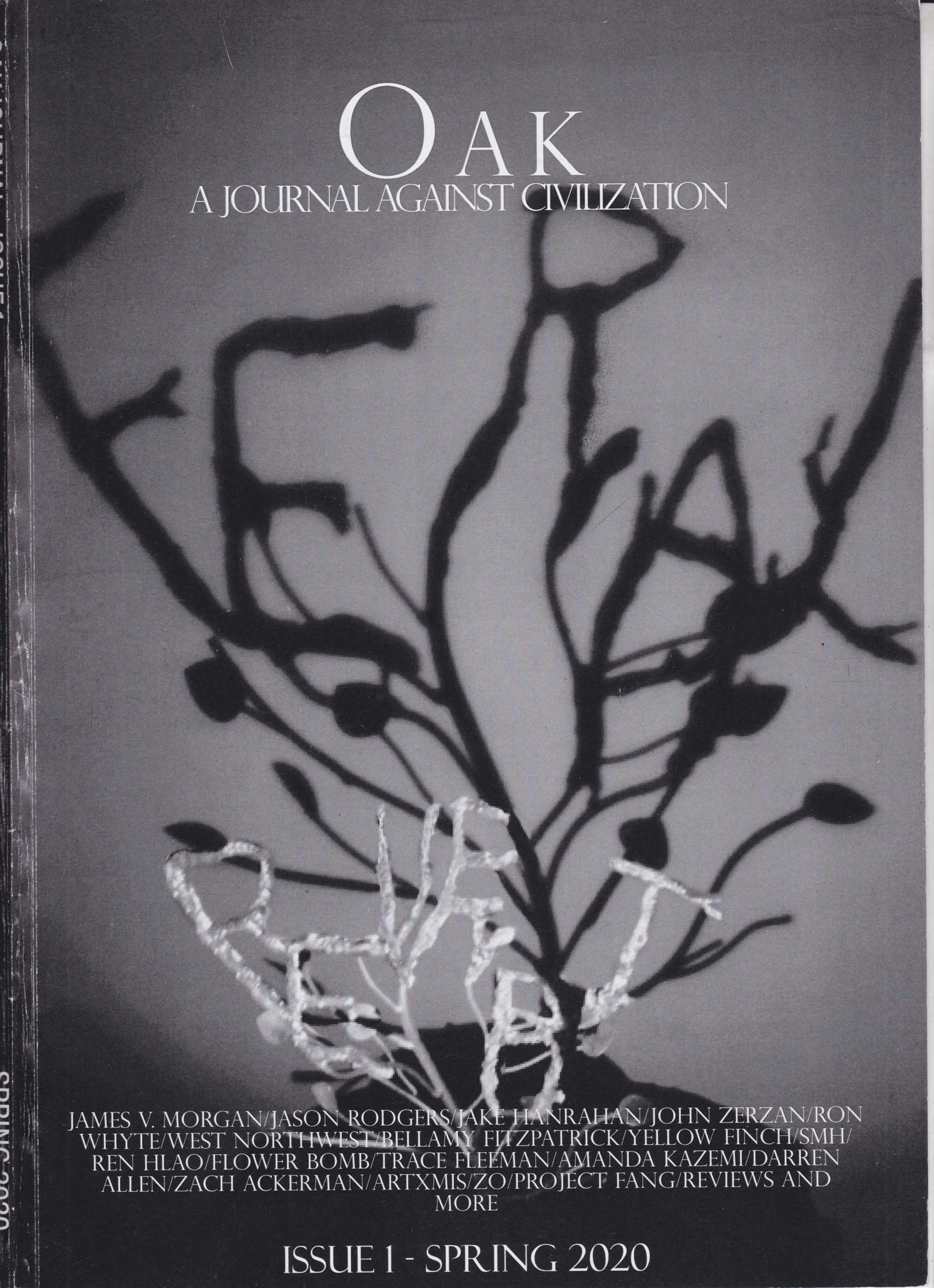


OAK

A JOURNAL AGAINST CIVILIZATION



JAMES V. MORGAN/JASON RODGERS/JAKE HANRAHAN/JOHN ZERZAN/RON
WHYTE/WEST NORTHWEST/BELLAMY FITZPATRICK/YELLOW FINCH/SMH/
REN HLAO/FLOWER BOMB/TRACE FLEEMAN/AMANDA KAZEMI/DARREN
ALLEN/ZACH ACKERMAN/ARTXMIS/ZO/PROJECT FANG/REVIEWS AND
MORE

ISSUE 1 - SPRING 2020

SPRING 2020

WELCOME TO OAK

The journal's primary name is meant to indicate reverence for oak forests, an amazing wild community providing human and non-human food. The second part is meant to describe what we wish to be doing: documenting the resistance to civilization. In this issue we hear about praxis, subsistence, theory, disagreements, strategy and on-the-ground struggles. All of these are concomitant factors that must be developed for a living reality outside of civilization. Similar to how civilization did not arise out of one singular factor manipulating everything, but instead was the culmination of many colliding factors that lead to the construction of the Leviathan which consumes most of the planet, so there are multiple factors, thinkers, ideas, actions, and ways of living which will collide to end it.

It must be commented where we are as we go to print. A pandemic of SAR-CoV-2 and the resulting disease, COVID-19, has gripped the human world, spiraling mass societies into panic and lockdown. The prescription (or current mitigation practice) for this pandemic has been to scale back engagement with mass society to whatever level possible without annihilating economies. In this often paralyzing moment many vulnerabilities and possibilities will be revealed. There will also be great sadness and death, the likes of which recent generations are not familiar with.

Whether this pandemic ends in a collapse-type scenario is completely unknown at this time, though there is certainly a path by which this could be the case. While accelerationist thinking is often wrong-headed, it is also the case that actions and events can engender new paces of decision making and some energy, economic, and ecological systems can go through periods of dynamic shift where going back is simply not an option. The greatest fear is perhaps that this pandemic results

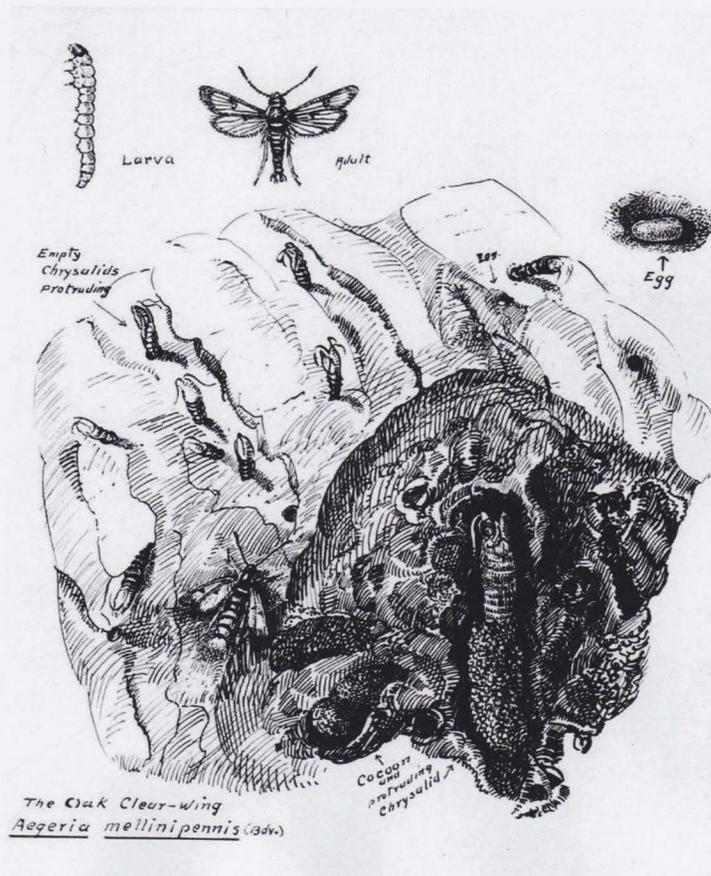
in a permanently estranged society, forever re-arranged on yet more fundamental levels and with continued exclusion of interaction. Concomitant with this development is the possibility of ever-growing statist apparatuses who aggressively assert themselves as the governors of space and movement. There are other possibilities. It would come as no surprise if 2020 saw the first dramatic drop in carbon emissions since the advent industrial societies. We can see pollution maps from China or the clean waters of Italy to display how quickly the world can back away from the ecocidal assault of this civilization. - SK For Oak

***Oak is a journal documenting the local and global destruction of civilization. All information contained within this magazine is for educational purposes only.

Oak is produced in print and as an audiozine, which curates much, but not all, the content of each print issue. You can learn more by visiting oakjournal.org -- you'll also find ways to support the project, which operates on an extremely limited budget. Your support is crucial to the future of Oak. This issue could not have happened without the contributors in this issue. Consider submitting your writing, art, letters and music to Oak at

oakjournal@protonmail.com.

Deadline for Issue 2 is June 30th. You can also write us at PO BOX 485 Wardensville, WV 26851 Oak would like to especially thank the following people who provided critical input to this issue: James V. Morgan, SMH, Anne Kirk, John Zerzan, Ria Montana, Ren Hlao, Peter Werbe, Alex, Zo and all others who we've missed. Thank you to all contributors and interviewees -- a special thank you to Yellow Finch autonomous zone for hosting Oak and bringing vibrant resistance to the East...we're not dead yet out here.



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LIVE WITHIN YOUR FRAMEWORK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAKE HANRAHAN OF POPULAR FRONT

OCTOBER 14TH, 2019

CONDUCTED VIA PHONE

Oak Journal: How's it going? Seems like you've been pretty fucking busy.

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, busy, very busy. Just got back from Hong Kong, just got back from Syria. Just absolutely exhausted. A lot going on but happy to just keep going and keep going.

It's fun. I like it, it's good fun but it is tiring. But, yes, it's all going on.

Oak Journal: Yeah, I just saw the Instagram is blowing up in the last -- it's got to be like the last 10 days.

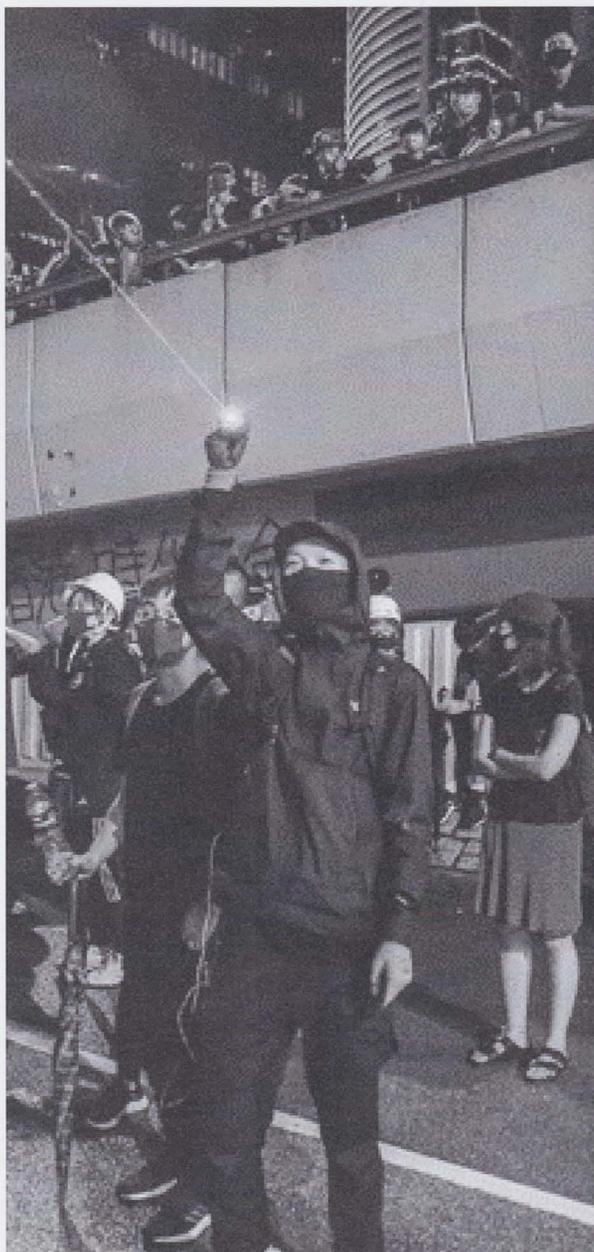
Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, it's crazy. We had like 10,000 followers, like I don't know -- fucking a week ago. We'd just hit 10 [thousand] and then today I open it up and there's 17,000. So, I was like -- it's mad. But I think it's just like, you know we reported heavy on the Rojava invasion right now. So, people trust us, you know what I mean, and they're coming to us for news. It's a good way -- like, Instagram is actually quite a good way of spreading news, I've found. A lot people don't use it for that, but we find it to be quite useful.

4

Oak Journal: So, at the time of this interview basically we're how many days into this Turkish invasion of Rojava and Northern Syria? We've already started to see large-scale slaughter taking place. And then today we're learning that at least some contingent of Kurds has looked for backing from the Assad regime. Could you maybe just break that down a little bit about what's going on right now?

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, so we're 6 days into the invasion of Rojava or Northeast Syria, whatever you want to call it. We're 6 days in now. It started off with the airstrikes from Turkey and then shelling and now Turkey has these -- I don't know, some people call it the Turkish FSA, but, you know, the FSA were legitimate rebels who rose up to fight the Assad regime against authoritarianism. Sadly, for years they haven't really been around. You know, they very rarely exist now thanks to the influx of Jihadists and what have you and they're getting crushed by Assad.

So, I don't call them the Turkish FSA -- Free Syrian Army -- they're Turkish backed mercenaries as far as I'm concerned because they're paid to do this. They're



flying Turkish flags when they're going to the frontlines. What is this? These are not the rebels that we know.

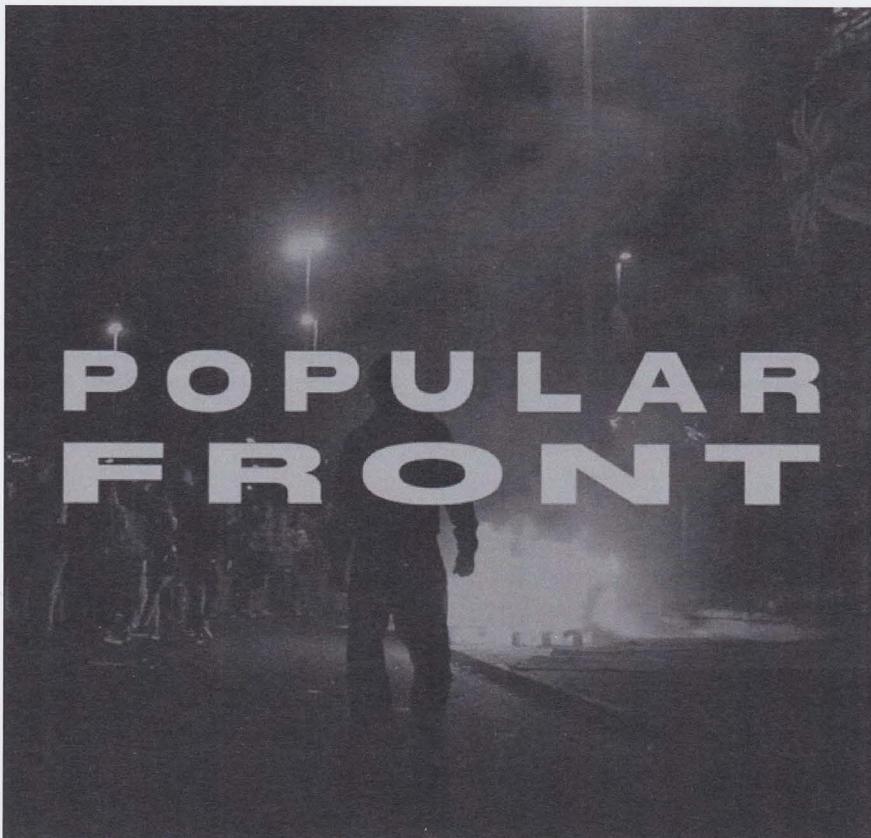
So, yeah, these Turkish-backed mercenaries are going in. I think by day 4 they ambushed a female politician -- so not even a militant, she was a politician, Hevrin Khalaf, and she was shot to bits in her car. They filmed it. They stood over her body. They started pulling other people to the side of the road, screaming Allahu Akbar as they do this.

So, I think it's quite obvious where a lot of these factions are perhaps from. I'm not saying ISIS, but I definitely

think more of the pro-Jihadist groups have formed into this group.

This happened because America abandoned Rojava and just said, no, thanks for fighting ISIS but see you. And then, you know, obviously, unfortunately, the Kurds have now had to make a deal -- or are trying to make a deal with Assad, which -- people should realize, like, nobody there wants this. You know I was there in August. No one even speaks about ISIS anymore there. Everyone speaks about, like, we hope to God the regime doesn't come back.

You have to remember they started this revolution before ISIS had really taken hold. You know what I mean? They started this revolution when they saw like, right, they're fighting in Damascus, now is our time to get rid of this authoritarian lunatic that has been stopping us from practicing our language and being racist to the Kurds and what have you. They started off fighting Assad. Now they have to make a deal with him, because America has basically fucked them off.



Oak Journal: It's really an incredible situation -- and it's even more...

Jake Hanrahan: Sorry, I should add as well, within the first 3 days the UN themselves said 100,000 people had been displaced in Northeast Syria. So, it gives you an idea of how many people are there and what's happening to them.

Oak Journal: That happened within the first three days?

Jake Hanrahan: First three days, yeah.

Oak Journal: It's even more complicated by the fact that Turkey is a NATO member, so you basically have a

NATO member withdrawing so another NATO member can go in and slaughter a portion of a country that's been at civil war for 8 years -- and you're also saying that Turkey is proxy sort of Jihadists. Like, why are they doing that? I guess, it can be difficult to understand why this sort of asymmetrical warfare is taking place in the way that it is. Do you see a motivation there? And is part of that motivation to crush Rojava because of their political position?

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, I think you have to realize -- or at least look at the history of PKK in Turkey which is a Kurdish militant group who have been fighting Turkey for, what? Like 40 years now. Tens of thousands of people have died. A long time they've been fighting, a

lot of people have died on both sides and the YPG is obviously deeply -- a lot of the PKK is in the YPG. When they first started a lot of them went over the border basically -- a lot of them. But that's how they built their resistance based of the ideals and the methods of the PKK.

However, if you look at it now -- I was just there, man -- anyone that tells you YPG

is PKK...it really isn't now. Certainly, there are elements within it but there's a much bigger thing now. You have Arabs, Christians, everybody -- Syriacs, Chaldeans -- everybody fighting in the YPG. Are you telling me they're PKK? Under this banner of the SDF, are you saying that they're the PKK? Some Christian guy, some Syriac who's had no ideological training, hasn't been to the mountains, has no connection to the PKK but is fighting to liberate his land under the banner of the SDF -- how can that guy be PKK? It's nonsense.

But, certainly, there is a heavy influence. So, obviously, for Turkey they're like, right, we hate the PKK and we've got them all over our border now. We have to get rid of

them, we have to smash them in whatever way possible. So that's idea.

Because NATO is so weak and pathetic, they don't really have morals as they're grounding, they have it as a -- what a professional business relationship is and what have you. And I can kind of understand, NATO is always going to side with the country rather than a militia and a bunch of guys. But you would expect something would be done. These people fought ISIS. NATO and U.S. forces have said they are the best force on the ground for helping to fight ISIS. They tried to do it with the rebels, that didn't work out. They did with the YPG and the SDF, which they formed, and it worked out great.

Now, as a reward, they've been abandoned. It literally took 50 U.S. troops to stay in Rojava to stop them being attacked but now that they've been repositioned and Trump has said, yep, Turkey you can go and kill everybody now. It is what it is. There's massacres. Children are dead. It's just unbelievable what's happening. And it's broken down so fast.

And it's crazy. I'm looking at these videos and seeing places that I was hanging out, drinking a beer, having a laugh like only two months ago. And now they're getting shelled and there are Jihadists running around -- or what look like Jihadists running around. I mean, I don't want to say they're Jihadists but when these so-called Turkish-backed rebels are slaughtering people and executing them at the side of the road screaming Allahu Akbar I don't think it's hard to think maybe they are Jihadists.

At this point in the war, if you're acting like that it's very clear what you're about in my opinion. But who knows what they actually are.

And then, also, you have this situation now where America has just said -- the Kurds have to do this horrible deal with the Regime -- America said, no, you're not allowed. So, America is basically now saying to YPG, to the Kurds of Rojava, saying, we're not going to help you. We're not going to protect you. And, now, you're not allowed to make any other deals to protect yourselves. So, basically, you will just have to die. It's fucking mad. It's really mad. I mean no one trusted America but no one thought that it would quite go to this level after what the YPG did with them.

Oak Journal: Right. There's really no political context the way it's talked about in the States.

Jake Hanrahan: Right.

Oak Journal: So, to me I'm always questioning, is there a political context to this -- you know, the Rojava

revolution, which a lot of people identify as a sort-of anarchist revolution...

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, that's a misconception.

Oak Journal: Okay, yeah, talk about that.

Jake Hanrahan: It's definitely not an anarchist revolution. There are anarchist elements. But it's best described as like socialist libertarian. Which you could say, woah, that is anarchist. But it's not really. It's very -- you know, they have to have order and structure because they're at war. So, it's not like -- in a military the structure is very rigid. It's not like, oh, let's all democratically decide. No, there are commanders. There are people that are getting told what to do because obviously you're at war. You know, it has to be like that.

Certainly, within society it's much more loose. It's very autonomous. For example, I went to this region, this village where the democratically leaders of the village are old women from the village. They called them the mommas (phonetic). So, you've got these 12 women who have been -- lived born and raised in that village their whole lives, if there's a problem people go to them first. They try and work it out. If they can't work, it out at the local level then they take it to a higher -- like a regional lawmaker who will then try to work it out. And then it will go further and what have you. And then they'll either try to rehabilitate or decide to jail and prosecute.

But, certainly, I really enjoy that idea of the very first response is you go to the mommas (phonetic) and you try and work it out rather than, quick, call the cops. You know what I mean?

It wouldn't work everywhere but over there it's certainly working how we saw it. We had several examples of this. We saw it and it was fascinating. And there's definitely this idea of small government. This -- they call it democratic confederalism. And another misconception is -- no offense I often see it with American leftists who go like, these are Marxist guerillas. They're not. They explicitly dropped Marxist-Leninism. They explicitly dropped it in the '90s. Saying, no, we are not Marxists, we're not doing this anymore. We don't agree with this anymore. We now look to Murray Bookchin and other thinkers like that. So, I would definitely say at heart they're traditional libertarian as it is right now. But there's certainly a very big place for anarchists there and communists even. Unfortunately, they even allow some Stalinists to fight on their international Taburs, which is like their units. I don't think they should be allowed because they're Stalinists, but it is what it is. That's a very small element.

But there's definitely misconceptions that it's this

anarchist revolution. But what it is, is incredible, is what I always say. Like, it's just amazing to see. I've been covering stuff in the Middle East 6 years of my career and to see that happen in the Middle East is just -- I can't believe it.

One thing I will say, there's a lot of problems with the system they have but the one thing that is very real and true is the way they're helping women reintegrate into society in a meaningful role. That is absolutely everywhere and there's no denying that. There's even these psychopathic D.C. analysts, I know a few who even went there, and notice they don't talk about how that's not true because that's the only thing they know is very true and they can't argue against that.

So, if there's anything, the idea of the women's revolution, what they did there, that will last forever. There will be generations and generations to come when Rojava is gone that say, remember when those people did that for the women here? It can be done again. I think that's important.

Oak Journal: Without a doubt, super important. I heard Murray Bookchin's daughter speaking about this recently and she kind of framed it in the same terms. I think it's really important to get your perspective being on the ground there. Because the American filter of a lot of these things is hey, look at what's happening -- and then they reify it and turn it into whatever their ideal is. It doesn't get unpacked very much, especially in social media

Jake Hanrahan: Exactly, that bubble of the social media thing is disgusting. Again, Americans -- and, again, no offense -- Americans think they have the monopoly on culture often, so they go like -- oh, that's this! No, it's this, it's this other thing that they have created. But then the Americans have to skew it to be like, no, it's this thing that we know about. And it's like, no, you're projecting what you want it to be.

Another example of this is the Hong Kong protestors. I've just got back from Hong Kong. They're using Pepe. You know Pepe the Frog is the unofficial mascot of the uprising there.

Oak Journal: Yeah.

Jake Hanrahan: And all these American leftists are like, see, they're fascists! (Laughter)

And you go like, why are you using Pepe? They're like, it's cool, it's from the internet. And it's like, yeah, but Americans associate it with the alt-right. And they're like, so what? Like, we don't give a fuck it's associated with that. That's insane. (Laughter)

And it's like -- Americans can't accept that; I'm sorry, you don't have the monopoly on subculture. You just don't. The Hong Kong protests, that's Pepe. Pepe, as well, was around before fascists used it and it will be around afterwards. And they are just using it. But, again, they cannot accept it. 'Well we see it as an alt-right thing.' Mate, do you think any Hongkonger gives a fuck about the alt-right in America? They're using it for their own purpose and good for them, you know?

Oak Journal: Well I can tell you almost certainly that there will probably be some anti-fascist American news outlet that will draw a conspiratorial line between Pepe and Ted Cruz talking about Hong Kong and the Hong Kong protestors and -- yeah, it's very much like we're infected by the Glenn Beck whiteboard bullshit still from, you know, 10 years ago.

Jake Hanrahan: Someone described it to me once as -- this is an American friend of mine, an Anarchist, who said it's like colonialism of the mind. It's like they basically can't allow -- still, even when they're allegedly leftist -- they can't accept that other places just don't buy everything from America, they just don't take it all on board.

It's like they have to know that this means this. No, they don't. They're not in America. Why should they care? The whole world doesn't look to America for approval, it just doesn't you know.

Especially rowdy young men and women on the streets of Hong Kong protesting against what is, in my opinion, one of the, if not the most, authoritarian government on the planet right now. You think they care that some angry leftists are getting moody online because you used Pepe? Why should they care?

Oak Journal: They certainly shouldn't...

Jake Hanrahan: It's the same with the American flag. So, a lot of them are flying American flags, right?

Again, I've seen Americans saying bad optics. Again, they don't give a fuck about your optics. I spoke to them -- why are you flying an American flag? Well, it's a country that has this potential bill that can be passed that will make things a lot better for us so we're flying the American flag basically to say, hey, can you help us out, we're appealing to you.

The same reason they fly a lot of other flags out there. One day, to prove the point that they're not this like American love child, they actually brought out every single flag of what they consider democratic countries and they marched for fucking miles with all of these flags. They're not saying, we love America! They're saying, we need help. It makes sense.

And I'm sorry that some communist online doesn't like that but they don't. Two of their people have been shot now, another girl just died in mysterious circumstances. I've seen the police violence up close; it is brutal, mate. You know what I mean?

Oak Journal: Yeah.

Jake Hanrahan: Sorry they're not taking on -- I say this to Westerners, sorry the protest isn't what you want it to be. And there's the same thing on the other side with the right-wingers who are like, wow, look at them attacking the police. Yes, sorry it isn't how you want it to be. Unfortunately, violence is being used. And there's nothing you can say really because you're not in that situation.

Oak Journal: I wonder if you could maybe unpack a little bit of what's going on in Hong Kong because the coverage here is pretty awful. Unless you are looking out directly for it -- it's pretty bad. It's mostly right-wing spin and just co-opting on all different sides. And the leftist media is really not sure what to do, exactly for the reasons that you've just laid out. They're like, eh... and they just stall.

Jake Hanrahan: Absolutely. So it started with -- it's been going on for years in a way because, as I'm sure you know, Hong Kong was a former colony of the U.K. and then Margaret Thatcher, may she burn in her grave, she made this weird deal where after 50 years or something -- don't quote me on this, off the top of my head -- after 50 years then it will be considered to be given back to China. [Editor's Note: This is correct, China and Hong Kong are in a "One Country, Two Systems" agreement until 2047, the handover took place in 1997] Now, that time is running out in the next generation of these youth that are fighting. That time will run out and already, for like the last 7 or 8 years, they've been seeing China kind of slowly increase its power over Hong Kong. It's kind of an autonomous region right now but it's not. I mean in law it certainly isn't. But they have their own culture, they have their own thing.

There's definitely a difference between mainlanders, as they call them, and Hongkongers. They're different. And they enjoy a lot of the kind of -- which, people will scream at me for saying this, but I don't give a fuck -- they enjoy some of the Western freedoms. Unfortunately, they also enjoy this hyper-capitalist hell which has every inch of the city covered in adverts. But whatever. But they've got more freedom compared to China where you will literally go to prison for saying one bad thing about the government. Winnie-the-pooh was banned because it was used to make fun of the Prime Minister there.

They turn up, build a makeshift barricade, set it on fire, throw bricks. And as soon as the police move in, then they just vanish like water dripping through the cracks.

So, any kind of tankie scumbag that's arguing that China is a free communist country. It's not -- I don't even like communism and it's like -- to even call China communist is wrong. It's not even that. It's just this, you know, totalitarian state-capitalist country.

So, anyway, so with that all out the way, you have the protestors who are like, right, this is getting too far. And then, all of a sudden Carrie Lam who's the -- like the leader of Hong Kong politically [Editor's Note: Chief Executive of Hong Kong is Lam's official title], I don't know what her exact title is -- she comes up and says, right, we're going to have a new law. It's an extradition bill which basically allowed for China to much more easily deport criminals or anyone arrested in Hong Kong to China to face trial.

Now, obviously, the youth are smart enough to see that it's not just going to be criminals, it's going to be absolutely anybody they don't like. Because that's what China does right? They arrest anybody that dissents. They're authoritarian, that's how they are.

So, they were like, right, we can't allow this because any protester is going to get canceled and we'll all start getting deported and sent to dungeons forever. They literally have re-education camps. They're fucking murdering their Muslims in Xinjiang which, again, was brought up a hell of a lot by the protestors.

So, anyway, they get out on the streets. They start a peaceful protest. Now, you can look this up, anyone that hears this, it started off peacefully just like the Umbrella Revolution before. They started up peacefully and the police went in very heavy-handed.

Now this time around instead of saying like, no, let's keep things peaceful, there was this large contingent of these young men and women that said, nah, we're going to get violent. Which is very unusual, even in the culture of Hong Kong. And they now call themselves frontliners -- they go to the frontline of the protest. They throw Molotovs, they do this, they do that.

And you can actually see with each escalation of police violence there has been an escalation of frontliner violence. Now they are saying, look, this is resistance, we are fighting, and we will fight. And they -- it's certainly now moving up. A police officer was stabbed recently. I saw a small bomb detonate -- very small, maybe it wouldn't even blow off your foot. But I saw it detonate and then today I saw on Reuters they say another IED's been detonated. It's not IED as such -- like what you would think, it's not like Taliban/Afghanistan style. It's like gunpowder strapped together and put a fuse in it and blown up. But, certainly, that's the way things are heading.

These youth are very militant and when you see the way the police treat them you can understand how they're being slowly radicalized. It's very interesting to see.

It's also interesting because this is a generation that have nothing like this. You know, when I'm in the Middle East and I've been reporting on these youth militant movements they have examples to go off. The PKK Youth, who I made a film with, obviously they took all their tactics from the PKK. These kids are learning on the go. They're online. I interviewed loads of them and they're saying, we get out, we share information online.

It's also a leaderless group as well. There's no leader. They have small teams. They join at the protest; they all wear black. They join each other. They fight and then they disperse.

They have this thing they call it -- you know Bruce Lee said it, it's from Taoism, but Bruce Lee said, be water. And that's what they use as their protest tactic and it really works. They turn up, build a makeshift barricade, set it on fire, throw bricks. And as soon as the police move in, they just vanish like water dripping through the cracks. And then they form again and then they move all around the city.

It's absolutely amazing. I've never seen a protest in 6 years so well organized. And they say, oh, well, we're not well organized actually. But I'm like, mate, you are. It's not that bad, trust me. Sorry to rant on but there's a lot to it, you know. And that's kind of where it is right now.

Oak Journal: I think that's great and that's kind of what I wanted to get into. Maybe they're feeling like they're not well organized because they don't have this classic, maybe -- from the States we would think of it like a classic leftist organizational approach to marching, all that bullshit. But they have a really good core strategy and philosophy as they approach each action.

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah and one thing I should say as well to make clear -- I forgot to mention -- is, politically, they

are: we don't want China. And that's it. In fact, getting into deep ideological talk is very frowned upon. So, if someone starts being like, well, no, actually we need to fight for this, this... They say, no, we don't want that. And it's quite clever.

They're saying the only way we can stay united is if we all stay on this one agreement: we want China out. We want to stop the authoritarianism creep. Then, afterwards, democratically, we can work out what we're about. But, for the moment, they're saying Free Hong Kong. That is it.

It's very interesting. And they say, fuck the commies, which they mean, basically fuck the -- it's a way of saying fuck china, fuck the authoritarianism creep of commies.

There are certainly leftists, lot of leftist. There's a whole contingent of leftists. There's even anarchist frontliners who I've been speaking to who wrote an amazing piece. Everyone should look at it, it's called "Three Months of Insurrection" and it was on Crimethinc. and it's probably the best piece I have read about the Hong Kong protests and it's from an anarchist perspective, it's very good.

So, yes, there is no overarching 'this is who we are' it's just we must -- it's just a popular resistance against the creep of authoritarianism. And a lot of people are saying -- these tankies online who've never even been to Hong Kong will tell you it's a bunch of rich kids.

I was on the street and there was like 100,000 people out and there was a three-mile, from what I could even see, a three-mile chain of people passing, hand to hand, equipment that went all the way, three miles up the road, to the frontline where they're building barricades. If you're telling me that's all rich kids -- there are very rich people in Hong Kong, you know what I mean? It's not just that. Certainly, some of them are rich kids but it's besides the point. That's it, it's not a working-class uprising. It's not this uprising, it's not that -- it's just a genuine people's uprising of: we are against this authoritarianism creep.

And, again, it comes back to leftists in Europe, I've seen evens some of them, but often in America, just cannot accept it. Well why are they doing this there's an agenda or they're CIA agent or whatever -- nonsense. They just can't accept that the people can rise up without having some stupid fucking trendy political compass to be a part of.

Oak Journal: Yeah. It's almost like you're saying Americans basically see things through a conspiratorial, ideological lens and if they can't figure it out, they get really pissed off.

Jake Hanrahan: It seems to me, man. I have friends who are, you know, American leftists but I do -- I often get criticized by leftists because I'm very critical of the American left. I find that a lot of it is just a big pow-wow and it's just a game. And they're like, you don't know how hard it is here! And it's like, man, we've been doing the Antifa thing for a fucking decade in Europe and we don't need to scream about gender pronouns as we do it, you know what I mean? Not that there's anything wrong with that but you know what I'm saying? It very much feels like commodified protest to me.

So, when they suddenly turn to Hongkongers and start telling them why they're wrong it's like -- typical Americans, deciding how the whole world should feel. It does feel like that.

Oak Journal: Yeah. And even the Antifa thing, the larger leftist paradigm didn't care about, in the late '90s and early 2000s when there was -- it was basically going under a banner, decentralized, as Anti-Racist Action. And at that time the popular leftist movements in the States, they could give a fuck about them.

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah.

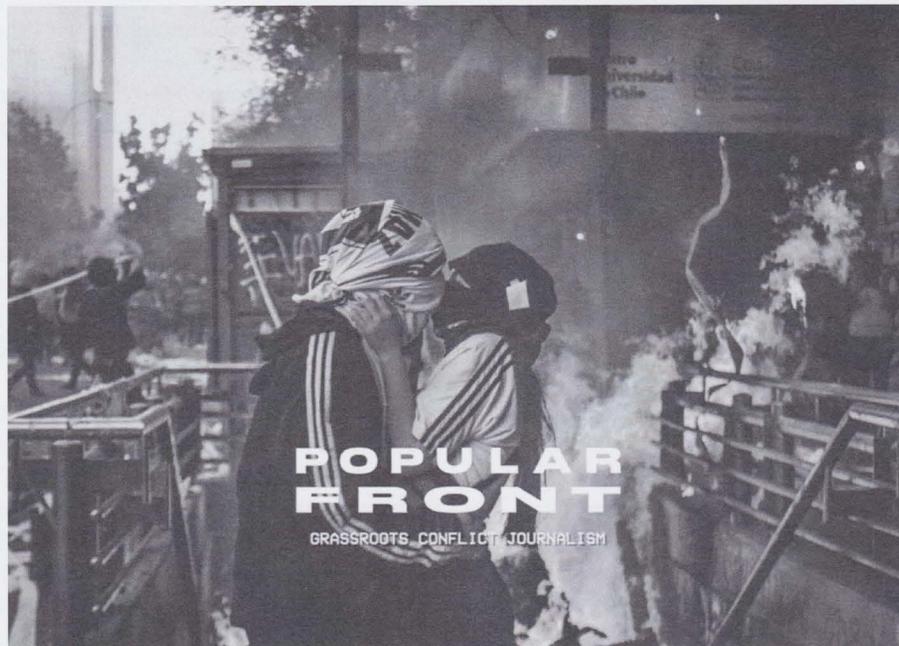
Oak Journal: And they were, you know, fighting Nazis and all that shit. And it was basically they were just alone. And now it's advantageous for the larger political left to sort of at least loosely align with it.

Jake Hanrahan: You're right. Look at FSU, Friends Stand United, AKA Fuck Shit Up, they were like working-class punks who basically formed together in America -- I think LA is where they originally formed, I could be wrong -- but they formed and -- maybe it was Boston [Editor's Note: FSU originally formed in Boston, MA] I don't know -- but they just formed to just fucking beat the shit out of Nazis. It's like, you come in, you call my black friend the N-word you're going to get your head kicked in. That was real. That's like real movement.

Now, all this name calling and finger pointing like -- you're not left enough, you're not left enough, you listen to this podcast -- like canceling people that listen to Cum Town. Like, good luck in your revolution (laughter). If that's your concern, good luck. It's sad to me, you know.

And often people say, you're a bad ally. I'm like, I'm not your ally, bro, I'm just assessing it from where I am. I don't know, I think there are a lot of people that are in this post-left sphere that see it a lot differently than the people who are kind of in the new left.

And maybe I'm wrong, you know, but I just don't find it helpful. I mean, look, if you're going to be fighting against Nazis, good. Whatever you're doing, whether you're doing it for a trend or not, fine. But then when you then take that to the degree where you're starting to shit on the class struggle because of your own ideological thing, I really dislike that.



There's a great article by Mark Fisher called "Exiting the Vampire Castle" about how middle-class leftists took over the class movement and that says it all for me. They couldn't engage with that so they decided to make something else to be worried about. I don't

know, man. When there are homeless people and huge drug epidemics, I'm more worried about that than I am that someone said a wrong word on a podcast once, I'm sorry.

Oak Journal: Yeah, I think that you're right that there is definitely the analytical approach in the post-left milieu in the States to sort of say that they're beyond some of these leftist -- American leftist politics. Unfortunately, I don't think it really plays out that way in my experience dealing with everybody. There's a lot of baggage.

But, anyway, to zoom back out a little bit because I do think the American example is particularly unrealistic. And just, in an endgame situation where you have these

massive militaries, the biggest militaries obviously that have ever existed in the history of the world, and you have small militias and all the different types of resistance that we've talked about through this -- whether it's militias or Hong Kong -- do you see that there might be a strategy for maintaining at least some sort of autonomous areas or is it always going to be sort of brokered against these massive militaries like we're seeing in Syria? Is it always going to depend on the power balance that's going on in the world?

Jake Hanrahan: I think the latter, unfortunately. Personally, I'm very -- I'm a bit of a doomer in terms of this, I'm very pessimistic. I think that the history has gotten to the point now where everything is such a chess game that it's almost like these autonomous movements can't rise up spontaneously and survive because they have to be crushed by the military complex. And it's just unfortunate.

They do kind of still exist, you know for example the EZLN, the Zapatistas -- which, personally, I'm very in favor of I think what they're doing there is actually excellent, in Mexico -- but even those guys are starting to get crushed now a little bit. The government had some weird compromise with them but all of a sudden announced some new incursion into their land recently. So, it doesn't look like things are going to last. And I do think we're at a weird state of history -- I mean, who knows, we only live in our present day -- but it does feel a little bit like things don't mean anything anymore. Like, I've been involved in journalism for about six years and interested in radical politics since I was about, I don't know, like 12 years old. And it's like now it -- for me anyway, from my perspective -- it feels like big events that you would think would change things don't really change anything anymore.

It's almost like -- this idea of this post-truth world, I think it's quite real. Who would think that America would -- I mean, obviously they betray everybody -- but who would think they would do it on this level with the whole world watching? You would think that a normal -- like Trump would be like, no I can't do that, that's insane. But, again, it doesn't really matter anymore. There's nothing to stop anybody. Who's going to stop him? What's going to happen? Nothing. Literally no one is going to stop him.

You know Lindsey Graham said, well, if Turkey uses airstrikes then we will react. Then, literally that same day, they used airstrikes on Rojava, and nothing happened. Sanctions. Sanction what? Sanctions mean nothing. Literally, all you have to do is move a few fucking ones and zeros on the corrupt bank sheet and you can avoid sanctions like that. Also, they've got Russia in their corner. Russia is the king of avoiding sanctions. So, it means nothing, unfortunately.

I'm not saying violence is the answer and forever-war is the answer but for one time in history, I believe -- and this obviously comes down to a personal bias -- but I do believe that America was slowly starting to reverse their reputation. It could have been the beginning of at least improving slightly their reputation in the Middle East and creating a new ally outside of Israel. But, unfortunately, they've dashed those hopes spectacularly.

Oak Journal: And it does seem like we're at a point where these movements and autonomous zones -- whether that be ecological resistance in the States or -- I know you've done some reporting from France -- Rojava, it's a matter of them deciding how long you exist and then basically it's impossible to stop once it starts.

So, it's kind of depressing, I can start to see the nihilist framework working itself out.

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, I've definitely struggled to stop that happening to myself. I'm very like blfff -- fuck it, you know. I also don't believe in this idea -- you know in *Desert*, how they start with this idea that the revolution isn't happening. Like, obviously, in my opinion -- obviously that's not happening. This idea that there's going to be some kind of like global anarchist revolution -- come on! Anyone that believes that I just think...come on, grow up, the world is way too nasty now. Live within your framework, you know.

Oak Journal: Yeah, the potential for that is maybe, maybe as much as 100 years over (laughter)...

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, literally. Right, like maybe -- or more. I agree.

Oak Journal: And even then, really the idea of a concrete global revolution really only comes out of this ability for there to be communication across the world -- in at least a way that makes those revolutions temporally relevant to each other. So, if you don't have that, if you go back even further it's localized then. And there's no point, why struggle against something that's not right in front of your face?

Jake Hanrahan: Exactly. And the world doesn't -- like humans don't work like that.

You're not just going to go, oh let's all have the same thing. People don't want the same thing, unfortunately. It's very nice to have this Western idea of, well, everybody wants to be free. Freedom, unfortunately, means different things to different people, you know what I mean?

Some people feel free to be in Turkey because they like the government. But the idea that that's free is outrageous because if suddenly they decide they don't

like the government anymore they're in jail.

So, you know what I'm saying, freedom is -- in my opinion freedom is very real in what it is and it's very much like the most important thing on Earth in my opinion. But, again, not everybody is going to agree with me and why should they? You can't impose it on everybody, and the global revolution is just not possible. Within even each revolutionary movement there's so many different ideas and frictions. How the hell are you going to do that on the state of the world? It's just not possible.

Oak Journal: I guess if you were to pull an optimistic thread out of *Desert* it would be that within this sort of growing chaotic situation across the world you're going to have further pockets for people to live intentionally and autonomously and do those sort of things.

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah.

Oak Journal: And I think we are seeing that actually play out but the endgame of it -- well, maybe that just attaches us more and more to the Western need for this sort of grand narrative where things all play out in one particular way.

Jake Hanrahan: I think so. I'm definitely guilty of that -- and then we can have this, and it'll be like how Rojava is, etc. And it's like, nah man, it's just not going to work like that. It's unfortunate. I think these ideas of these like almost anarchistic autonomous communes or whatever-you-want -- I honestly think they can only survive in certain periods of time. And I don't mean like decades, I mean like small periods, in-between conflicts. It's sad, really, but I don't see it as sustainable.

I think sustainable as the network of doing it is definitely, I just don't think the surrounding factors will allow it to ever be sustained.

Oak Journal: Right.

Jake Hanrahan: I think Rojava's a prime example.

Oak Journal: Exactly. And then there's also just the baseline of subsistence and whether or not -- sustainable to what degree right? Sustainable if you have people bringing in supplies and stuff..

Jake Hanrahan: Exactly, what does that even mean, right.

Oak Journal: It gets complicated.

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah.

Oak Journal: Well that's great, I really appreciate you

taking the time to talk. Is there anything else you would want to talk about in the context of talking to an anti-civ mag?

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, definitely. It's definitely a concept that I'm very interested in and I have been for quite a while now. The kind of green anarchist thing is what I got into when I was younger. Not as an activist but something I've always been very interested in. In fact, when I was politically active, when I was a very young teenager, I was big into like Anonymous -- you know them times -- that very anarchistic but in a very cool, real way. It was about attack this; bankers; fuck that. And now I just feel -- I think it was like the tail end of the WTO kind of culture. You know the riots and that. And now I feel like all of that has turned into something very, very different. So, for me, the kind of anti-civ stuff is almost -- it sounds weird, but I see a lot of people from them periods now coming about in the anti-civ stuff and I find that very interesting.

But, yeah, it's just something that I find very interesting. And I don't -- again, I don't pin myself to any specific cross -- a lot of people I'll talk to and, oh, politically you're an anarchist. I say, well, I don't class myself as anything particularly. If that's sitting on the fence, fine, I don't give a fuck. It's just because I don't agree entirely with any group.

No, I want to live in the forest, and I love all that and I would prefer that society was more autonomous with as little government as possible. But I also want to be able to be able to like play my PlayStation (laughter) so I'm a fucking -- I'm a complete hypocrite. Put it this way, I get on very well with these kind of anti-civ anarchists. There's a lot that listen to my platform, Popular Front, and I get on with them well. I definitely enjoy talking to them as opposed to like a Stalinist who I despise and they all hate me, which is good, I'm glad they do. (Laughter)

But, certainly, I think if people like -- people can look at my stuff as well, Popular Front. It's entirely grassroots conflict journalism. It's my platform, I do that almost singlehandedly. And we've definitely covered a few of these things. We had John Jacobi on to talk about the kind of new Green Scare. Also, this kind of -- I don't buy into this eco-fascist idea, I think it's a lot of hysteria. Just because a fascist goes, I like trees, it doesn't make them an eco-fascist.

And we're actually making a documentary about ITS. I read both *Atassas* and I got in contact with ITS and they did this -- I wanted to interview them upfront but then they were like, no, for security reasons you have to send questions. And I sent them questions and they recorded the answers and it's in this weird dungeon looking place and they've got like a fucking ram skull and a handgun

and pipe bombs -- it's very weird man.

We're doing a whole documentary about ITS. And a lot of people have said, how dare you, you shouldn't even speak about them. But I just said, look, they're very ugly and a lot of ugly things happen, and you know just because you don't like it doesn't mean it's not going to be spoken about.

But yeah, if people want to have a look, Popularfront.co online.

I quite like talking about politics now and then, just to keep your ear to the ground, what's the new thing. One, because of my work. And two, because of my own ideology of -- you know Popular Front has no particular ideology other than anti-authoritarianism. So often we'll report on one thing and then all the communists will be happy and then we'll go, for example we went to Hong Kong, and all the communists were like, what, I thought you were leftists?

I'm like, bro, I'm anti-authoritarianism, I don't give a fuck about your leftists your rightists whatever. 'But the Hong Kong protestors are all CIA agents!' Sorry, they're not. (Laughter).

Oak Journal: Three miles of CIA assets. (Laughter).

Jake Hanrahan: I actually asked one of them, one of the kids, he's like 16 years old and is like deeply injured, and I was like, by the way, in America some of these Stalinists say this: they reckon you're a CIA agent. And he just said, I wish I was that able. (Laughter)

Exactly, right. That was it and he laughed. He wasn't even like, oh really! He was like, it's stupid you know.

Oak Journal: Be out here jump-kicking fucking riot police if I was CIA...

Jake Hanrahan: Right! They honestly don't, they literally shrug it off. To another guy I said, Americans have been calling you guys fascists. And he just went, well, obviously we're not fascists. And that was it. He had nothing else to say about it. They just don't care, and I really respect them for that, you know, not caring too much about that thing.

They're very militant. They're like, here is our struggle. If you don't like it, whatever. But they even allow -- to a degree they actually allow some dissident voice -- dissent from their path. But they have done bad shit as well. They have punched up a few pro-China people and it's like, if you're really for freedom of speech don't do that, allow them to at least speak. But, again, I said to people, war, conflict, it's ugly. Sometimes bad things happen. Sorry that it happens but that's human nature.

Oak Journal: It's fucking messy, what do you expect.

Jake Hanrahan: It's messy, yeah, it's not fun. It's not lovely. It's not great. It's messy.

Oak Journal: I think a lot of that is product of utopian thinking...

Jake Hanrahan: Exactly.

Oak Journal: Which is, in and of itself, a product of civilization and particularly the oil paradigm since the late 1800s. So, it's like they want a little bit of everything...

Jake Hanrahan: Exactly.

Oak Journal: ... They want the perfect solution. The perfect utopia. It's bullshit.

Jake Hanrahan: They want like the American dream, basically, but in a different context. The American leftist dream.

[Editor's Note: the conversation moves to personal background and a discussion of ITS]

Jake Hanrahan: I found *Atassa* quite interesting. Obviously, I'm not pro-ITS -- I told them, I literally told them: I hope you all die, why don't you just kill yourselves? And they were like, yeah, it's a good point (laughter). Seriously, I got this crazy -- I got this really interesting transcript when I actually had a live chat with one of them. It was so interesting. I was like, why don't you just kill yourself if you hate the world that much?

And he was like, I think about this -- I know that sounds grim but it's like these guys are people that were, literally, at the time saying to me that it was okay that they murdered that random civilian hiker and they're working with fascist groups.

But, anyway, I do find *Atassa*, I'm glad I started reading it because I find it very interesting. There's a lot in it that I think is quite interesting, quite good. Talking about how kind of real anti-civ or primal nature just doesn't fit into any of these frameworks, even now. It wasn't about morals or anything like this. But, again, you don't want to live like a wolf (laughter). You do want to be a human.

Like I said, that's why I don't pin myself to anything, I just find it all very interesting. It's nice to read up on but you get too deep into it I feel like you start losing your head, or I do anyway.

Oak Journal: I don't know if you followed 325's sort of

outing of that dude... [Editor's Note: The outing of the editor of *Atassa* on 325nostate]

Jake Hanrahan: That weird lawyer guy? He's like some weird lawyer?

Oak Journal: Yeah and he -- I'm trying to remember how it broke down, but they outed him and basically tried to just tear him down and say he was just -- his wife was a vivisector. It got really crazy. But 325 actually contacted the magazine, *Oak*, and said are you going to say anything positive about ITS and we're not going to post this if you do.

Jake Hanrahan: Yeah, I think that's bullshit. I think that's really bad to do.

Oak Journal: I just told them it's not our focus. I just try to not get into fights with any online anarchist media organization that revolves around posting unscripted articles over and over again. Like *Anarchistnews*, all that shit, I just...

Jake Hanrahan: That's not news.

Oak Journal: Yeah, right.

Jake Hanrahan: That's the thing. They get mad with the media -- for example, I was in *Exarchia* and I was trying to film, and they were like, we'll smash your camera. And I was like, bro, you ain't smashing shit. But also it's like you get mad, oh the media misrepresented us -- and then when you get there you just want to smash everybody up and then you just want to like put out what you say is news -- and it's, no, you just want to put your communique out there. Like what's the point? That's not news.

And often it's written in such a way that no one that hasn't been reading the same shit for decades will even understand. There's that great piece on *Crimethinc.*, "Your Politics are Boring as Fuck", and that says it all, it's such a great piece, I think.

But, yes, I've had some anarchist media attack me -- well, 'attack' -- they email me -- and they're like, you better not post the ITS thing! It's like, what, what are you going to do? Well we'll be really angry! Well fuck off, you're so-called anarchists and you're trying to tell people what not to post and what to post? Like, fuck off. I really think that's bullshit.

Don't talk about them? No, I'll talk about whatever I want. And as should anybody. And, also, information is good to be out there. The world needs to see information whether it's ugly or not. I had some fascists posting on the Popular Front Instagram and some people are like, you need to delete these comments. I

said, no, man. The world is ugly, and you can see it as that. If you don't like it, unfollow. I hate them. I literally want them to die. I want fascists to die. But it's like, you all see them, and they exist. And you have to see them because it's not just you. Black people, and all people that they attack, have to see this all the time. So, sorry, you're going to have to see it as well.

So long as it's not talking about wanting to kill someone or whatever. But you know what I'm saying? I just think it's better to just be open and see it all because it is ugly, and you have to see ugliness.

Oak Journal: I think a lot of the ITS stuff -- there was a lot of response -- I had actually written a piece in the first *Black and Green Review* just questioning the validity of the strategy. That was the entire point of the piece was we get caught in this extremist paradigm where it's like extreme actions means extreme results. And it's just fucking bullshit -- it could be true...

Jake Hanrahan: ITS are a joke. They're like literally a joke. They're not going to achieve nothing.

Oak Journal: The other part of it is that I've heard people tell me that it's all a fucking ruse and that they -- I don't know what do you think? Can you confirm some...

Jake Hanrahan: Nah, I heard that as well. That was my initial thought, this is -- there's no way. And I actually have a huge thread on Twitter about it. Like, they're definitely real. They're small but they're definitely real and they've definitely killed at least two people. But, again, the reason I want to report on them is because I focus on under-reported conflicts often and under-reported militant groups and that's it.

I'm like, I'm sorry that your politics doesn't let you enjoy the spread of information, but it just isn't relevant to me. You know what I mean, it's just not -- or people saying, you're putting them out there! It's like, nah, man, they're out there already.

You never know -- it takes only one of them to do something insane. Their ideology literally thinks school shooting is okay. That's how crazy they are. So, it's like, I think it does need to be spoken about. I don't think we should hide away from it. Don't just post their communiques, sure -- but at least engage and be like, why is this like this?

In fact, when I had this long conversation with one of their members, towards the end, he was like, I'm really glad I spoke to you -- you've made me think of things -- I swear -- I'm thinking of things differently, I hadn't thought of this. Not that I'm saying he's ever going to come away from the ideology but surely, it's worth

having conversations with people you don't agree with. It's got to be.

Oak Journal: And obviously they've isolated themselves purposefully and even just you talking about having direct communication with them, from the perspective of the American anarchist scene that's just like (laughter) I don't even know how to characterize it. But it's like, oh my god! What the fuck! How could that happen?

And just like you're saying, they -- well part of it is Americans exotify everything -- so on top of them being lunatics and all this stuff, which undoubtedly I think they are, they're also this foreign-language speaking exotified strange evil commodity to be tossed around for internal American politics. And that part of it is super fucking stupid and, arguably, fucked. But, anyway, that's really interesting...

Jake Hanrahan: It is interesting. The unknown, the weird is interesting, so what.

Oak Journal: Here's the fucked-up thing, if you were two steps further away from radical politics. Let's say you were just some whatever reporter and you were doing this; all the anarchists would be wanting to watch it.

Jake Hanrahan: Of course.

Oak Journal: But as soon as you get a little bit closer -- then they freak. They want to stab people at the same table, that's my experience.

Jake Hanrahan: That's a great way of saying it, that is very true. But I tell you what, when the doc comes out, they're all going to watch it. (Laughter)

And they'll send me emails and I'll be like, cool, buy my merch, support Popular Front. Fuck off.

Oak Journal: Just write them: I know you had a watch party for this. (Laughter)

Jake Hanrahan: Exactly.

**Check out Jake Hanrahan's
Popular Front --
Popularfront.co**

atrocities ren hlao

i said: atrocities. i said:
someday i might love
it. love might look like
a riot or some animal
carcass rotting on the soft
floor of the forest so long
it cannot be
named. it's fine. you
will never stop
picturing the desperate faces
of your friends whimpering
at the funeral of yet
another friend, and my hair
only has so many split
ends. they say this
section of the south
was more beautiful before
the fracking and i know
that i believe it. because
the clear cuts are fenced off. i
will try again (so selfish) to
love
this shivering husk because
i know it helps
the cornfield roar back. when
i arrive home after years
of navigation there will still
be
warm tortillas
on the old sloping table—
and the floor
forced to support it.

BARBARIAN TONGUE

BY TRACE FLEEMAN Y GARCIA

Flor'l stench blown in black eyes, the pollen-thief's sweat-lodge.
Bone-charred in the ashes, marrow roasted in flame.

The hermit is a spouse, he is not alone there --
For the earth is his wife, and mother of his sons.

I put my mouth down to earth, I drink from the earth's womb.
Into union with her, I enter the Low Earth.

I see my Father Sky, he dances in wild-furs --
White and blinding as sun, he courts my Mother Night.

wilt,
by ren hlao

wilt

pestilent
rhizome.

Sheppard Pratt
and—

too many
drugs.

rehab

then graduation.

rehab

then

court.

after court.

tick and

this or that
disease.

tick and

co-infections.

forever

i will

spread wide

my

diseased
maw—

M.Y.G.

NECESSARY AND IMPORTANT

PROJECT FANG ON PRISONER SUPPORT

CONDUCTED VIA E-MAIL

Oak Journal: Project FANG describes itself as, “a much-needed attempt to fill a gap in the ongoing support work for earth and animal liberation prisoners in the United States.” Maybe we can start with the problem, can you tell us about the gap in support?

Project FANG: Sure. The project really grew out of support work that many of us were already doing – the day-to-day work of prisoner support organizing. Things like letter writing, court support, fundraising for legal fees, and more. All of these are necessary and important. But one thing we heard from prisoners over and over again was how important visits are to their mental and emotional well being. And we also heard that they weren’t getting visits, something which was alarming to us because it seems like such a simple, necessary thing. Human contact with the people we care about is so vital to our existence as a species – we don’t even need to be in prison to understand the importance of that. But, of course, being in prison amplifies this need beyond imagining because people inside are so dramatically cut off from everyone and everything they care about.

Oak Journal: How did this support gap start, or has it always been an ignored reality in contemporary prisoner support work (or lack thereof)?

Project FANG: I think the support gap has always been there, although I wouldn’t say it’s been an ignored reality. In fact, project FANG was something many people had talked about doing in one form or another for quite a while before we were finally able to make it happen. It’s just a hard problem to fix because it requires constant and substantial financial resources to do so.

And it’s not just a problem for animal and earth liberation prisoners – this is a problem for ALL prisoners. According to the prison policy institute, only 31% of prisoners have had a personal visit in the last 30 days. When we put names and faces to that statistic – our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, our children, our lovers and comrades and friends – it’s really horrifying. Imagine spending a month in a cage in a place built on a bedrock of state violence and control, where you maybe never get to go outside or see the sky or breathe fresh air. That’s awful enough. But then imagine not seeing a single friendly face the entire time.

This is how people lose hope. This is how people lose those pieces of themselves that are so essential to making us who we are. And I do want to make sure that

we keep in mind it’s not just animal and earth liberation prisoners who are struggling with this. All prisoners do. And the reason for that is that the BOP [Bureau of Prisons] is designed to cause this sort of isolation and alienation. People in the federal system are especially prone to this because, in the federal system, a person can be sent anywhere in the country, which means they often end up hundreds or even thousands of miles from the people who would give just about anything to visit them.

People who love them and care for them but simply can’t afford the cost of a plane ticket, a rental car, gas, a night in a hotel, time off of work, child care...all of the expenses that pile on whenever we try to visit people in prison. So I think it wasn’t so much a lack of understanding or desire that created the gap – I think it was just the cold hard economic realities of visiting people in prison. Each visit can cost hundreds of dollars. For most prisoner support groups – who are really just scraping to get by and keep doing the good work that they are doing – this just seemed like an insurmountable task.

Oak Journal: Maybe you could break down some specifics of what the support work looks like -- or what it could look like if project FANG had appropriate resources?

Project FANG: Right now project FANG provides financial resources for people to visit earth and animal liberation prisoners across the country. Each prisoner has the opportunity to apply for and receive funds on a quarterly basis. The funds come in a lump sum that people can use for any associated expenses – airfare, car rental, gas, hotel stays, et cetera. If there is any money left over afterwards, we ask that they donate it back to the fund, to other prisoner support endeavors, or to the person they are visiting. So far we have been lucky enough to receive an annual donation that has covered most of our expenses. But the number of people going to prison for earth and animal liberation actions is growing again...with renewed resistance to things like the Dakota Access Pipeline, we are seeing more requests for the fund.

Our concern is that our annual donation will no longer be enough to cover all of our expenses. We have also always really wanted to expand access to the fund to other kinds of prisoners. In the future that could mean people doing time from a variety of movements and struggles – not just earth and animal liberation. But we can’t do that until we have a larger, reliable and steady stream of income.

Oak Journal: Who are some prisoners that project FANG is working with or hopes to work with?

This is how people lose hope. This is how people lose those pieces of themselves that are so essential to making us who we are. And I do want to make sure that we keep in mind it's not just animal and earth liberation prisoners who are struggling with this. All prisoners do.

Project FANG: We have supported prisoners from earth and animal liberation movements, including Marius Mason, Rebecca Rubin, Justin Solondz, Tyler Lang, Nicole Kissane, Red Fawn Fallis, Rattler, and more. If we are at some point able to expand our reach and offer funds to prisoners from other movements, we would love to.

Oak Journal: A little more than a decade ago there was this incredible backlash by the federal government against earth and animal liberation struggles, perhaps epitomized by the Green Scare and the arrest of what became known as "The Family," but also with AETA and many, many other arrests and prosecutions -- these prosecutions were often characterized by former friends informing on each other and terrorism enhancements used as prosecutorial tools. How has the Green Scare, both more recently and historically, effected prisoner support work as well as contemporary arrests and prosecutions?

Project FANG: This is a big question! But yes, I do think the Green Scare really impacted the way these cases would be handled in the long term. For example, at a Congressional Hearing in 2002, James Jarboe, who was then Domestic Terrorism Section Chief of the FBI Counterterrorism Division, stated that ELF/ALF was the top priority in domestic terrorism.

He labeled people who had been engaged in what amounts to

property damage -- albeit on a large scale -- as eco-terrorists. This hearing happened only 5 months after 9/11, so I'm sure you can imagine the sort of fervor that label induced. And really what it did was up the ante on any kind of environmental action. The most obvious result was that both the federal and state governments began passing laws that increased penalties for people engaging in action for the earth and animals. But it also did something more insidious, which was that it infused these movements with a sort of palpable fear and paranoia. The threat of government surveillance, spying, agents provocateurs and informants -- all of these things were very real. And I think we did see a slow down in actions. This also meant, of course, increased resources being poured into these kinds of investigations, which meant that prosecutions were more aggressive and far reaching. What this means for contemporary arrests and prosecutions, of course, is that now we have all of these new laws on the books which criminalize all kinds of protest or dissent -- no matter how large or small -- in new and dramatic ways. Instead of being charged with misdemeanor trespassing, a person is now charged with felony trespassing and labeled a terrorist. Or a person could attend a noise demo at a prison and get arrested and charged with felony rioting. These things have real chilling effects on both the actions people take and on the kind of support work people feel empowered to do.

Oak Journal: If you're able, can you paint a picture of daily prisoner life in the United States?

Project FANG: I am certainly not the most qualified person to answer this question. And I think the tricky thing is that it can really vary from prison to prison. But what I would like to stress here is that prison, at its core, is about isolation. It's about, really, kidnapping people, putting them in cages, and using the full force of the state to keep them away from everything that matters to them. I often remember this quote, which I just happen to have with me, when I think about the kind of isolation that prisons create. It's from a book called *A Sliver of Light*, which was written by Sarah Shourd, Shane Bauer, and Josh Fattal who were held in prison in Iran for about 2 years and a significant chunk of that time was spent in solitary confinement.

This is from the preface. It reads, "Being human is relational, plain and simple. We exist in relationship to one another, to ideas, and to the world. It's the most essential thing about us as a species: how we realize our potential as individuals and create meaningful lives. Without that, we shrink. Day by day, we slowly die." So when I think about prison, and I think about our friends and loved ones and comrades who are trapped there, I am reminded of this most basic thing that they are denied every day. And what that does to a person's heart and mind. Project FANG exists to fight back against the soul crushing isolation of prison. Our hope is that the fund enables prisoners to keep these pieces of themselves that prison tries so hard to take from them -- their connections, their inspirations, their shared moments of joy and pain and intimacy with people they love. These are the things that keep us going -- those of us inside and outside of prison. People don't stop needing these things once they are inside -- in fact

they need them MORE. We want our friends and loved ones to maintain their sense of connection to their loved ones and their movements. We want them to come back to us as healthy and as whole as possible. So we can all keep fighting. Together.

Of course, prison is more than just isolation. It is also incredibly boring. Until it's not. It's very...routine. Until it's not. It's very much being alone with yourself and your thoughts and all of your fears. Until it's not. And when it's not it can be incredibly violent. Or incredibly scary. Or empty. For a lot of people prison means living in a constant state of anxiety. But I also think, sometimes, we have this idea of prisons as places where no human emotion happens. And that is also simply not true. Sometimes people can make incredibly strong, powerful connections with other folks in prison. That speaks more to the resilience and strength of the people inside, though, than to what day-to-day life is like inside a prison.

Oak Journal: How can people support project FANG and/or otherwise fill this support gap that exists with earth and animal liberation prisoners?

Project FANG: People can support project FANG by donating! We are about to finish up a fundraiser, trying to increase our annual budget. Our goal is \$10,000 and unfortunately we are falling far short. I know it's a strange time of year for people, but we really encourage folks to think about how much these visits mean to people locked inside. They really are a lifeline. At a time of year when everyone else is getting together with

friends and family, our comrades and loved ones are locked away in cages, unable to see or hear the people they love. Please donate and encourage others to do the same. You can donate by visiting fundrazr.com/project_FANG or via NYC ABC at paypal.me/nycabc (make sure to note what the donation is for).

Oak Journal: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Project FANG: I guess I would just add, please don't forget about folks doing time. Even if you can't contribute to project FANG (which of course we encourage you to do...now, tomorrow, next month, whenever you can!), you can still support prisoners. Write a letter, share their stories, and continue the struggles for which they gave up their freedom.

The best things folks can do to support project FANG is support the earth and animal liberation prisoners by writing letters and checking in with their support crews for other needs they may have. Beyond that, folks can help by donating to the travel fund. Donations are accepted through NYC ABC, so snail mail at: NYC ABC attn: project FANG/ Post Office Box 110035/ Brooklyn, New York 11211

*Below: Narrow-nosed crocodile/
Night Swim by Marius Mason.
Visit supportmariusmason.org for
information on how to support Marius,
currently serving a 22 year sentence
-- and also to see more of his fantastic
artwork.*



John Zerzan is a long-time anarchist writer, well known for developing much of the theoretical groundwork for anarcho-primitivism and critiques central to anti-civilization anarchy. His early essays questioned foundational elements of civilization such as domestication, time, division of labor, as well as symbolic culture. Zerzan is the author of several essay collections. johnzerzan.net

Bellamy Fitzpatrick is an editor at *Backwoods*, a journal for autochthonous anarchy. Fitzpatrick was previously co-host of *Free Radical Radio* and *The Brilliant*, both anarchist podcasts out of the Bay Area. Current Bellamy is co-host of *Liberty & Logos*. Bellamy is also the author of *Corrosive Consciousness*, which is a critique of anarcho-primitivism. bellamyfitzpatrick.com

**The barbarism of modern times is
still enslavement to technology.**



A CONVERSATION WITH JOHN ZERZAN AND BELLAMY FITZPATRICK

CONDUCTED VIA PHONE
AUGUST 2019

Oak Journal: I guess let's just jump right into it. We kind of started this conversation around the idea of the anarchist milieu and where that was and given that John has Anarchy Radio where he's able to kind of talk about these things on a week-to-week basis, and Bellamy coming from Free Radical Radio way back, I think it would be really interesting to hear just general takes on where we are as anarchists?

John Zerzan: Would you like to go first, Bellamy, on that?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I'm from Ohio so I think it would be almost morally impossible for me to go first in a situation like this so you can go ahead.

John Zerzan: Okay. Well, the milieu, I think you're right, Steve, to throw in Anarchy Radio because I kick this around -- more or less as a constant I suppose. I would say that if we're under the sign of nihilism and egoism the so-called milieu has just about nothing to offer. In large part it doesn't try to offer anything because part of the -- part of the thing there is, there's such a widespread feeling that nothing can be done, there can be no transformation, no prospects at all for overturning the nightmare. So, what follows from that is going to be kind of limited -- going to be kind of uninteresting, at least to me. And if we think about being anti-authoritarian, or anarchists, to me that includes, primarily, what do we have to offer. What are we sharing with people? How are we helping people understand things and conceivably go forward? If you

don't have that thing in mind then, well, where are you at?

And I think in general, and I guess I dote on this maybe all too much, this is a post-modern culture. And, right away, that's so disarming or debilitating in my view. In other words, for example, if you don't believe there's any stable truth or meaning, and maybe not any outside, actual world, then -- again, you're kind of crippled. You kind of go nowhere because you don't believe you can go anywhere or should go anywhere. Or the -- and this maybe -- I hope this is a little out of date, I have some idea that it is in terms of the post-modern culture -- the idea of overview. The idea that the totality is totalitarian. To try and get a grasp of what's going on in general is bad, you don't do that. You throw that out.

So, I think that's coming back. I was just reading today in *The World Interior of Capital* by Peter Sloterdijk he starts right out, the first page he's saying, I have a grand narrative, I have an overview and I'm going to give it to you. I haven't gotten into it that much but he's not shrinking from that, he hasn't been scared away by the -- by Lyotard and all the others who announced the very end of metanarratives or overview.

So, anyway, in general, in terms of the milieu, I just think it's in sorry shape and hardly makes an effort.

Oak Journal: Bellamy, would you like to talk about that a little bit.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure, so I

agree with a good deal of what John said. I would say that there is a certain tendency towards defeatism and that that is harmful and there's no need to really to sign on to that philosophically. But, going alongside it is a different tendency that I think we see represented by those who are more open to engaging in kind of big-tent activism and that that carries its own set of problems that are separate from the ones John outlined.

And I should bracket all of this by saying, you know, I live rurally now. I obviously used to live in the Bay Area and was very much in and of the subculture. But I didn't come to anarchism through the subculture or the milieu, I came to it through philosophy and I -- in certain ways I kind of have one foot outside of the subculture now. So, my comments are indexed to what I saw when I was in the Bay Area, what I've seen in New York City when I'm there, my time that I've traveled to different urban and rural locations with anarchist activity over the past several years. And, of course, what I see through media whether in print or through the internet. So that's my vantage point, that's where these comments are coming from.

When I talk about this big-tent activism, something I've been disappointed by, predictably, is the way that, in the past few years, anarchists seem to have been very much led by the mass media. And part of that is this big reaction to Trump, as if he's some kind of paradigm shift, which I really think he's not in any significant way. And you see that anarchists have, for instance, taken up this immigration/deportation issue, it's become this major hot point of anarchist activism even though deportation rates were higher under Obama than they have been under Trump, even allowing for the fact that Trump hasn't had as much time. The activism around the

detention centers, these detention centers have existed for a long time, they pre-dated Trump. And yet you see people acting as if from this place that everything has changed now and, therefore, our priorities need to be changed. And that's just disheartening because it tells me that there's a lack of sober analysis and that anarchists are, in North America, being very easily led by current events, the sort of topic of the moment.

And if someone wants to say, no, I'm doing this for principled reasons and it doesn't have to do with Trump, that's fine, good for you. I'm not seeing that these are necessarily bad struggles to be engaged in. What I'm concerned by is what seems to be the proximate cause for them. Which is this being very led by the media narrative, being very led by this 24-hour news cycle, which I think -- it's easy to get sucked in by if you don't really step back from that.

And, of course, going along with that is the way that -- I was talking to someone last week from the, this Inhabit project. Capital I. And he was saying it's as if anarchism in North America has become Antifa, so much of the energy has been taken up by that. And, in the some way, it seems like something where people are very led by the media that the alt-right is the thing we should be so concerned with and they get lots of media attention, therefore they become a hot point for anarchists, even though really their power is very limited. And it becomes vanishingly small when you consider it in comparison to just the everyday commodity life, the assault on the living world, the meaninglessness that John was referring to -- the kind of disbelief in any kind of truth or meaning or value.

These issues to me are far bigger. And if anarchists are going to be significant in this world, I think they need to really have principles and an analysis that they can come back to and act from -- that doesn't just get swept aside by whatever the new issue of the 15 minutes is. And I feel like I'm going on too long, so I'll just cut it there.

Oak Journal: No, I think it's fine. I just thought it was interesting that you kind of immediately went to the leftist anarchism -- and I think for good reason, it's obvious that there's quite a bit of momentum there, even if it is tied to this 24-hour news cycle, I think you're on to something there. But it also occurs to me that that is also somewhat cyclical of Republican administrations and sort of leftist campaigning in general. It seems pretty perennial. It's something we should be used to by now. And it is somewhat disheartening to see some anarchists take on this more traditional, RCP-type tactic of straight up co-opting causes and trying to use it for propaganda. I guess there's a door there but I'm not sure.

But, John, I thought it was interesting that you didn't

mention that? Did you want to comment there?

John Zerzan: Well I couldn't agree with Bellamy more, I think this whole Antifa thing is lowest-common-denominator leftism and in order to rule out everything else they have to inflate the global neo-fascist wave that's sweeping over everything.

Whereas, it is very minimal I think, I mean that could change I guess, but I don't see -- plus, as you both were saying I think, if there wasn't any neo-Nazi or neo-fascist thing how would anything else change? I mean I'm not brushing under the carpet the whole thing about racism or anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry but if you make that your whole world you are crowding everything out. You're blocking out all these other questions.

You know, I would like to say something, Bellamy referred to this in passing, this being led by the media. I guess, to some extent, I'm led by the media in the sense that -- and you can't conflate the two -- but I would say I'm led by reality, such as the mass shootings that are happening every day. And just an hour ago I was searching the web a little bit here: Suicide rate up 33 percent over the past 20 years, since 1999. I mean, these are things, and I got it from the media I guess is what I'm saying. But there's all too many anarchists, they've got their analysis of their position, but they don't seem to have a clue about the outside world, they don't even know. I hardly ever see it referred to in what we -- I guess the more well-known anarchist sites or what have you. I don't even see it.

So, what relevance do we have if we don't even know what the fuck is going on? I think the enormity of this should make us even more willing, or ardent even, to try to say, well, what do we have to offer? Do we have any inspiration or analysis or anything? Or are we just going to -- I'm a nihilist, I'm an egoist. Who the fuck cares?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Right, I hope it would be clear from what I said, I'm not suggesting that people stop paying attention to the events of the world..

John Zerzan: Oh, no.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: ... I'm suggesting that they be careful and realize that the framing, what gets talked about, how things are...

Oak Journal: How they're placed in the media?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yes.

John Zerzan: Sure, yes, understood.

Oak Journal: I think that's a really interesting point

to come back to. Something you both touched on is this -- sort of the obviousness of the crisis on a deep interpersonal and community level that seems to be kind of in front of everybody's faces -- the suicide statistics, the mass shootings. And the denial of that situation, to me, seems no better highlighted than in the coverage of the mass shootings where they become 100 percent co-opted and you can see the media narrative is taking off on its own. Have you both felt that way?

John Zerzan: Yeah, that's why we need to step in and -- what is society? What kind of society is it that you get every pathology now -- that you might have not even dreamed of just a few years ago and they're just all over the map. I mean, do we have something to offer there? We better. I think we do. It goes down to fundamental things in terms of mass society, domestication, all the rest of that. You don't hear very much of that in the milieu either although I think it's making its way, some I would say deeper critique that's fueled by something. Fueled by the massive negativity for one thing. Things are just getting desperate. On every single level. I see friends just being chewed up by it.

I've been, for months now, I've been spending a lot of time with a very close friend who's very suicidal. And I just see more people -- that's anecdotal obviously -- but I just think it's getting so scary. It's just -- are we doing something? Or are we just in our little niche or our little clique. Or, anyway...

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I guess, I essentially agree with what John said but I guess I would -- at this moment maybe it's interesting to ask, if you were to try to give people who are hearing that message a few points of action I'm curious what those would be for you, John?

John Zerzan: Of course, my focus is writing, public questioning, the critique.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure.

John Zerzan: And how to try to do that while being aware of the traps of the media and the spectacle, in a context where we're not given much room or platform to connect with people. And you know sometimes that takes the action and if nothing is happening of



course it's all the harder to be heard. Just one example, some group, ALF group for example, burns down a McDonald's and they have a communique explaining why -- you might get to read that communique because they burned down a McDonald's and it was in the news. Again, it's a media thing I suppose.

But I don't know. I mean, we don't know what to do, I don't know what to do. I'd like to have a riot every day or something (laughter) but it's usually not on offer, it hasn't been on offer for a while now so that's tough.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure.

Oak Journal: What -- I guess, in the same vein, would you have something that you would propose, you know to present to somebody?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I guess this is sort of apropos our earlier topic. Lately I've been thinking about the -- trying to reflect critically on the media efforts I've done and what's felt successful and what hasn't and I've come around to thinking that the milieu is -- I mean,

this is a perennial criticism like the ones I raised earlier -- but that it's small and it's fairly insular. And I've been toying with the idea of trying to reach a broader audience and thinking about what -- rather than taking it to what John was saying, the kind of lowest common denominator left-wing issues, but rather as a way to appeal to discontent that might be felt across the political compass or however you define it. And what...

John Zerzan: I wonder if I could ask you, Bellamy, vis a vis Backwoods -- I'm really impressed by it and I have a feeling that that is -- are you getting good connections from that? Is something going on with that?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I mean I would say it's reaching a different audience than the podcast projects I've done before and I think that is a positive step. But I've actually been thinking, okay, what's an even kind of broader point of tension that doesn't end up shallow. And I've come to feeling that the point of tension right now, globally, are related to the technology issue, the mass society issue -- understood as the death of community, the death of feeling tied to any group of people, any particular place -- and globalization.

And so I've lately come to think that if anarchists, understood in the really robust sense of anarchists that I think the three of us share, that those should be our major points and that, perhaps, then, the points of action would be radical decentralization, pan-secession, Luddism of some form and that perhaps those could have purchase around the political compass. Not just anarchists but people on various parts of the green spectrum, maybe some form of small communitarian socialists, certain types of conservatives and libertarians, people with certain traditional religious beliefs and I think that maybe there could be a kind of meeting point of the myriad marginal tendencies around those issues. If we agree that, yes, global society is bad, high tech is harming us, we all want community -- and maybe we totally disagree about what that looks like -- what our ideal would be -- but we agree that this is not appropriate and if we could form smaller, insular communities that that might be a common starting point.

And I realize that might sound heretical to certain types of anarchists who say, oh how could you countenance some of those people -- and it's like, well, things are looking really, really bad and we need to have a broader appeal than what we do right now. We can't just be talking to ourselves.

Oak Journal: I would agree. Interestingly, you would probably have critiques from a couple different angles there. One with your inclusion of people and then the second with what sounds like possibly a program of political reform in I think -- it would be interesting

thing to see what the response is, and it will be interesting to see what the response is there...

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I'm not sure I followed your comment there...

Oak Journal: Well this idea of laying out a practical political strategy that could coalesce into these sorts of movements of succession or subsistence -- that it would be purposeful and political across a large area or globally.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: To be clear, I don't mean to try and lay out a political program so much as, insofar as I'm going to participate in media and disseminate ideas, I personally feel like this is maybe the point that has some potential and it's not that I would try and bring everyone together in some kind of pan-secessionist party or something like that...

Oak Journal: Right.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Rather, try and disseminate this sort of separatist, decentralist ideas and say like, look, we all have things that we don't like about the way things are now and what is really tying that together? It's the mass technological infrastructure. It's the idea of these global or very large societies and none of us are going to get what we want as long as those things continue.

Oak Journal: Yes. Thanks for the clarification. I just thought in the way that you were speaking about it, not that was necessarily that was your intention but that would be a possible critique of the way it was laid out.

John Zerzan: Good to focus on that. I totally agree, we shouldn't be afraid to be open and reach out. I mean, there are practical needs if we're going to get anywhere and that's -- what Bellamy said, these are the high points, these are the key things. And so that stuff has to be present. To try and connect with people so we're not just talking to each other and as things worsen I think there's a good likelihood that people -- I mean on one level I think it's kind of obvious, that people have soured. I mean you can't find anyone to defend anything, but the thing goes on because of inertia, and other reasons.

But it's not like we're going to be running up against people that are just going to rush out and, like Pinker [Steven Pinker], defend civilization and everything is wonderful. (Laughter)

It's just so ludicrous, it's so preposterous that anyone would, well, try and fail so grandly. It's just like a case in point. I mean, list all the things that are stupid in defense. You and Chomsky and these others -- it won't

work it's not happening.

Oak Journal: Yeah, 600 graphs don't make your civilized life any better. (Laughter)

And then the whole issue of him with Epstein too, it just seems like what a cruel revealing of this fraud.

John Zerzan: Yeah.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Wait, you're saying Pinker had connections to Epstein?

Oak Journal: Yes.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Oh, wow.

John Zerzan: Delicious. (Laughter) So, it's good that this is exposed. You can more easily connect the dots. This is what this whole racket is about -- or that's part of it -- the corruption itself isn't all of it. But you know the whole damn thing is rotten and it's hurting everybody. Every species.

Oak Journal: Yeah.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah.

Oak Journal: It kind of gets me into this thing of possibility in general. And that's something we're really interested in. Not so much in the -- I guess I hadn't considered it as much, and I need to, consider it a little bit more in the way that you were framing it, Bellamy. But the way that it's sort of presented in Backwoods and I think it's a common thread through a lot of anarcho-primitivist writing, this possibility that -- whether that's there's this wild human for you to become or there's these openings to have subsistence, however you want to frame. To me it feels as though there's a ton of possibility as we have this sort of fever-pitch political climate -- that despite everything, despite the news coverage and all that, there's a lot of people who are engaged and are willing to listen to a lot of different things and I wondered what you thought about that.

John Zerzan: Well I've seen quite cracks of the armor, I guess, not much, but more than I used to. I got on public radio, what, about a year ago I guess it was to talk about *A People's History of Civilization*. And I recall, like 20 years ago, there was this woman from Australia did a very fine film about forest defense and she had the cops in there, the timber guys, timber CEO and everything -- it had the 'balance' that's usually very necessary (laughter). So, she took it to public broadcasting here in Oregon and, man, she practically got arrested.

Oak Journal: Oh, wow.

John Zerzan: They practically treated her like she was some terrorists. So, I just thought, those fucking liberals, it's going to be a cold day in hell when they're open to anything. And then, I get an invitation to have a half-an-hour on the talk show and I thought it was a joke at first. I just thought, yeah, sure. But the guy was totally interested.

So, I mean, maybe that doesn't mean much of anything, but I see some small signs that there will be maybe more of a chance to have a voice, to be a little more accessible. But, then again, we get into the whole question of media...

Oak Journal: Right.

John Zerzan: (Laughter) ... which can be tricky. I've been called a 'media slut' and I sort of agree.

(Group laughter)

John Zerzan: I agree with -- people I respect, they think you should never do that, you should never talk to media. Well, I disagree.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: This is a safe pace for sluts right here, so. (Laughter)

John Zerzan: Yeah, that's a whole interesting topic in itself, how you navigate that, or don't you navigate that or what?

Oak Journal: Any thoughts on this, Bellamy, want to join in?

If we agree that, yes, global society is bad, high tech is harming us, we all want community -- and maybe we totally disagree about what that looks like, what our ideal would be, but we agree that this is not appropriate and if we could form smaller, insular communities that that might be a common starting point. - BF

...it's easy to categorically reject certain things but face it. Here we are. In this very real situation. So, if we're talking about some kind of transition or some kind of process away from this well, if we are, then there must be actual steps... -JZ

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Just thoughts on possibility broadly or...

Oak Journal: Or specifically as it's laid out in -- I mean, I guess there's kind of these -- in permaculture -- and I have a lot of experience with people who are interested in permaculture out here or who are practicing it and in that experience it seems to me that they're very open to a critique of civilization but their default critique has been one that's been presented in permaculture books, which seems pretty limited and pretty anthropocentric in a lot of ways.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure.

Oak Journal: I wonder though, just that vast interest, is there a possibility to pull on these strings that you were talking about earlier: mass society, the technological deprivation of literally everyone who's existing in modern life -- can we pull at those strings to sort of creating something that's more vibrant and more anarchistic in the realm of what we were talking about in the beginning?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I do see some positive signs in spite of all the negativity. Those have to do with the fact there is a lot of

discontent and perhaps the would-be masters of the universe have pushed too fast with some of what they want, like the high-tech phenomenon, the globalization. And you see a lot of pushback from that, again, across the political spectrum, including from some of those we may not like for various reasons -- but, still, the discontent is there. I mean the confidence in public institutions in the United States is very low right now, if you get these sort of polls of -- questions like: Do you feel like your representatives reflect your interests or hear your concerns? I mean, you see again and again from polls that are asking those kind of questions broadly that people feel very negatively about those sorts of things. And then these sorts of psychological issues that John often talks about are so in your face, whether it's the hikikomori phenomenon or the suicide phenomenon.

So, there is a feeling I have sometimes that -- I'm not an accelerationist, I don't like those ways of thinking -- but sometimes I feel like the elite are pushing so hard that there is going to be a backlash. I mean, Laura Drake [Editor's Note: See Oak's interview with West Northwest in this issue for more on this topic], for instance, with whom I've been speaking, who John had on his show just a month or two ago -- I don't recall exactly when -- she reads a lot of the internal media of the tech people and they're very concerned about a backlash. So that, in itself, is a good sign.

And, again, I guess, this is just me having my new idea of the moment but the idea of a certain meeting point across various malcontents on these issues of technology, mass society. I think there is some kind of possibility if we're willing to think -- to really focus on this issue of radical decentralization.

And I guess, I'm going on a tangent but just bear with me, that's something else that I have a real problem with the North American anarchist milieu, is many of them seem to really want a globalized society. And they imagine that they can push these sorts of -- you know, the woke morality on the entire world. And that would be stifling and impossible and totally authoritarian if it were ever to be carried out in any meaningful way. And so, I think we need to absolutely abandon the idea of a global society that's going to reflect our particular set of values. I think it's fundamentally non-anarchist and absolutely dangerous way of thinking, that's the kind of thinking that led to these awful communist revolutions that we've seen play out time and time again.

I feel like I got away from your question.

Oak Journal: Yes, but I think it came into an interesting one there, which is the sort of -- and I don't think you mentioned it in your kind of litany of things that you were talking about that could starting points for people to become engaged with the critique, is that -- this rejection of this leftist paradigm, which I think you both...

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Rejection of the world-society paradigm. We have to get away from the world-society paradigm.

Oak Journal: John, would you put that in similar terms you think?

John Zerzan: Well, yes, I think so. The emphasis on the radical decentralization I completely endorse that. So, it's a matter of particularity and getting your hands dirty. For one thing I've noticed this, as obvious as it is, if you seriously want to get rid of civilization you better be ready to live without it. The plane is going straight down but you don't jump out of

the window even though you're going to be dead in a few seconds if you just sit there. I mean, I don't know, I respect the practical effort, working on these things. That's part of it too, very obviously I think...

Oak Journal: Yeah, we're not going to get very far if we can't figure out subsistence on a basic level.

John Zerzan: So, you know it's easy to categorically reject certain things but -- face it. Here we are. In this very real situation. So, if we're talking about some kind of transition or some kind of process away from this well, if we are, then there must be actual steps and what parts would make up that possibility.

There's another emphasis, at least fairly recently, of yours, Bellamy, very intrigued by. When I read the pan-psychism essay in *Backwoods* No. 2 and the whole question of the relationship of spirituality of the 'political' -- very intriguing. And, also, and not just to throw out a whole welter of questions all at once, but one other one would be the -- where is the practical connection there? We've been talking a little bit about real moves and possibilities among other people. Anyway, I was just very, very intrigued by the piece and wonder if that ties in at all with the other emphasis of trying to reach out and do something, some actual moves in the world?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I think it does. I think maybe if I were to amend the list of things I gave before of radical decentralization, critique of industrial technology and whatnot as potential meeting points for people from a wide array of political and philosophical stances I guess the other one to throw in there would be something like a return to a true spiritual way of being.

And I -- the biggest shift in my views, probably that I've ever had, was probably about a year-and-a-half to two years ago where I realized that I was just really wrong about the spiritual question and -- it would take a long time to explain but suffice it to say I do think now that there's a kind of *sophia perennis* or core human spirituality and I think it's expressed itself in various way at various times that you can sort of -- you can see the common threads among a wide variety of human expression. And this is not a new idea. I mean this is -- you can see it in the capital-T Traditionalists or people like Aldous Huxley or other figures have pointed this out.

And I basically think it's true. And I think it is something that we need to come back to if we are to really be liberated. And I think our lives do have objective inherent meaning and there is a capital-T Truth and a capital-G Good and all these sorts of things that I formerly was very averse to.

And I think my reasons for being averse to it were not ill conceived, but I've had a shift. And that piece that you're referring to, John, I'm going to keep developing that and I've had some new thoughts since I wrote it and so that's going to keep being developed in future media projects of mine. But I think that is, again, an essential thing for us to be pushing that I think could allow anarchists to reach out to people who normally might be deaf to their appeals.

And I think it's a real mistake that there's this strong atheist streak -- not absolute by any means -- but strong in anarchism that anarchists have kind of inherited from Marxism and I think it's really just a historical accident because of the things that were going on in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, that basically to be a free-thinking intellectual you had to be an atheist because the church was seen so much as this instrument of authority. And that's all fine and well but there's no reason to be this hardcore atheist materialist, scientific person. Because if you take that point of view seriously, the atheist materialists scientific view, if you really take it on it means your life is meaningless, there's no such thing as good or beautiful or freewill -- and everything in the universe came out of nowhere by a complete accident, it's going nowhere and it's just a bunch of billiard balls colliding together and everything that you think your life means is just a hallucination created by your brain. And I think that's not only an awful way to feel about your life but there's no good reason to believe it philosophically.

And I think it completely dovetails with the sort of post-modern stuff that John was talking about earlier.

Oak Journal: Yeah, most definitely.

John Zerzan: Yeah, I remember my own sort of -- well, not putting words in your mouth -- but sort of awakening. I think it was in Turkey I gave a talk and afterwards this young woman said to me, I think this whole green anarchy thing is, at base, a spiritual movement. And I was just gob smacked. Wow, I never thought of that. And then unfortunately she had to take a bus because I wanted to -- I tried to ask, what do you mean by that? What's going on there?

But she had to leave. But, anyway, it opened me up more -- or, opened me up period to that and I think she was thinking about -- whether you're talking about wholeness or communion with the earth and that sort of thing. How is that not spiritual? How is that not connected to -- and this is my word -- but, you know, in terms of authenticity and the spirit.

I mean, well, it is. And I was glad to hear it. It was just an eyeopener. Okay, we don't have to be against it. We don't have to have this wooden materialism, kind of

19th century like you were referring to, Bellamy. That doesn't go anywhere.

It doesn't appeal to anyone, especially now when our very souls, if you want to put it that way, are just being hammered. And we're in just such an attenuated place. Not to mention the suicides or the drug use and just so many countless things. Man, maybe we've never needed something like that more. Not to reify it but you know what I mean, more awareness of that. What's going on? Where are we? What are we supposed to be doing here?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Right, if I can press you a little bit on that, John. I mean, when someone reads your writings it's obviously a plea for a kind of objective value, objective meaning to life, a desire for a closeness to nature. And I guess I just wonder, where does that come from? In the sense, do you want to say that nature is alive, that it's sentient in some way or that there is a transcendental dimension to things? And I realize I'm putting you on the spot so if you want to say let's table that for now -- but I am curious.

John Zerzan: Well, I like that. And you know reading your piece in *Backwoods* made me think all the more about that. I mean, because it doesn't -- I'll just throw this out, speaking of Gaia or an instance of that, you know, James Lovelock -- well, the guy is in favor of geoengineering and nukes. (Laughter)

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I know.

John Zerzan: So, he doesn't seem to -- I mean what is he taking from that. That doesn't make sense to me. But I do think there is -- and I don't mean to dismiss it because of his limitations, I don't mean that -- but I mean, rather, it does make sense to me and I certainly don't reject that, that concept or that vision. It sounds pretty cool. Yeah, there's more thinking, I'd like to kind of get down with that more.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure. Yeah, he's a real disappointment, actually, he's also a huge advocate of nuclear power.

John Zerzan: Right, right.

Oak Journal: And I wonder how this would normally be experienced locally. In anthropology they would normally talk about it in sort of animistic terms. But it seems on a local experience -- and I'll just go off here and maybe it won't work -- but there's a great book called *Soul Hunters* by Rane Willerslev in which he explores this Siberian hunting culture and how they have interacted with their local land and the animals and this very complex -- there's really no species in their worldview, they're all interconnecting and interrelating, especially in a complex dream world. And I wonder how -- it always occurs to me that those sort of dreams, where you're walking the land and you're exploring and coming upon an animal that you will then hunt, that that only happens when you're in a very localized world, when you're experiencing the land over and over again in a very immediate way that's also not geographically related to how we see land in civilization. So that did occur to me when I was reading "What Does the World Desire?"

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I think to have any authentic spirituality you have to be spaced in a certain -- I was going to say bioregion but even more local than that. And you need to have a real kinship community and -- but I also don't think that acknowledging that means that we should then take this attitude of despair and say, okay, well, I'm too fucked up and I'm too broken to connect with any of that. No, the connection is possible all the time because you are at all times within the world-soul, you can't actually be disconnected from it, you

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can only sort of block it out and disassociate yourself from it. But that potential for connection, I think, is possible all the time. And I think it should guide us.

John Zerzan: Yeah.

Oak Journal: Yeah, I think that sort of brings it in to this idea -- and that's also what I took a lot from that piece was this sort of hope in there. And I just wanted to read, you end the piece and I'm going to skip around between a couple of sentences but you say: "We must each live this virtuous way as best we can, always patiently moving closer to it, and speak of it as truly as we can, reaching whomever will listen." And then you close with: "Our great and terrible task is to revive it once again, first in ourselves and then in others."

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: That's pretty good. (Laughter)

Oak Journal: I thought it was quite good and it had quite a lot of hope, I think, embedded in the tone of that.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I suppose my views on a lot of things have changed, like I said, and I suppose I think now that it's so important to act from where we are each day and try to push toward the good and that an attitude of trying to say, oh, well what difference does it really make in the broad scheme of things or I'm just going to die is just completely the wrong way to think about things because the reality of our spiritual relationship to the world is such that that struggle, that kind of pushing against what we see as negative, is inherently meaningful and inherently positive even if it feels like a drop in a bucket. So, I just have no -- I don't want to countenance at all these kinds of -- this kind of defeatism. I just think that the attitude that leads to defeatism is fundamentally wielding the wrong metric in the first place.

Oak Journal: Great. Yeah.

John Zerzan: I agree, why should we slam the door on possibility, that doesn't make sense to me. Maybe we'll lose. Maybe we'll never get anywhere. But, man, you've got to try. And I think that's, to refer to Adorno, the need in thinking. And not just thinking. The need. The need to be part of it and realize that we're a part of it.

Oak Journal: Any other topics people want to bring up?

[Editor's Note: We decide to discuss veganism]

Oak Journal: I don't really see where this narrative gets us. And I don't see how you can possibly draw these species lines across the world into what foods to consume and not to consumer. I mean, what are we even considering vegan, if we go back 6 million years,

we have insect consumption. So, it seems very sticky.

John Zerzan: Yeah, but it is a strong thing. It has a strong appeal. And as much as I think Ria [Ria Montana], for example, her ideas on pre-history are just dreamed up -- but I do have strong respect for her, I really do, and I don't want to...

Oak Journal: Yeah, I like her quite a bit.

John Zerzan: But this whole veganism thing, I guess we could spend a lot of time sorting it out, the appeal, whether it's factual or not and all the rest of it.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I have full respect for Ria, she's always engaged with me in a very good faith way, a very warm way. I appreciate all of that. I think her heart is in the right place. I guess, both of you have seen the engagement I had with Layla [Layla AbdelRahim] where I just felt like when the question of veganism got down to nuts-and-bolts there was just no defense of it, no explanation. And I don't see how a vegan could survive outside of technological infrastructure that provides for their food needs. I've thought about whether it would be possible to do it where I am, and I just come back again and again to -- it would be very difficult, require close management of large areas of land and, still, even then, lead to a diet of dubious healthful value. I mean can anyone name any traditional society or indigenous group that subsisted that way? I see that Ria tries to claim that Neanderthals did...

Oak Journal: Yeah, she throws out an archaeological find with low meat consumption...

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Okay, so low meat consumption...

Oak Journal: That's my understanding of the paper and I should say I have not read it. But that is my understanding of the paper as it's been characterized to me by others.

[Editor's Note: I have read it now. The study in question is: "Neanderthal behaviour, diet, and disease inferred from ancient DNA in dental calculus". The study shows high meat consumption among one group of Neanderthals and a varied fungi/plant diet with no evidence for meat consumption in the other. In other words, the cohorts of the study showed highly varied diets. Other studies of Neanderthal diet have showed cohorts of almost exclusive meat eating. This genetic dental calculus study may also provide evidence for self-medicating with plants and fungi. However, the study did not show Neanderthals were broadly vegetarians and was characterized thusly by the authors: "...our first genetic description of their diet supports evidence that Neanderthal groups across Europe used multiple subsistence strategies according to location and food

availability.”]

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Low meat consumption is not no meat consumption, right?

John Zerzan: No. You can find various people in the ethnography, the ethnology, that didn't eat a lot of meat. But what does that have to do with anything?

Oak Journal: Well it's very different across the world but you get like honey-hunters in South East Asia probably have some of the highest non-meat or plant consumption or honey consumption -- whether we want to consider honey a vegan product or not, we can table that -- but then you have this huge ethnographic problem where anthropologists were categorizing all small animals as gathered because they were done by women and children. So you have this, even in the best-case scenario, and I know she's [Ria Montana] familiar with these examples because she does cite *Us, Relatives* by Bird-David who has done a lot of work in the area -- but, anyway, I don't see any but maybe I'm putting my predatory blinders on.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Right!

John Zerzan: I haven't seen any.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I think the whole vegan phenomenon is, to me, fairly obviously derivative of

modern liberal values and trying to extend the human-rights paradigm to non-human animals and it's just a way of thinking that is part and parcel of kind of modern, utilitarian, rationally-managed society and saying, okay, well, how do we mathematically lower suffering? Or, alternatively, how do we give this sort of universal moral rights to more and more creatures. And those might be coming from places of good intentions within the kind of Leviathanic way of thinking, but they don't get outside of it.

John Zerzan: Right, and you wouldn't really think that she would be prey to that, if I can put it that way, all this sort of anthropocentric stuff. And you end up having to rule out so much to maintain your world view, the vegan world view. Fire is no good. Of course, hunting is no good. Anyway, rife with stuff and -- maybe further dialogue will, maybe there'll be further changes.

Oak Journal: Yeah, I think at this point it may need to be discussed at some length because there is quite a bit of interest in it. And I thought the interview with Layla was really good and kind of revealing in how the argument sort of hit a dead end there. I thought quite obviously. You pointed it out in your closing, but it seemed obvious reading it that it just fell apart. So, I hope people do engage in that.

So, we've talked about two things from *Backwoods 2*, "What Does the World Desire?" and the interview with Layla AbdelRahim, if people are interested.



Bellamy Fitzpatrick: This is just a commercial. (Laughter)

Oak Journal: This is just a commercial.

John Zerzan: You paid us nicely to publicize it, by the way. (Laughter)

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah.

Oak Journal: So, you can get your pan-secessionist party off the ground. (Laughter)

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Right.

One last comment on the vegan thing, which is, it seems like anyone entertaining that would have to say that we would all have to live in an equatorial or close to equatorial climate and, therefore, basically human migration out of that region was some kind of mistake itself. Which, that's quite a line to draw. It's not incoherent necessarily but it's quite a position.

Oak Journal: I think that there has been some anthropological argumentation in that vein, the migration out of Africa, that conquering species and stuff.

Well, veganism, there we go. (Laughter)

As a former vegan it feels like so much cognitive dissonance, all these ideas of veganism that are basically embedded in the writings of Layla and Ria, I think, to a large extent, are these things that I felt like I really had to try and get over at points in my life because they felt so limiting and so inherently civilized. So that's my biggest takeaway.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, I was vegan for 7 years and it's an orientation that's kind of based around hating power, hating power in yourself and being unwilling to countenance your exercising of power because you're sort of withdrawing into this hyper-pacifistic way of being -- like, I just don't want to do harm, I just don't want to do harm. And that's -- you don't see that in the natural world around you.

Oak Journal: Yeah, and how do you even -- and then it becomes an issue of quantification like you said earlier.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure.

Oak Journal: You've got to be able to add it up or else it really doesn't make any sense.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Right, and then you're back in the modern, utilitarian, moral calculus way of looking at things.

John Zerzan: Well, there's so many topics. I guess you're trying to wrap this up, Steve. I was thinking of the moralism charge and the relationship to values. How one really gets away with calling people moralists if they object to anything. Anyway, it's fascinating to me and I think there's some interesting points on that. But I realize that's a whole other...

Oak Journal: Well, we can take 5 minutes if you want to talk about that. It's fine by me.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure.

John Zerzan: Well, that's my question, let's put it that way -- I mean there's so much to say on it, I realize, but some people who go that way pretend there are no values, whereas I think almost everything connects to values. You may try to deny it. So, does that mean you're not a moralist too?

Anyway, the whole thing -- it's also, and not to make this even more of a vague thing, but the whole question

of ideological contamination or you're an ideologue. That's been thrown at, for example, primitivists. Well, he's just an ideologue -- as if their own set of ideas is not as ideological if not more ideological and we don't even know what that actually means. Anyway, all that. I don't know how relevant that is, but it sure intrigues me. And I can think of very recent places this has come up.

For example, if you object to the idea of adults having sex with kids, well what are you? You're some kind of moralizer, you're a moralist, you're a Catholic, you're the Pope -- commanding this or that. Well, no, I'm not. But I don't accept that. I just think there's various reasons to really rule it out. But you can't -- so, in other words, I'm saying, I don't think you get away with just dismissing with the charge of moralist -- then you don't have any values, you're not making these choices which I think are inherently evaluative. Anyway, that whole thing is kind of bugging me. I find it interesting, the ins and outs of that stuff.

Oak Journal: Care to comment, Bellamy?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, sure. Well I have come around to being a moral realist, I think there really are -- there really is such a thing as the objective good and true and beautiful and all those sorts of things. And I think part of this -- and this is going to sound hopelessly nerdy or something, but I think it's true -- is that I don't think a lot of anarchists in North America at the present moment have really developed a kind of robust ethical theory. And I think that's something that we should do. And I think it's a way for us to communicate with the broader world of people like I was saying before. And it's something I'm going to try to do in my future projects.

And so, I think there's this anarchist way of being that is undeveloped and in some ways sort of adolescent, okay, I'm against everything: I'm against the society and state and capitalism and, therefore, I'm against morality too. And I think what a lot of people really mean is they're against the dominant morality.

And I think what a lot of people are maybe trying to get at is, well I'm very libertarian and I think people should have as much freedom as possible and we shouldn't be imposing certain ways of being on others. And there's a dimension of that that you can take seriously and is positive to a certain degree and that's where, again, I come back to the radical decentralization. So, I would say the charge of moralism, or being ideological, is mostly meaningful when it's directed at this orientation that wants to take over the entire world and impose a certain way of being on everyone. Like I said before, it seems like some anarchists imagine that they're going to impose woke morality on the entire planet and then everyone is going to be happy and I think it's a terrible,

ludicrous, hysterical fantasy.

To be an anarchist is to make a moral assertion about how we ought to be and I think we should own that and develop it in a coherent way.

In reference to the pedophilia thing, I assume you're talking about the recent thing where Wolfi [Wolfi Landstreicher] wrote this essay and it boiled up in this latest anarcho-drama, kerfuffle. I fully agree that, as anarchists, we should be against pedophilia and I don't think that Wolfi actually endorses it.

John Zerzan: Okay, good.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: As a friend of Wolfi I feel the need to point that out.

John Zerzan: Yeah, right, good. I mean, I've known Wolfi since 1980, he's certainly no enemy. We go way back. We certainly disagree on a few things, but I consider him a friend too.

I'm not after Wolfi, it was just an example to some degree and to some degree not. Whether he -- I guess he chose not to comment on what he was getting at more precisely, if that would be useful.

But some of these things, you know, everybody sees these things differently. I guess that's obvious enough. But the ITS thing is another case, just to bring in specifics. Individualists Tending Toward the Wild [Editor's note: Also translated Individualists Tending Toward Savagery] and, apparently, I just heard this a couple of days ago, they arrested somebody in Chile who is apparently an ITS person who set off a bomb that injured a postal worker I guess.

I just want to say, I find it just horrific that that's, to some people: well, what's wrong with murdering innocent passersby? I mean, Jesus, have we gone that far down the trail of post-modernism that we can't -- to me that's just astounding. And that's why -- and this doesn't have to be in the interview I guess -- but I have zero respect for people like Aragorn! [Aragorn! of Little Black Cart who recently passed away February 2020, about six months after this interview]. I have a lot of respect for people that, maybe, in a lot of ways, disagree with more. But I just don't see how you pull that up. Oh, it's an interesting source of anarchist ideas? Really? Are you fucking kidding me?

And there was blow-back on that, of different kinds, I guess. But when you become a cynical post-modernist to that degree any-fucking-thing goes. And I just find that horrendous, frankly, and I don't mind being called a moralist I guess but, wow, that's just really depressing to think that. And if you consider yourself part of some

anti-authoritarian spirit or milieu or what have you, that kind of blows me away.

That's maybe -- that's kind of a random thing for me -- not random but may it hasn't much to do with what we were talking about.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Well I think it dovetails with the moralism issue. Yeah, I am absolutely not for attacking or harming random passersby. I understand the ITS point of view of saying, well, no one is innocent in this society because we all participate in it. Yeah, that's true in a certain sense, we all countenance hideous things as we go about in our daily life, in some cases, in many cases more or less unconsciously. But the notion of attacking random people because of that is both ethically abhorrent and strategically ridiculous.

And as far as Aragorn!, I consider him a friend, I think both of you know that. I disagree with him about many things -- but we also agree on many things. But I'm about -- some would say you can't be a free speech absolutist, maybe that's true, but I'm about as close to it as one can be and the -- whatever one thinks about ITS and the eco-extremist tendency broadly the treatment that LBC is getting from the milieu for simply publishing a couple of books about ITS -- not even their material but material commenting on them -- being de-platformed and antagonized because of it I think is ridiculous. I think the anarchist tendency toward wanting to de-platform or physically attack or otherwise menace people who are simply saying things that some of us don't like is both intellectually cowardly, ethically dangerous, considering the general atmosphere in the United States of cracking down on free speech as a whole. I think it's just a -- I wish I could say it were astonishing, it's not astonishing, it's predictably disappointing.

John Zerzan: Well what would you say about denying Nazis a platform at, say, the anarchist bookfair? Would you feel like that's an error morally or otherwise?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I would say that an anarchist bookfair is a place of coming together in free association for a particular purpose. And Nazis are obviously statist, authoritarian -- I mean Nazi, honestly, at this point, it's a snarl word that has almost no meaning -- but if by that we actually mean national socialists, they don't have a place at an anarchist bookfair because they're obviously authoritarian and if they're actually owning their ideas there's no way around that.

I do think, I guess just to throw a different ball into the fray here, that actions such as those by the metropolitan Anarchist Coordinating Council of New York City, where they try to de-platform people on the alt-right by essentially sending repeated whining messages to the

authorities of YouTube to take down videos is, again, both ethically objectionable and strategically ridiculous. Because you're literally appealing to authorities with enormous power, far more power than the people on the alt-right who, again, I think are very marginal and unpopular in the mainstream. And calling on these authorities to enhance their censorship and therefore take people out. It's ridiculous. There's nothing anarchist about it.

And it shows a lack of confidence in our actual ideas.

Oak Journal: Just to briefly go back though, to what you were saying and how you were sort of talking about the rationalization for possibly not having a national socialist booth at an anarchist book fair. I do feel though, that is precisely the argument that has been given in regard to ITS. I mean, do you see that there are possibly some parallels there? Between the way you rationalize that and the de-platforming of ITS or, more specifically, are you concerned about the de-platforming of LBC as an actual anarchist distributor?

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: So just let me understand you correctly, are you suggesting that we should be de-platforming Atassa because it is inherently authoritarian, is that what you mean?

Oak Journal: No, I actually don't know that I feel that way, but I do think that was the explicit argument of some on the left.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, and for this set of whiners who apparently have such low confidence in the cognitive and ethical capacities of anarchists -- that somehow they will read this book and instantly become so corrupted that we must, therefore, bar them from reading it. Again, it's intellectually cowardly and ITS ought to be interesting to anarchists -- I wrote a piece about this in *Black Seed*, I think it was number four -- ought to be interesting to anarchists because this is a bunch of former anarchists, people definitely in the deep green strain, who went in a particular direction that I think all three of us agree is wrong, but who came out of the milieu, went into this particular set of tactics and they are informative, both in terms of the how and why they got to the place that they are, and in terms of the reaction of so many within the milieu.

And as I said before, there are many in the North American milieu today who dream of a sudden violent upheaval of the disenfranchised, unfortunate and exploited and if you don't think that that's going to involve awful bloodshed and tremendous privation and, in all likelihood, I think if such a violent uprising were to really happen in an abrupt way, warlordism -- all kinds of horror. I think you're deluding yourself. And if you absolutely blanch at this really small, marginal,

weak faction killing a handful of people -- I don't mean to sound heartless, I do think that killing is wrong -- but the people who blanch so much at that I think really need to do some deep searching about the kind of politics that they advocate because they are absolutely countenancing violence, absolutely countenancing so-called innocent people, and I don't say that in a belittling way, dying.

John Zerzan: Well, of course, there are other ways, there are other possible routes though...

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: No, I absolutely agree, John, but I'm just saying...

John Zerzan: ...that doesn't necessarily call for a lot of violence.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I agree with you, John.

John Zerzan: For instance, '68, 10 million people went on strike and there was very little violence. That didn't go very far. Didn't go far enough, long enough, as we know. But the cops and even the army was out-flanked almost immediately so there wasn't much violence. In other words, it's possible that there could be a shift without some traditional bloodbath or something.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I agree with you, John, but the overall record of revolutions doesn't point to that, it points to a lot of the horror that I'm talking about.

John Zerzan: For sure.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: And what you see from these sorts of -- big left trinity of Submedia, Crimethinc. [Editor's Note: Crimethinc. has directly addressed this in the piece: "Against the Logic of the Guillotine Why the Paris Commune Burned the Guillotine—and We Should Too"] and *It's Going Down*, is a lot of this -- a lot of imagery and music and that sort of thing that glorifies violent upheaval in a kind of weirdly -- weird fusion of old left with new woke, new left. And they have these video images of people riding in pickup trucks with assault rifles and that kind of thing. So, it's like, well, what are you really advocating for.

John Zerzan: Sure.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: And this is the very same bunch of pearl-clutchers who say, oh my god, you killed a few random people this is the worst thing I've ever heard in my life and I just think...

John Zerzan: Well I don't quite get how you're putting those two things together. It seems possible that some or possibly all of this ITS [Editor's Note: Jake Hanrahan makes clear in another Oak interview in this issue that

the attacks are real to at least some degree] is kind of a fraud or a fiction or something. But if they actually did...

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I've heard that as well, I don't know.

John Zerzan: Yeah and, I don't now, if you exalt in it -- it's almost as bad. The couple in the park, you kill them and the young woman drunk after a party, she's trying to make a phone call, you go to the phone booth and murder her, and the postal worker who's out behind the post office and he opens the bag and blows himself up. I mean that's -- I don't see how you justify that, man. And we can agree...

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: I'm not justifying it. I'm not justifying it.

John Zerzan: ...the reason -- what you bring in about the left, yeah, of course I think we agree on that. But that's not -- I mean we were talking about ITS I thought, and some people made -- some people were in bed with that. They were, oh this is interesting and maybe we can make some money publishing this Atassa stuff and that -- I just don't think that's very justified. And you don't have to be -- I find that offensive. And why not say, well there were people who were once anarchists now they sexually torture a whole bunch of three-month-old babies -- you're getting into kind of a stretch. Maybe they didn't kill all that many three-month-old babies so why should we get all worked up about it. That's kind of a twist of logic I would say. It's horrendous or it isn't horrendous, I think it's horrendous.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Let me be clear...

John Zerzan: And there were a lot of radicals who became fascists in Italy in the '20s, so? I mean, does that make their fascist views interesting, I don't think it does.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Let me be clear, I am not justifying the actions of ITS or any eco-extremists, I am indicting both them and what I see as a hypocritical reaction on the part of certain people who belong to a kind of big anarcho-left who glorify a certain type of hypothetical violence and, at the same time, claim to be absolutely horrified and terrified by the...

John Zerzan: Right, right, well we all easily agree on that. That's not in question.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: And, also, I'm also criticizing the idea of de-platforming and censoring anyone who merely publishes and distributes commentary on the ITS phenomenon. And you brought up the example of, oh, should we be interested in anarchists who became fascists and therefore be interested in that material?

Yeah, I actually think that that is valuable to learn from. Why did certain anarchists become fascists? I mean many people in the alt-right today were formerly anarcho-capitalists or libertarians, how did they go from that to being national socialists?

John Zerzan: I agree, and I've written about that, too. That wasn't a very good example.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, Richard Spencer was an anarcho-capitalist.

John Zerzan: Some people find it kind of fascinating, that these people who didn't mind just murdering people off-handedly. I mean, what's wrong with that? Man, that would be potentially as much of a danger than imagining leftist troops killing everybody in the service of revolution.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure.

John Zerzan: It sounds like even worse. You're deliberately killing people who had nothing to do with anything. Whereas the leftists, you might argue, they have to commit violence against whoever who did this or that. But these victims didn't do anything.

Anyway, I don't want to -- I think we probably agree on most all of this, but I don't consider Aragorn! a friend precisely because of this moral vacuous, anything is fine. Hey, we're post-modern, aren't we? It doesn't matter, your story is as good as my story. I don't think they are. I think some stories are more valuable than something else. And there is such a thing as values. And we probably don't disagree about that either, so I'm not trying to pump up a disagreement here, Bellamy.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Sure.

Oak Journal: It sounds like we all agree on the broader point about ITS. I think that this issue around de-platforming and trying to draw parallels across different examples to show consistency of some application of some radical idea I don't think that's going to work and we'll probably just around in circles with that.

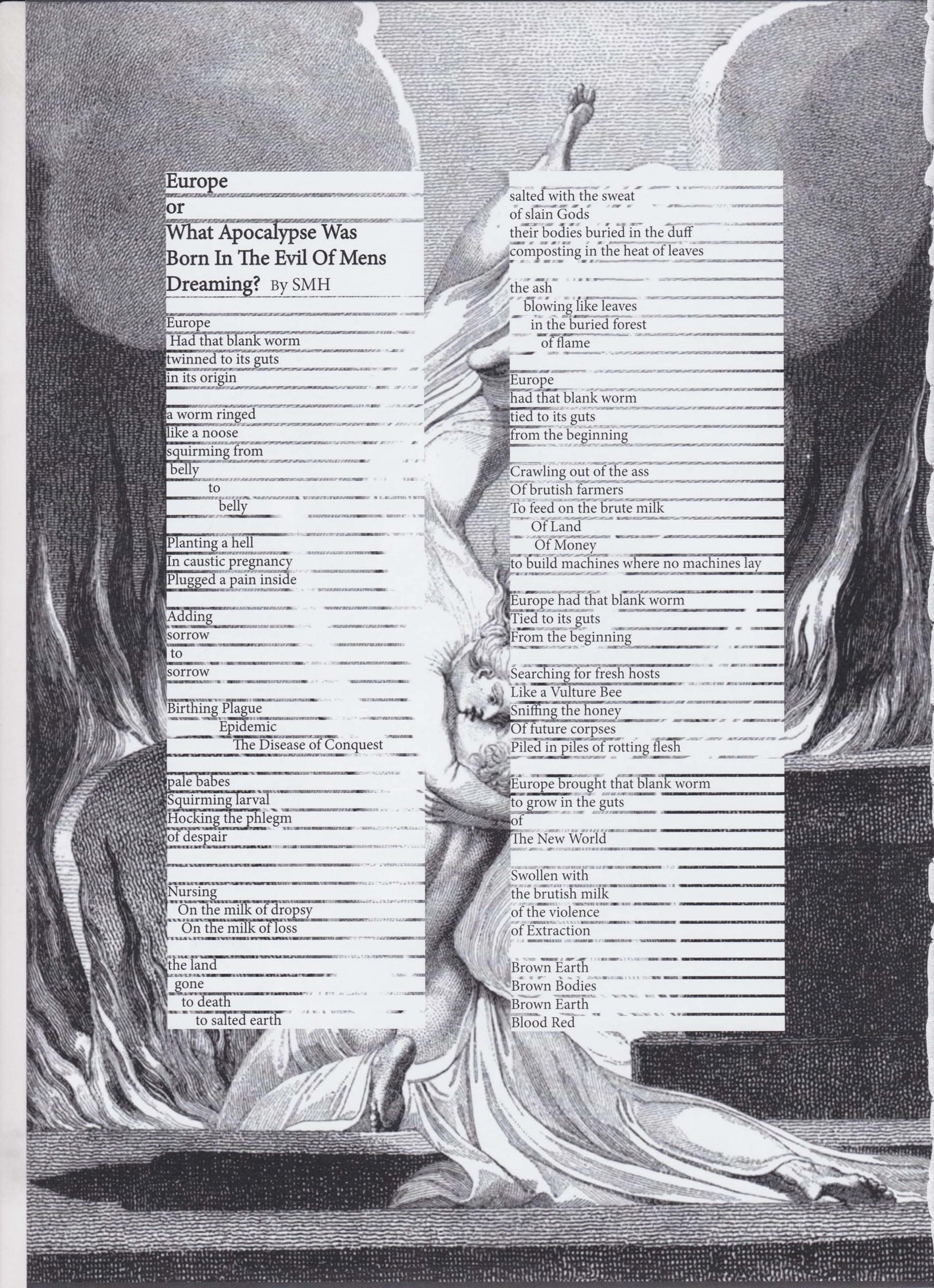
Well, probably should wrap...

John Zerzan: Thank you. And I'm glad to have the chance to talk with you, Bellamy. I really am.

Bellamy Fitzpatrick: Yeah, very good conversation. Thanks for raising it.

CHECK OUT OAK'S AUDIOZINE EPISODE REJECTING THE WORLD SOCIETY PARADIGM FOR THE AUDIO OF THIS INTERVIEW





Europe

or

What Apocalypse Was Born In The Evil Of Mens Dreaming? By SMH

Europe

Had that blank worm
twinned to its guts

in its origin

a worm ringed
like a noose
squirming from
belly

to

belly

Planting a hell

In caustic pregnancy

Plugged a pain inside

Adding

sorrow

to

sorrow

Birthing Plague

Epidemic

The Disease of Conquest

pale babes

Squirming larval

Hocking the phlegm

of despair

Nursing

On the milk of dropsy

On the milk of loss

the land

gone

to death

to salted earth

salted with the sweat

of slain Gods

their bodies buried in the duff

composting in the heat of leaves

the ash

blowing like leaves

in the buried forest

of flame

Europe

had that blank worm

tied to its guts

from the beginning

Crawling out of the ass

Of brutish farmers

To feed on the brute milk

Of Land

Of Money

to build machines where no machines lay

Europe had that blank worm

Tied to its guts

From the beginning

Searching for fresh hosts

Like a Vulture Bee

Sniffing the honey

Of future corpses

Piled in piles of rotting flesh

Europe brought that blank worm

to grow in the guts

of

The New World

Swollen with

the brutish milk

of the violence

of Extraction

Brown Earth

Brown Bodies

Brown Earth

Blood Red

CIVILIZED ANTISEMITISM

BY RON WHYTE

Some years ago I published a series of podcasts entitled “Treyvon Martin and Civilized Racism,” and “Civilized Racism Pt. 2” with Layla AbdelRahim, a Canadian anthropologist, theorist and scholar. Our discussion was an exploration of how society’s institutions enable and perpetuate racism and systems of racial privilege. Although there are some major differences, antisemitism exists on the same continuum as racism and can be deconstructed using similar methodologies. This essay is meant to be a counterpart to the discussion about civilized racism, and a challenge to think about antisemitism (and by extension all forms of oppression) in a new way.

Antisemitism reveals beyond a shadow of a doubt the structural weaknesses and moral bankruptcy of western society’s institutions. Antisemitism and the centuries-long persecution of Jewish people is often associated with a lack of civilization, or as stemming from some wild, untamed, tribalism-oriented corner of the human psyche. As we shall see, in reality, most systems of oppression within our society stem from not a lack of civilization but from too much of it.

What Is Antisemitism?

Victor Klemperer was a German-Jewish university professor and linguist who is known for his posthumously published World War II diaries; in these diaries he meticulously details the persecution of Dresden’s Jewish community at the hands of the Nazi regime. Having directly experienced what is arguably the most extreme form of antisemitism to ever exist, we can trust that his perceptions

and definitions of it are accurate. Klemperer gives us a very clear definition of antisemitism in his book, *The Language of the Third Reich*:

Antisemitism, as a form of hostility with social, religious, and economic causes, has cropped up across the ages and amongst all nations, sometimes here, sometimes there, sometimes in a mild form, sometimes more virulently...

Further on in this chapter where he explores the European cultural roots of Nazism, he strikes directly at the heart of the issue with this passage:

...the third and most crucial innovation [produced by the Nazis] consists of embedding the hatred of the Jews in the idea of race. In earlier times the animosity towards the Jews was directed at a group which stood outside the Christian faith and Christian society; the adoption of the country’s religion and customs served as a compensation and (for the succeeding generation at least) as a blurring of differences. Displacing the difference between Jews and non-Jews into the blood makes any compensation impossible, perpetuates the division and legitimizes it as willed by God.

Klemperer sheds light on the fact that antisemitism was modernized by the Nazis to bring it into line with the prevailing race theories of the day—theories that were considered respectable and acceptable as recently as fifty years ago. These pseudo-scientific race theories contributed to Jim Crow segregation, the genocide of Indigenous peoples and brutal European colonization on a number

of continents, just to name a few examples. Antisemitism, already a serious problem, became much deadlier when it was brought into line with both modern racial theories and modern technological capabilities.

Victor Klemperer’s writings are essential reading for anyone seeking to understand antisemitism both in practice and in theory, and his perspective dovetails nicely with the assertions that will be made here. His diaries are particularly enlightening and should be part of standard high school and college curriculums. Klemperer chronicled Germany’s gradual, day to day descent into the abyss under National Socialism’s tyranny, beginning in the early days when, astonishingly, some of his German-Jewish acquaintances had positive things to say about Hitler. Unlike most of the Jewish people he eventually found himself surrounded by, he descended into hell and lived to tell about it—and, because of his academic background, he was able to clearly articulate both his experiences and their political and sociological relationship to current events. This is what makes his and similar perspectives so valuable.

When the Nazis began ethnically cleansing all state institutions Klemperer found himself out of a job, dismissed by the university. Because of his World War I military service he was entitled to a pension which enabled a modest partial retirement. After a few relatively mild years, the vise gradually tightened. After Kristallnacht many of his friends and acquaintances fled the country; he halfheartedly explored emigration, but no possibilities to leave the country materialized. According to his diary entries, he only half-heartedly wanted to leave. Essentially, he was too much of a German to want to abandon Germany. As part of an onslaught of anti-Jewish legislation, shortly after the beginning of WWII his home was “Aryanized,”

meaning he was forced by the Nazi bureaucracy to move out and hand his property over to a so-called Aryan. As a non-Aryan, Klemperer eventually found himself facing a murderous regime with almost no rights whatsoever. He and his wife were compelled to move into one of about a dozen "Jew's Houses" located in the nearby city of Dresden. These were essentially partial ghettos where people were congregated before later being deported to eastern European ghettos and death camps. Only his marriage to an 'Aryan' woman saved him from a similar fate—he was what was then referred to as a "privileged Jew," part of a very small percentage of the German Jewish population spared from deportation because of their family ties with 'Aryans.'

When Klemperer learns that he must vacate his home he remarks in his diary: "The sadistic machine simply rolls over us." If we want to understand systems of oppression and how to once and for all eradicate them, it's absolutely crucial that we understand the true nature of this "sadistic machine."

Recent headline-grabbing controversies and horrific incidents have reminded us that antisemitism endures as a scourge within our society. While it's true Jewish people are not currently being targeted by the state for deportation, economic and political disenfranchisement, mass incarceration and extra-judicial police killings, hate crimes are nevertheless on the rise and antisemitic attitudes still pose a threat as we saw with the recent Pittsburgh synagogue massacre. If white nationalism and neo-Nazism continue their ascendancy, Jewish people could very easily once again face systemic threats either here in the U.S. or in other countries.

With the exception of the past half century and a brief Renaissance in the early Middle Ages, the Jewish experience in the western world has mostly been one of marginalization and persecution that culminated in one of the most horrific crimes in human history. Only by taking a deeper, critical look at our society's institutions can we understand why the history of Jewish people in the western world has been so fraught and intertwined with tragedy. Understanding this has implications for other minority groups living within western society. Far from being an aberration, violent attacks against minorities and their exclusion and oppression are commonplace.

What is Civilization?

Since the term will come up quite a bit here, let's define what "civilization" means in the context of this essay. The widely accepted, mainstream definition¹ of civilization is: "The stage of human social development and organization which is considered most advanced," and, "The comfort and convenience of modern life, regarded as available only in towns and cities."

The word "civilization" has a fair amount of baggage because it's often automatically associated with social advancement, technological sophistication, comfort, security, and with the more desirable aspects of human societies. Layla AbdelRahim gives us a very good working definition that reveals what this institution is really all about with all the bells and whistles stripped away²:

*...the term "civilization" refers to the social and material cultures that issue from a specific socio-environmental system, which in human animals is legitimated by a perspective that sees the world as existing for a utilitarian purpose. **In this view, all living and non-living beings are bound together in a predatory food chain, their reason for existence being to serve as a resource for someone else** [emphasis added]. This food chain is hierarchical rather than circular, with the human animal emerging as the top predator...*

And additionally (especially important considering the epidemic of rape, gendered violence, enforced heterosexuality and sexual subjugation within civilized society):

Before everything else, therefore, civilization is about "breeding," that is, the selective breeding of crops, animal husbandry, and human resources.

The perceived benefits of civilization are therefore built upon systems of oppression.

Critiques of civilization (now known colloquially as "anti-civ") are not new³, and they date back to the period of the Enlightenment. In the 18th and 19th centuries, critiques of civilization were rhetorical tools used to attack social problems within European society as well as colonialism and the slave trade abroad. Dismantling systems of oppression requires us to use as many tools in the toolbox that we can get our hands on. Critiques of civilization are deeply radical critiques that shine a light on the foundations of our society; the point of these critiques is to help us craft and deploy radical solutions built on a radical analysis of society's problems. Radical in this context means getting to the root, to the core, to the foundations. Despite what you may have heard, critiques of civilization are not focused on a return to life in the forests, or with taking away people's insulin and wheelchairs, but on offering a holistic framework for re-imagining our relationship with the natural world and with each other.

It's important to take a moment to recognize that while western European civilization will be our main focus, there have been African, Asian, and Native American civilizations as well. Some of these civilizations have been totally obscured from us and left out of the history books, particularly the African and Indigenous American ones.

When Spanish priests and Conquistadors arrived in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán they were awe struck. Those ‘godless heathens’ had managed to build a city that rivaled Venice, then known as one of the most beautiful places in the world.

The city of Tenochtitlán and Aztec culture were indeed full of wonders, but as with most civilizations, Aztec society was a very strict hierarchy and made wide use of slavery, the subjugation of women, and indentured servitude. In addition to being forced to work, those enslaved in Aztec society were occasionally used as human sacrifices during religious rituals and celebrations. When Hernán Cortés attacked the Aztec capitol, he was joined by a large number of locals from nations subjugated by the Aztecs who were seeking revenge.

Contrast the Aztec patriarchal civilization with the traditional Lenape or Diné matrilineal clan societies to understand in greater depth the difference between civilizations and other types of human societies. This distinction is an important one. All civilizations are societies, but not all societies are civilizations and do not necessarily aspire to become civilizations.

To orient us further and give a brief example of why an analysis of this thing we call civilization is necessary as part of examining and dismantling antisemitism (and other forms of oppression), let’s take look at a recent news item. Steve King, a Congressman representing the state of Iowa, was recently interviewed in the New York Times where he said the following:

White nationalist, white supremacist, Western civilization—how did that language become offensive?
Mr. King said. *“Why did I sit in classes teaching me about the merits of our history and our civilization?”*

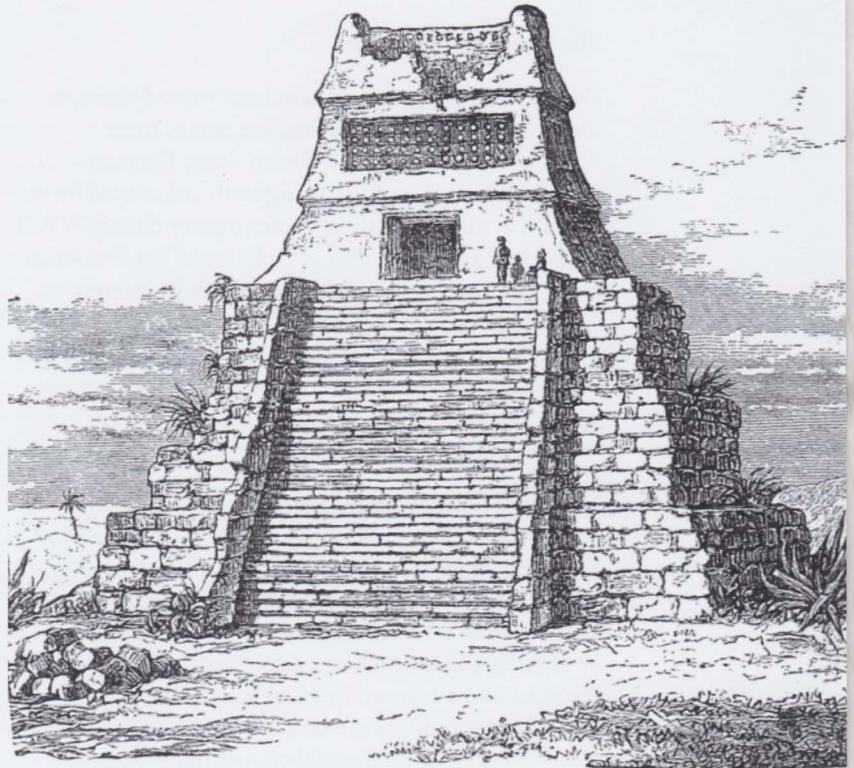
After this article was published, Mr. King issued a public statement calling himself a “nationalist” and defending his support of “western civilization’s values,” and said he was not an advocate for “white nationalism and white supremacy.”

“I want to make one thing abundantly clear: I reject those labels and the evil ideology they define,” he wrote.

Backlash compelled him to walk back his statement, however he has made his point of view quite clear in the past, praising far right European xenophobes with comments like, “we can’t restore our civilization with someone else’s babies.”

Let’s also not forget the sentiments expressed by the Pittsburgh synagogue shooter in one of several online antisemitic forums⁴: “Jews are waging a propaganda war against Western civilization...”

The usual knee jerk reaction to this sort of poisonous vitriol is to try and snatch western civilization from



the clutches of the racists and claim that it is actually wonderful, diverse, and not under the dominion and stewardship of dangerous white men. Or, some respond by pretending that civilization is some irrelevant concept being seized upon by racist wingnuts. The racist/antisemitic mob is wrong about a secretly plotting, Jewish monolith attempting to undermine WASP culture, but they’re right about western civilization being under threat from progressive/leftist values, and that’s as it should be. Steve King and others of his ilk are squirming now that more people are beginning to question one of western civilization’s major cornerstones—white supremacy—just a little too much. They correctly link their racist ideologies to western civilization and the white patriarchs who have been its main ambassadors.

It’s no coincidence that the majority of this vitriol and violence in our society originates with men. Civilization, particularly western civilization, was born during the ascendancy of male dominance, a dominance achieved through extreme violence. Like the original Nazism, today’s far right Nazi spin-off ideologies are deeply misogynistic. In his essay “Patriarchy, Civilization, And The Origins Of Gender,” John Zerzan explains how civilized societies emerged with the advent of patriarchy⁵. To bolster his case he quotes Ursula K. Le Guin who blessed us with this insightful gem:

Civilized Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is other—outside, below, underneath, subservient. I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and wilderness, to be used as

I see fit.

The Underlying Problem

One prime example of antisemitism viewed through the lens of a critique of civilization comes from Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, German-Jewish philosophers who were greatly influenced by the turmoil of exile from their home country during WWII. In Michael Löwy's review⁶ of Jack Jacobs *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives and Antisemitism*, he references one of Horkheimer and Adorno's most important writings and "the constellation of themes—exile, Jewish fate, catastrophe of civilization—that ultimately make up their masterpiece *Dialectic of Enlightenment*." Löwy writes:

"Elements of Anti-Semitism," a chapter in the form of philosophical fragments, is one of the most important of the book, and it contains some quite radical theses, for instance, that fascism emerges from liberalism and that liberals fail to acknowledge that anti-Semitism cannot be expunged from such a society [emphasis added]. The essential idea advanced by Horkheimer and Adorno is that fascist anti-Semitism helps to elucidate the dialectic of enlightenment itself and therefore the history of civilization.

Keep in mind that Horkheimer and Adorno originally published their observations in 1947, when the full scope of the genocide was only beginning to materialize. With large swaths of Europe in utter ruin, many people were questioning the institutions, lofty ideals and philosophies that had once again failed to avert disaster. "Elements of Antisemitism: Limits of Enlightenment"⁷ is crucial to understanding how antisemitism arises organically from the structures and logic of western civilization:

Anti-Semitism is a well-rehearsed pattern, indeed, a ritual of civilization, and the pogroms are the true ritual murders. They demonstrate the impotence of what might have restrained them—reflection, meaning, ultimately truth.

Are stratified, rigid hierarchies conducive to the pursuit of nuanced reflection and the search for deeper meaning and truth necessary to once and for all eradicate both antisemitism and other forms of oppression? It's an important question we must consider. The passage continues with an exploration of why Judaism's relationship to the modern world is so complex:

Civilization is the triumph of society over nature—a triumph which transforms everything into mere nature. The Jews themselves, over the millennia, have played their part in this... As the oldest surviving patriarchy, the incarnation of monotheism, they converted taboos into maxims of civilization while the others were still enmeshed in magic.

The Jews appeared to have successfully achieved what Christianity had attempted in vain: the disempowerment of magic by means of its own strength, which, as worship of God, is turned against itself. They have not so much eradicated the adaptation to nature as elevated it to the pure duties of ritual. In this way they have preserved its reconciling memory, without relapsing through symbols into mythology. They are therefore regarded by advanced civilization as both backward and too advanced, like and unlike, shrewd and stupid. They are pronounced guilty of what, as the first citizens, they were the first to subdue in themselves: the susceptibility to the lure of base instincts, the urge toward the beast and the earth, the worship of images. Because they invented the concept of the kosher, they are persecuted as swine. The anti-Semites appoint themselves executors of the Old Testament: they see to it that the Jews, having eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, unto dust shall return.

Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis appears to do what Alice Walker was attempting with her horrendous poem-as-political-screed "It Is Our (Frightful) Duty To Study the Talmud." Walker came under fire when she published this poem on her website; in it, she attempts to explain the roots of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians while also indulging in some rather disturbing conspiracy theories. In contrast to Walker, Horkheimer and Adorno identified and teased out the complex connections between Judaism and modernity without blaming Judaism for all of modernity's ills. The recent Alice Walker controversy merits some discussion. As someone who is genuinely concerned with justice and getting to the roots of systemic oppression, perhaps her heart was in the right place, but the effects of Walker's exposure to toxic conspiracy theorists like David Icke made her attempts at systemic analysis dead on arrival. In the aforementioned poem she writes:

*Unlike most Americans/I have witnessed Palestine/
Under Israeli rule. It is demonic/ To the core. But where
to look/ For the inspiration/ For so much evil? Where/
To find the teachings that influence/ And sanction
such limitless cruel behavior?/ For the study of Israel,
of Gaza, of Palestine,/ Of the bombed out cities of the
Middle East,/ Of the creeping Palestinian/ Of our
police, streets, and prisons/ In America,/ Of war in
general,/ It is our duty, I believe, to study The Talmud./
It is within this book that,/ I believe, we will find
answers/ To some of the questions/ That most perplex
us.*

Searching for the roots of this and other conflicts is of course a worthwhile endeavor, but we can see from her use of the word "demonic" where this is heading. What is even more bizarre is that anyone who is even casually aware of history knows that Israel hardly has a monopoly on "limitless cruel behavior" when compared with other nation-states. One of civilizations defining

features is near-constant brutal warfare on a scale that is unknown in other kinds of societies. War and conflict with neighboring countries has indeed been a mainstay of Jewish history going back to at least 1200 B.C.E.,⁹ but to say that we'll discover the roots of warfare in Jewish religious texts is quite bizarre to say the least. The earliest record of organized warfare dates to around 14,000 years ago in present day northern Sudan, and the earliest recorded instance of urban warfare has been traced to 5,500 years ago in modern day Syria; both occurred long before the rise of Judaism and any Israelite military force.

Alice Walker is understandably concerned about the Palestinians, and this permeates much of the poem. The most recent incarnation of Israel's ancient conflict with the Palestinians is an example of behavior that is commonplace in almost all patriarchal, civilized societies going back many thousands of years. Walker however eschews history and becomes entangled in conspiracy. Under the influence of David Icke (notorious for his Holocaust denial and furtherance of Rothschild conspiracies and the debunked Protocols of the Elders of Zion) she goes on to say in the poem:

Are Goyim (us) meant to be slaves of Jews, and not only/ That, but to enjoy it?/ Are three year old (and a day) girls eligible for marriage and intercourse?/ Are young boys fair game for rape?/ Must even the best of the Goyim (us, again) be killed?/ Pause a moment and think what this could mean/ Or already has meant/ In our own lifetime.

If this were coming from some random internet nobody it might be easily dismissed, but the person who wrote this is internationally acclaimed and widely read. For that reason alone we must not let this pass by without comment. The horrors of the system we live within are very real, but to imply that the origins of this horror lay within the pages of a Jewish religious text is patently false.

"Black antisemitism"

Walker's bungling analysis and conspiratorial thinking is a prime example of how antisemitism functions: whether done with malice or not, negative attributes of our society are attributed to Jewish people; then these people, or their culture in general, are blamed for creating a nefarious system they are actually "merely" participating in. The sentiments expressed by Walker combined with other recent events have opened another can of worms: the specter of so-called "Black antisemitism." Her sentiments, shared by some members of the Black community (whatever that really means), are an unfortunate byproduct of the bitterness created by a stark reality: once almost universally despised and systemically oppressed, Jewish people, for the most part, have managed to rise above this history and now fully participate in society's institutions.

Meanwhile, Black people continue to be excluded from full participation in these same institutions while simultaneously struggling to have our inter-generational trauma, disenfranchisement, and history of horrific abuse validated and taken seriously.

The "Black antisemitism" specter is on full display in an editorial piece entitled "Finley: New face of anti-Semitism is black." In this piece the writer says the following without a shred of irony and sans a single caveat: "Anti-Semitism is the most murderous force in history. It's not OK to engage in it as casually as James did, nor as whole-heartedly as Farrakhan does."

This is indeed one of the most dramatic examples of 'Oppression Olympics.' It invokes that French saying *je suis plus folle que toi*, which translates to "I am more angry (or hurt, disparaged, dismissed or judged) than you." James Baldwin explores this emotional minefield in his 1967 essay⁹, *Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-white*:

In the American context, the most ironical thing about Negro anti-Semitism is that the Negro is really condemning the Jew for having become an American white man—for having become, in effect, a Christian. The Jew profits from his status in America, and he must expect Negroes to distrust him for it. The Jew does not realize that the credential he offers, the fact that he has been despised and slaughtered, does not increase the Negro's understanding. It increases the Negro's rage.

For it is not here, and not now, that the Jew is being slaughtered, and he is never despised, here, as the Negro is, because he is an American. The Jewish travail occurred across the sea and America rescued him from the house of bondage. But America is the house of bondage for the Negro, and no country can rescue him. What happens to the Negro here happens to him because he is an American.

While systemic racism and economic anxieties can contribute to antisemitic attitudes, as the historian Adolf Reed reminded us, there is no such thing as "Black antisemitism":

Obviously, I don't mean that there are no black people who are anti-Semites. ... What doesn't exist is Blackantisemitism, the equivalent of a German compound word, a particular—and particularly virulent—strain of anti-Semitism. Black anti-Semites are no better or worse than white or other anti-Semites, and they are neither more nor less representative of the "black community" or "black America" than Pat Buchanan, Pat Robertson, Tom Metzger—or your coworker or roommate who whispers about "their" pushiness and clannish-ness—are of white American gentiles.

Blackantisemitism is a species of the same genus as

“African-ized” killer bees, crack babies, and now the rising generation of hardened ten-year-olds soon to be career criminals. It is a racialized fantasy, a projection of white anxieties about dark horrors lurking just beyond the horizon.

There are quite a few similarities and points of connection between the Black and Jewish experience, many of which revolve around the struggle to assimilate and gain acceptance within a generally hostile society. This is one reason why Walker’s poem and embrace of David Icke is so troubling, and why it’s unfortunate to see how some of these recent antisemitism news stories are being used to paint a picture of the Black and Jewish communities as enmeshed in mutual miscommunication and suspicion. In addition to Alice Walker there was also the controversy with the Women’s March organizers and the furor over LeBron James retweeting lyrics referencing “Jewish money.” These incidents however reflect more on the general culture than on the Black community as a whole and some mythical “Black antisemitism” bogeyman.

Let’s consider how after white men marched through the streets chanting “Jews will not replace us,” and after swastikas were burned during a neo-Nazi rally, very few people sounded the alarm over “white antisemitism” or “white male antisemitism,” though perhaps they should have.

Ask yourself if this scenario sounds familiar: a generally feared and despised minority group is excluded from most of society’s institutions and is pushed to the fringes where over time they become associated with criminality and vice. Most of them are segregated from the general population and are forced to live in ghettos where they seek escape, refuge and comfort from their debased circumstances in religion and in identifying even more strongly with their own unique culture. Over time, those members of this despised minority who are most willing to shed their “other-ness” and conform are offered conditional access to mainstream society. Essentially this describes the experience of Black people in the diaspora, particularly in North America and Latin America, but it also describes the experience of Jewish people in pre-WWII Europe.

Insecurity & Herzl’s Dilemma

The difficulties inherent in trying to create something new while operating under the logic of western civilization’s institutions is personified in the figure of Theodor Herzl, the father of the modern political Zionism movement. Born into an affluent, assimilated, German speaking Jewish family in the Austro-Hungarian empire, for much of his life he glorified European culture, particularly German culture, only becoming disillusioned with the idea of assimilation after traveling across Europe witnessing and experiencing repeated episodes of virulent antisemitism.

His vision of an ideal Jewish homeland is very different from the current reality where the Israeli state subjugates Palestinians and routinely murders them while declaring itself to be a beacon of freedom and democracy. Consider Herzl’s vision of the then-imaginary Zionist state in his book *Altneuland* (Old New Land)¹¹:

It is founded on the ideas which are a common product of all civilized nations ... It would be immoral if we would exclude anyone, whatever his origin, his descent, or his religion, from participating in our achievements. For we stand on the shoulders of other civilized peoples ... What we own we owe to the preparatory work of other peoples. Therefore, we have to repay our debt. There is only one way to do it, the highest tolerance. Our motto must therefore be, now and ever: ‘Man, you are my brother.’

A fundamental misunderstanding of the true nature of modern nation states (and by extension civilization itself) cast a shadow over his project from the very beginning. His passion for finding a secure homeland for Jews away from European antisemitism originally included a plan to settle in modern day Kenya,¹² in an area then controlled by the British empire. This idea was voted down by the Zionist Congress in favor of settlement in Palestine, but we can imagine what problems may have arisen if this original scheme had come to fruition. This ‘humanitarian colonialism’ brings to mind the origins of the United States and the settlers who came here fleeing religious persecution. Herzl’s nation building schemes were largely a response to ongoing late 19th century pogroms in eastern Europe where large numbers of Jewish people were being killed and thousands displaced. Nevertheless, his plans were still predicated on the logic of colonialism. Herzl was, like many people of that time, trapped by a lack of revolutionary imagination, yet he instinctively realized that safety and security could only come through the promotion of certain values.

Herzl’s main goal was to solve the dilemma of Jewish insecurity, an insecurity that was primarily the result of their history vis-à-vis Christian Europe. The golden age Jewish people experienced during the Middle Ages came to an end with the propagation of the ‘Christ killer’ trope that grew extremely popular during the Crusades, a bloody, protracted war to assert Christian dominance. After the forces of Islam were beaten back, France, Germany, England and Spain expelled their Jewish populations to Poland and beyond in the 11th and 12th centuries. It was not until almost 600 years later in the late 1860’s when Jewish people finally received equal rights across most of Europe. Despite this progress, the insecurity remained, smoldering like embers waiting for a gust of wind to ignite them into a roaring flame.

WHEN RACIAL IDEOLOGY WAS GRAFTED ONTO ALREADY EXISTING ANTISEMITISM, AND WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS CRUMBLLED, EVEN THOSE WHO HAD CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY AND FULLY ASSIMILATED INTO EUROPEAN SOCIETY WERE NOT SAFE.

Herzl, who is viewed as a kind of saint in Israel, was genuine and sincere in his desire to create a place where Jewish people could be free of the pressure of antisemitism. And indeed, those who have been born there have experienced a cultural Renaissance and found a sense of self-confidence that was generally unknown a few generations ago. Herzl's vision of a state where people could live free from oppression and insecurity was mostly fulfilled, but at what price?

Compare Herzl's ideal society to the current reality, where Noam Chomsky has declared that Israel's actions towards the Palestinians are "much worse than apartheid" in South Africa,¹³ and where one public official recently declared on national TV that she is "happy to be a fascist." Furthermore, there are millions of Palestinian refugees living in abject poverty, constant human right abuses perpetrated against the occupied Arab population, and over 2 million people in Gaza are living under an illegal blockade in what has been referred to as an open air prison. It was not wrong for people to seek refuge from centuries of European cruelty, but the Palestinians don't deserve the treatment they've received and should not have to pay the price for other people's security. Simply shifting locations was obviously not enough to break the destructive cycle of violence and warfare. In *Wild Children, Domesticated Dreams*, Layla AbdelRahim points out the folly of taking our civilized institutions for granted:

...regardless of individual intentions...if we continue to view our current institutions and pedagogies as benign and essential, inevitable attributes of life, we remain complicit in the reenactment of the deadly narrative that has colonized the world and brought it to the brink of destruction.

What we see happening in Israel is an example of this "reenactment of the deadly narrative." Oppressive institutions and thought processes were transplanted from one location to another, ensuring the cycle of violence and oppression would continue. Essentially there's been a flourishing of Jewish culture and identity at the expense of the Palestinians' right to freedom and self-determination. Some say Israel is being unfairly singled out, and perhaps this has a ring of truth to it. The United States, Canada, Australia, and many Latin American countries persecute and force their indigenous populations to live in very deplorable conditions. If we call for Israel to stop building on land stolen from its original inhabitants, and for it to respect its minority population, we must demand the same from our own colonial governments as well. What's

happening in Israel is unfortunately a continuation of Europe's culture of colonization and persecution of minorities; on a deeper level it is yet another chapter in the long and sordid history of western civilization.

Assimilation as Domestication

How can it be that well-meaning endeavors like Herzl's so often end up reproducing oppressive dynamics? And how exactly are these oppressive dynamics reproduced across generations? An exploration of the concept of domestication and its effects on both human and animal society is one of anti-civ's most important contributions to a radical analysis of systems of oppression. In his book *Elements of Refusal*, the anarchist writer and theorist John Zerzan gives us this compelling overview of the effects of domestication:

Domestication involved the initiation of production, vastly increased divisions of labor, and completed the foundations of social stratification. This amounted to an epochal mutation both in the character of human existence and its development, clouding the latter with ever more violence and work.

Most of us are familiar with the domestication of plant and animal species, but we rarely entertain the idea that as human beings we ourselves have been domesticated, and that this is an ongoing, continuous process. Domestication is at the root of how people learn to internalize and accept the logic of antisemitism and racism. Domestication is also at the root of the pressure exerted on minorities to assimilate into the dominant culture. The process of assimilation (in effect a subcategory of domestication) illuminates the intractable problems facing minorities living within western society.

Domestication is rarely spoken of outside of certain fairly narrow contexts despite the fact that it is a process our civilization has relied upon from the beginning. Although he mentions it in passing, John Lanchester touches on the importance of domestication as a component of the development of civilization in his New Yorker article, "The Case Against Civilization":¹⁴

*Anatomically modern humans have been around for roughly two hundred thousand years. For most of that time, we lived as hunter-gatherers. Then, about twelve thousand years ago, came what is generally agreed to be the definitive before-and-after moment in our ascent to planetary dominance: the Neolithic Revolution. **This was our adoption of...a "package" of agricultural innovations, notably the domestication of***

animals such as the cow and the pig, and the transition from hunting and gathering to planting and cultivating crops [emphasis added]. The most important of these crops have been the cereals—wheat, barley, rice, and maize—that remain the staples of humanity's diet. Cereals allowed population growth and the birth of cities, and, hence, the development of states and the rise of complex societies.

The domestication of plants and animals was essentially the first step in the creation of systems of oppression. The domestication of sexuality, gender and women's reproductive capacities are on the same spectrum as the domestication of horses for their labor, cows for their milk, pigs for their flesh, and sheep for their wool, etc. Domestication is essentially the process whereby one's reason for being is appropriated by an oppressive, exploitative force—which then creates systems of logic and institutions to legitimize this exploitation. In *Wild Children Domesticated Dreams*, Layla AbdelRahim maps out how institutions play a key role in the process of domestication:

To organize...civilized society, the institution first has to delegitimize wild knowledge and then institute authority in order to legitimize the needs of the hierarchy...

One major example of "wild knowledge" being delegitimized is how patriarchy as an institution created systems of authority to domesticate and subjugate women. Those branded as witches, the holders of "wild knowledge," were persecuted and even burned alive to send a strong message to others. Religion and other control mechanisms that manifest as social institutions were used to legitimize the regulation and control of women and their reproductive capacity. Recall what was said earlier about "breeding" and its connection to civilization. AbdelRahim continues:

*...the needs of the institution are usually in conflict with the needs of the people it colonizes. **Through education, the institution thus occupies concrete bodies and minds. As domesticated people come to embody their institutions, the civilized come to see institutions as natural, inevitable and organic***[emphasis added].

If domestication is the root, assimilation is the branch—the more visible aspect of the oppressive relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. Assimilation, and the pathways it can offer into the halls of privilege, helps western society maintain its dominance and eliminate competing paradigms. For those with their own unique culture but no power or influence in society, the offer to trade their culture for acceptance through assimilation is usually one that is too good to refuse. In most cases, assimilation appears as the only option as the alternatives are usually exclusion, persecution, poverty, and so forth.

The fraught nature of assimilation gradually became clear to Martin Luther King Jr., who, near the end of his life, had this to say during a conversation with Harry Belafonte:

"I've come upon something that disturbs me deeply. We have fought hard and long for integration, as I believe we should have, and I know that we will win. But I've come to believe we're integrating into a burning house."

Although his somewhat dubious solution to this dilemma was for Black people to become "firefighters," he was touching upon one of the main contradictions of the modern era. Western society is dangerous, destructive and corrupt to its core, but assimilating into this society's institutions is often the only way for minorities to achieve economic and social stability, at least in the near term. Assimilation is a rational decision within the confines of our society based on economic and social concerns. If the dominant group controls access to resources and social capital, the more one becomes like the dominant group the easier one's life will be. Additionally, shedding unique cultural traits is often a prerequisite for assimilation. For example, most Jewish people pursuing assimilation in either Europe or the United States during the 19th and early 20th century would never have been seen in public speaking yiddish or wearing traditional orthodox clothing or hairstyles.

Few have done more to shed light on the relationship of Jewish people to western society than Hannah Arendt. Undoubtedly she is a controversial figure; her European chauvinism and conflation of Stalinism and Nazism are very problematic. Despite this, her work is essential to understanding the complexities of Jewish assimilation into a generally hostile and antisemitic society. Of special interest to us here is how Arendt's work reveals the ways in which Jewish people were practically forced to participate in and assimilate into systems that would later turn against them. For centuries, Jewish people were segregated and shunned within Christian Europe because of their unique culture and religious practices. They only gained equal rights and comprehensive civic freedoms around the same time chattel slavery in the United States came to an end. After their emancipation period Jewish Europeans were able to pursue the higher education, professions and social positions that had long been denied to them. Essentially they were given a seat at the table—that is, if they were willing to navigate the fraught assimilation process while seeking acceptance into French, English, or German etc culture.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt explains in great detail the choppy waters European Jewish people had to navigate as they made their way through an antisemitic society. In the chapter entitled "The Jews and Society" she drops quite a few gems that help us understand the relationship between Jewish assimilation and a shifting antisemitic landscape:

Society, confronted with political, economic and legal equality for Jews, made it quite clear that none of its classes was prepared to grant them social equality, and that only exceptions from the Jewish community would be received. Jews who heard the strange compliment that they were exceptions, exceptional Jews, knew quite well that it was this very ambiguity—that they were Jews and yet presumably not like Jews—which opened the doors of society to them.

Arendt describes the psychological effects of assimilation and navigating the expectations of the dominant society:

The behavior patterns of assimilated Jews, determined by this continuous concentrated effort to distinguish themselves, created a Jewish type that is recognizable everywhere. Instead of being defined by nationality or religion, Jews were being transformed into a social group whose members shared certain psychological attributes and reactions, the sum total of which was supposed to constitute “Jewishness.” In other words, Judaism became a psychological quality...

...Jewishness, after having been converted into a psychological quality, could easily be perverted [by society] into a vice.

Victor Klemperer adds further insights on this topic in *The Language of the Third Reich*:

When did the Jews at last emerge from their segregation, from their special sty, and when were they at last integrated into the nation as a whole? The emancipation goes back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, but is only implemented fully in Germany in the 1860's, and in Galician Austria a tightly knit group of Jews does not want to relinquish its unique way of life, and thereby repeatedly provides those who speak of an un-European people, an Asiatic race of Jews, the concrete illustrative material they are looking for.

Those who would not or could not assimilate had the most difficult path to tread, but socially and psychologically, assimilation also took its toll on those who gained some material benefits from it.

Another key aspect of domestication is the creation and enforcement of strict categories of identity. The

THE USUAL KNEE JERK REACTION TO THIS SORT OF POISONOUS VITRIOL IS TO TRY AND SNATCH WESTERN CIVILIZATION FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THE RACISTS AND CLAIM THAT IT IS ACTUALLY WONDERFUL, DIVERSE, AND NOT UNDER THE DOMINION AND STEWARDSHIP OF DANGEROUS WHITE MEN.

enforcement of strict identity categories is thankfully something that has been increasingly called into question, especially by those yearning to be free from the rigid norms of gender and sexuality. We can trace this civilized need for classification to the process of domestication. The first step in exploiting someone or something is naming it and assigning it a category based on its usefulness to the owners of society. The roles and categories within a rigid hierarchical and patriarchal system exist to satisfy the needs and desires of the owners of the system. Within this hierarchy to which living beings have been assigned, plants and animals are at the bottom with no agency and little regard for their autonomy which helps explain why we're currently living through the sixth mass extinction.

As time passed, the increasing complexities of nation-states and the social forces set in motion by the era of colonization created a wide variety of new categories that manifested in the creation of pseudo-scientific race theories. These race theories had one major goal: to explain and justify the 'natural' subordinate role of some and the 'natural' superiority of others. Before the so-called Enlightenment, religion was used to justify a person's position in society be they a king or a peasant. In the age of 'reason,' a new framework was created to justify both old and new forms of oppression.

Layla AbdelRahim helps us understand how the enforcement of identity categories and “the hierarchy of predatory relationships” are crucial to systems of oppression: “The construct of “difference” provides the platform for all forms of exploitation, discrimination, slavery and extermination...” This construction of difference within the civilized system of categorization and classification reached new heights of insanity and absurdity during WWII. One of the most dramatic examples of this was the Nazi Germany edict forcing Jewish people to wear the yellow star. The Nazi's genocidal ambitions could not have been carried out without 1) clearly defining who was Jewish according to their racialist definition, and 2) then isolating their victims from the general public. This isolation happened gradually, relying on propaganda and laws that enforced segregation. Victor Klemperer's diaries give us a clear window into how this process unfolded. Shortly before the yellow star edict was announced he recorded this on August 2nd, 1941:

Frau Voss continues to be bitter about the notice given on telephones [several days earlier the Gestapo announced a ban on Jewish people owning telephones]. She has to go to an “Aryan” birthday, she would prefer not to go, she cannot bear to see any Aryans anymore. We are sitting at our evening meal, she returns, extremely happy and excited. A lady from western Germany was there; she said that Saxony and Silesia were full of west Germans “who cannot

stand it anymore,” who wanted to get a good nights sleep. Air raid shelter every night, destruction and dead everywhere. ... “And there was another woman there, I thought a National Socialist, and I was careful, and she could not possibly have known that I am not Aryan. She talked with tears in her eyes about a Jewish friend who had suffered so much...”

The Frau Voss referred to here was Klemperer’s roommate in the “Jews House” where they shared an apartment after being forced from their homes. Like Klemperer, she was born in Germany, had been married to an ‘Aryan’ and was a convert to Christianity with many ‘Aryan’ acquaintances. Her sociability and information gathering talents helped Klemperer paint a clear picture of what was happening at the time. Frau Voss’ ability to gauge the mood of non-Jewish people, both friends and strangers, was one of her talents, but this came to an end after the introduction of the yellow star. Once Jewish people like Frau Voss were no longer able to blend in, their isolation from society and ghettoization was near-complete.

Under the Nazis the racialism and prejudice of western society, built on a foundation of systems of hierarchy and categorization, reached new heights (or rather depths) that would culminate in genocide. For western society genocide was nothing new, but what was new was the fact that assimilated European minorities who had managed to join society’s institutions were violently expelled from these institutions, and then ultimately from the world itself. We should not delude ourselves that this cannot happen again to any of our society’s minorities, and this is why it’s important to understand, deconstruct and reject the logic that leads to these tragic outcomes.

Civilized Barbarism

Wilderness is often associated with suffering and barbarism while civilization is presented as a place of safety and security buffering us from all those scary animals and natural forces. The Jewish experience within Europe, particularly in the 20th century, reveals just how dangerous life in civilization can be. In reality, those who have found themselves racially and ethnically targeted by our society might have had better luck with wild animals.

Nazi Germany has become synonymous with racial terror despite the fact that this system of racial terror that has run rampant across our globe over the past 500 years was not instigated by Germany, but in large part by British, Dutch, French and Spanish colonialism. While committing genocide on a massive scale and enslaving many millions, these same states were busy proclaiming the superiority and enlightened nature of western society. The United States, Canada, Australia, and most South American states are heirs to this tradition of hypocrisy built on a foundation of racial

terror.

The extent to which the Nazis drew inspiration from U.S. laws has been well documented, especially by James Q. Whitman in his book, *Hitler’s American Model*.¹⁵ Keep in mind that at the time the Nazis were carefully studying its racist laws, the U.S. was widely regarded as a ‘beacon on a hill’ and a bastion of democracy and prosperity. The infamous Nuremberg laws that outlawed sexual relationships between Jews and non-Jews were patterned on similar ‘race defilement’ laws crafted decades earlier in the United States. So-called ‘interracial marriage’ was illegal in the United States until 1967, a full twenty-two years after the defeat of Nazism.

Richard L. Rubenstein, author of *The Cunning of History: The Holocaust and the American Future*, saw the “severe measures” taken against Jewish people as a logical continuity of western society’s violence towards minorities rather than a freakish, illogical outburst. Rubenstein sees the Nazi concentration and death camps as an evolution of a technique of dehumanization that began during the Transatlantic Slave Trade:

The parallels between the treatment of the slaves in transit from Africa to the New World and the death-camp inmates are unhappily instructive. According to Elkins, the process by which the slaves were transported from Africa to the Caribbean, where they were stripped, deprived of name, identity, and language, and then sold as chattel at auction in the United States, anticipated the process by which the Nazis shipped their victims in overcrowded freight trains, compelled them to strip, exchanged their names for numbers and then either incarcerated them as slave labor or murdered them outright. The sea journey of the slave ships was a horror comparable only to the German freight cars. The same calculating rationality that was to figure in the work of the German bureaucrats was already at work in the New England and British sea captains who transported the sorrowful cargo.

Unlike the many other atrocities committed by the standard bearers of western civilization, what happened during WWII was well documented by the perpetrators themselves. The millions who perished in Belgian-administered Congo under the control of King Leopold II are for the most part forever lost to history; but thanks to extensive and meticulously researched databases we can reconstruct the lives of those murdered by the Nazis. The German government has published a particularly useful educational and research tool, the Memorial Book¹⁶:

The main objective is to compile a list, as completely and precisely as possible, of the approximately 600,000 Jewish residents, who had been residing in Germany anytime between 1933–1945—borders of the Reich as outlined on 31 December 1937—and who had been

persecuted because of their Jewish origin or Jewish belief by the National Socialist regime.

A work in progress, it has so far compiled over 170,000 names of known victims of Nazi persecution. Many of those who fled Nazi Germany as refugees have used the database to find information about their family and friends; the database can also be used to verify historical accounts like Victor Klemperer's diary and the many people mentioned within it. Far from overwhelming the researcher with numbers and statistics, this Memorial Book actualizes each victim of fascism as an individual worthy of remembrance.

The above-mentioned Frau Voss was the widow of a priest turned banker who held a high position in the German national banking system. She appears quite often in Victor Klemperer's diaries. According to Klemperer's account, she was a very social, somewhat childish and fun loving person who enjoyed doting on her friends and acquaintances. She was also a cat lover and a great cook. His diaries bring their situation in the "Jew's House" to life in all its thorny details, documenting how the strain of the situation led to resentments, occasional fierce arguments and petty squabbles, highlighting the enormous stress everyone was under. Sometimes his characterizations of his fellow sufferer seem unfair, not taking into account that Frau Voss went from living a widow's comfortable upper-middle class life to working as a forced laborer in a munitions factory facing the near-constant threat of imprisonment, deportation and death.

In the autumn of 1942, along with the majority of Dresden's remaining Jewish population, Frau Voss was forced to move once again, this time to a detention camp on the outskirts of the city (Klemperer and other Jewish people who were married to 'Aryans' were spared from the camp). The Hellerberg detention camp was one of thousands of Nazi internment facilities that supported the concentration camp system, and we may never have known about it if not for Klemperer's diary and the fact that film of Dresden's Jews being interned miraculously survived.

You can view a clip of people being interned at the camp on the United States Holocaust Museum's website.¹⁷ Unfortunately, the video clip echoes what we are now seeing on the U.S./Mexico border. The conditions of the barracks camp were horrible—a dozen or more people per room with no privacy, very poor food, poor sanitation, and little to no access to the outside world. As Klemperer notes in his diary, all of this was carried out with cold, ruthless efficiency in the name of national security and protecting 'Aryan' purity. Only a few of the almost 300 people interned at the camp survived; most, including Frau Voss, were murdered shortly after being deported to Auschwitz.

Recent studies revealed that 41 percent of Americans

and two-thirds of millennials don't know what Auschwitz is. This ignorance is not as prevalent in Europe but it is on the rise. Frankly, this is terrifying. As Richard L. Rubenstein explains, Auschwitz is not a freak occurrence but an example of the mutation of already existing racial ideologies and oppressive social dynamics. Had the Nazis won the war, Auschwitz would have become a model for the institutionalized enslavement and ethnic cleansing of Poles, Slavs, the disabled and others who were deemed racially or genetically inferior.

Auschwitz represents the height of civilized barbarism and the logical end point of racial ideology. In addition to its sprawling slave labor complexes, it was literally a 'death factory' operating with a factory's methodical efficiency. People were not only murdered there but were also enslaved to corporations to generate profits and experimented upon in the name of science. Not only was Auschwitz the most 'advanced' extermination/slave labor facility and the place where the majority of assimilated western European Jewish people perished, it was the model for a new type of society—the Necropolis.

It is tempting to view all of this as a ghastly one off event that we can shudder at then put out of our minds as it has no relevance to today's much more enlightened society. We embrace that narrative at our own peril. Rubenstein ends his book, *The Cunning of History*, with reflections on what the Holocaust reveals about the nature of civilization:

We are sadly forced to conclude that we live in a world that is functionally godless and that human rights and dignity depend upon the power of one's community to grant or withhold them from its members.

Thus, the Holocaust bears witness to the advance of civilization, I repeat, to the advance of civilization, to the point at which large scale massacre is no longer a crime and the state's sovereign powers are such that millions can be stripped of their rights and condemned to the world of the living dead.

Civilization means slavery, wars, exploitation, and death camps. It also means medical hygiene, elevated religious ideals, beautiful art, and exquisite music. It is an error to imagine that civilization and savage cruelty are antitheses.

Rubenstein comes so close to seeing the light but then loses the plot with this next bit:

On the contrary, in every organic process, the antitheses always reflect a unified totality, and civilization is an organic process. Mankind never emerged out of savagery into civilization. Mankind moved from one type of civilization involving its distinctive modes of both sanctity and inhumanity to another. In our times

the cruelties, like most other aspects of our world, have become far more effectively administered than ever before. They have not and they will not cease to exist. Both creation and destruction are inseparable aspects of what we call civilization.

What he fails to grasp is that civilization and the logic of its institutions are at the root of this "savagery." His belief that cruelties will inevitably persist is based on the assumption that civilization as we know it and its institutions will continue to exist. He has much to say about civilization, including some very useful insights, however, notice that he has nothing to say about wilderness besides a remark about "savagery" which is meant to represent the state humans lived in before entering civilization. The opposite of civilization is not savagery but life, spontaneity, freedom, and the ecstasy of living on one's own terms in harmony with the forces that brought us into being. Is there pain and hardship in wilderness? Of course, but it is certainly not institutionalized, and those moments are far outweighed by the joy of being immersed in the glorious web of life.

A New World

The civilized world is often presented as a place of safety, beauty, culture, and abundance. Wilderness on the other hand is usually portrayed as a brutally indifferent place full of pain, suffering, hunger and insecurity where everyone is at the mercy of the 'survival of the fittest' doctrine. However, if we look closely at what is happening within civilization, specifically western civilization, we can see that perhaps we've been the victims of a very old and ongoing propaganda campaign. The horrors we've grown familiar with (the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Holocaust, settler-colonialism, pogroms, genocides, institutionalized patriarchy and all the other social ills) do not happen in the wilderness and in societies more closely aligned with wildness.

Wildness represents freedom, autonomy and balance. In contrast, civilization represents authoritarianism, loss of freedom, and chaotic imbalance. To be a revolutionary is to align oneself more with the logic of wilderness than with the logic of civilization, whether one does so consciously or not. Rosa Luxembour, the Polish-Jewish revolutionary who galvanized German politics, understood the depth of the crisis in her own time and did not shy away from fiercely opposing this destructive system. Today, this crisis manifests as ever-increasing poverty, political dysfunction, ongoing wars and threats of war, and with the wanton and disgraceful destruction of nature and our precious environment. Like Luxembour, we must take a clear and sober view¹⁸ of what is right in front of us:

Violated, dishonored, wading in blood, dripping filth—there stands bourgeois society. This is it [in reality]. Not all spic and span and moral, with pretense

to culture, philosophy, ethics, order, peace, and the rule of law—but the ravening beast, the witches' sabbath of anarchy, a plague to culture and humanity. Thus it reveals itself in its true, its naked form.

Today, we face the choice exactly as Friedrich Engels foresaw it a generation ago: either the triumph of imperialism and the collapse of all civilization as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration—a great cemetery. Or the victory of socialism...

Moving away from capitalism and towards socialism is of course a step in the right direction, however, the poisonous and persistent roots of antisemitism, racism, and other systems of oppression require us to dig deeper if we want lasting solutions. We should also entertain the idea that a managed collapse, or a managed retreat from ecocide, institutional racism, perpetual warfare, patriarchy, etc, might be preferable to hoping we can tinker around with an inherently destructive engine.

Critiques of civilization like this essay are all about exploring the deeper structural issues that transcend politics and the mostly failed liberal strategies of 'anti-oppression.' It should not be considered taboo or strange to question how the emergence of this relatively new kind of society affects our daily lives today.

The crisis has been thousands of years in the making, but we don't have thousands of years to find a solution to the incredibly huge and complex problems facing today's world. Solutions will not be discovered by focusing entirely on political ideology and economic systems, but in re-imagining what it means to be a human being and rediscovering our true place in the world and its community of diverse life. In part this means rediscovering the value of wilderness and making space for other beings who deserve a chance to live and thrive.

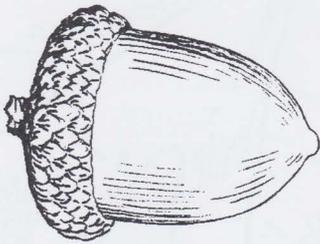
As the European Jewish experience of the 19th and 20th century has shown us, the moral arc of history does not necessarily bend towards justice. The so-called Jewish Question arose organically from the fact that western society eschews cultural nuance and complexity and thrives on utilitarian homogeneity. Jewish people have historically faced persecution in Europe because institutions like the Catholic Church and Protestant denominations that controlled society had no place for them. When racial ideology was grafted onto already existing antisemitism, and when the international order protecting human rights crumbled, even those who had converted to Christianity and fully assimilated into European society were not safe.

Passing legislation to limit antisemitic speech and actions is only a band-aide solution. Legislation can be reversed. Protections can be withdrawn. Because minorities become especially vulnerable during times

of war, the institutions that thrive on war, violence and hatred must be dismantled. We must accept the fact that only radical, institutional, structural changes to our society can once and for all liberate us from the threat of antisemitism, racism, and other forms of oppression. We cannot believe that we can have an inclusive, just society that somehow coexists with racist, colonial, warmongering institutions.

Between the climate crisis, enduring systems of oppression, the threat of nuclear war, and all the rest, it's difficult at times to be optimistic. Yet to the degree that it's possible to find a way out of this mess, Rosa Luxembour is one of those who offers us a way forward. Even back then, nearly one hundred years ago, she realized that the hour was much too late for us to be satisfied with merely rearranging the deck chairs for a more comfortable position on the *Titanic*. She understood that drastic times call for drastic measures in both thought and in action. Perhaps most importantly, she recognized that while human suffering is universal, the only way to end this suffering is with a dramatic and revolutionary break with the status quo. The following was written by Luxembour to a friend while she was in prison for her anti-war activism during WWI. Both revolutionary and poignant, I'll let her have the last word:

Above all one must at all times live as a complete human being [...] read only the good ones, not such kitsch as the "Spinoza novel" which you sent me. What do you want with this theme of the "special suffering of the Jews"? I am just as much concerned with the poor victims on the rubber plantations of Putumayo, the Blacks in Africa with whose corpses the Europeans play catch [...] they resound with me so strongly that I have no special place in my heart for the ghetto. I feel at home in the entire world, wherever there are clouds and birds and human tears."

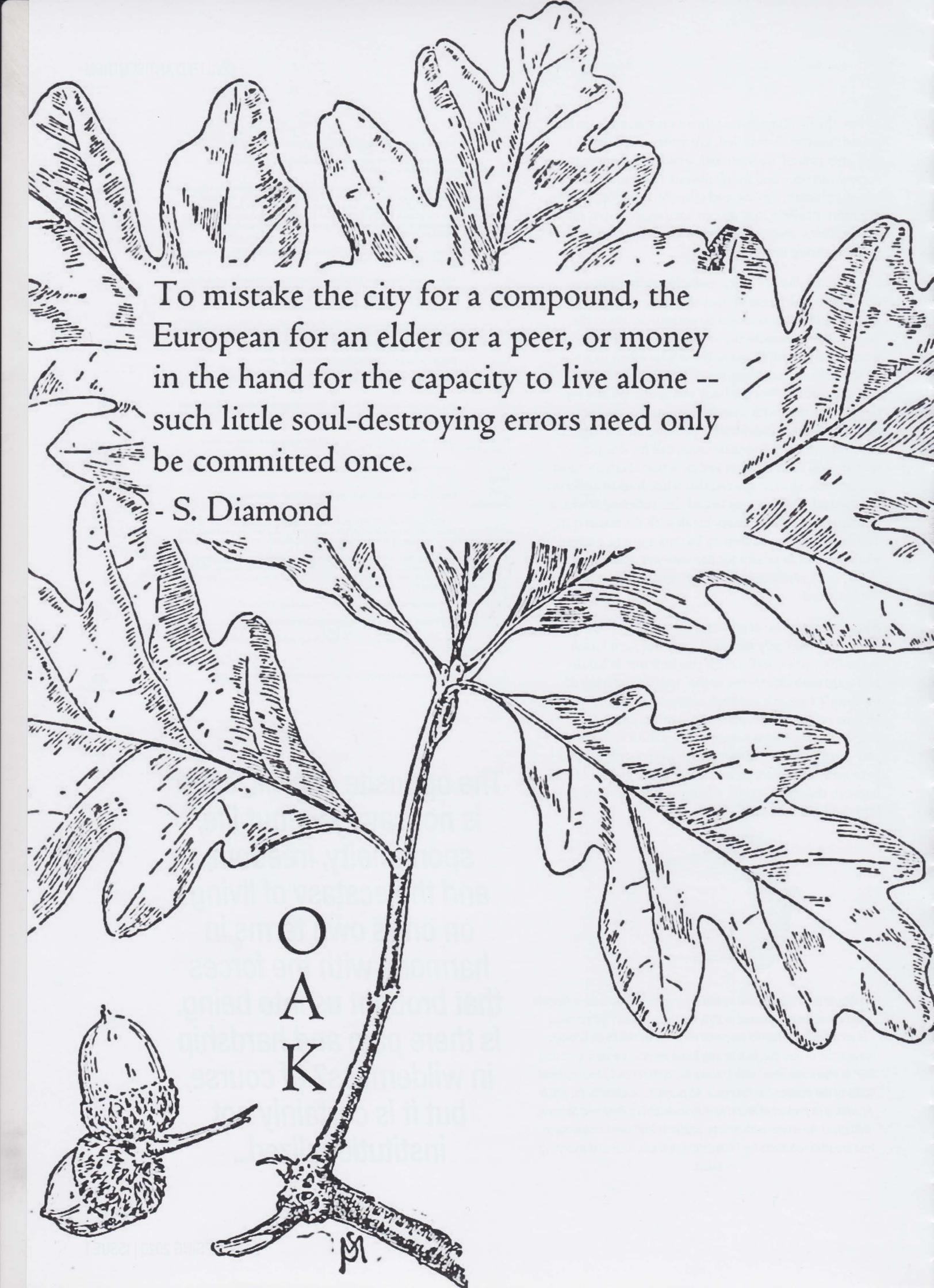


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Endnotes

1. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/civilization>
2. Wild Children – Domesticated Dreams: Civilization and the Birth of Education. Fernwood Publishing, 17th May, 2013
3. Some noteworthy contributions to critiques of civilization include: Civilization and Its Discontents by Sigmund Freud; The Crisis of the Modern World by René Guénon; Annihilation of Caste by B.R. Ambedkar; Silent Spring by Rachel Carson, and Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her by Susan Griffin. Recent contemporary critiques of civilization are associated more with post left and green anarchist philosophers like John Zerzan, Layla AbdelRahim and Daniel Quinn.
4. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-pittsburgh-shooting-and-the-dark-specific-logic-of-online-hatred>
5. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/john-zerzan-patriarchy-civilization-and-the-origins-of-gender>
6. <https://newpol.org/review/frankfurt-school-and-jews/>
7. Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments by Horkheimer and Adorno, Stanford University Press, 2002. Originally published in 1947. Quoted text can be found in the 'Elements of Antisemitism: Limits of Enlightenment' chapter.
8. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_military_history
9. <https://www.livescience.com/37672-ancient-urban-warfare-site-threatened.html>
10. <http://movies2.nytimes.com/books/98/03/29/specials/baldwin-antisem.html>
11. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Old_New_Land
12. <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/1903-herzl-proposes-kenya-as-jewish-home-1.5391077>
13. https://www.democracynow.org/2014/8/8/noam_chomsky_what_israel_is_doing
14. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/09/18/the-case-against-civilization>
15. "America in the early 20th century was the leading racist jurisdiction in the world," says Whitman, who is a professor at Yale Law School. "Nazi lawyers, as a result, were interested in, looked very closely at, [and] were ultimately influenced by American race law."
16. <https://www.history.com/news/how-the-nazis-were-inspired-by-jim-crow>
17. <http://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/intro.html>
18. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn599830>
19. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/junius/index.htm>

The opposite of civilization is not savagery but life, spontaneity, freedom, and the ecstasy of living on one's own terms in harmony with the forces that brought us into being. Is there pain and hardship in wilderness? Of course, but it is certainly not institutionalized...



To mistake the city for a compound, the European for an elder or a peer, or money in the hand for the capacity to live alone -- such little soul-destroying errors need only be committed once.

- S. Diamond

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O LOST...?

BY JOHN ZERZAN

O lost, and by the wind grieved, ghost, come back again."

--Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*

The temper of the times is that of emptiness, exhaustion. A sense of a disintegrating end-time in which the endgame plays itself out slowly, corrosively. Both physically and spiritually, the life-world seems to be buckling under a massive weight or force of estrangement.

Dialogue, relationships, everything in peril.

As usual, this didn't arrive overnight. I think of the unrelieved negativity of the late '70s band Joy Division. Its lead singer, Ian Curtis, was a suicide at age 23. Named for a Nazi sex-slave brothel, Joy Division's bleakness foreshadowed today's general immiseration. See Mark Fisher's *Ghosts of My Life* or his lecture "The Slow Cancellation of the Future."

As society darkens, unlikely voices make themselves heard. Beginning in the '90s, novelist Michel Houellebecq has pointed to a landscape with finally no energy left, a terminal emptiness. The overall theme of misery in his work has an eschatological quality; it's not surprising that Houellebecq, while seen as a nasty, wholly non-PC character, views religion as society's only hope. His outlook seems to be widely shared; Ben Jeffery calls it "depressive realism."

Sociologist-philosopher Bruno Latour, with his post-secularity notion, appears to think in a similar vein. Not calling for religious wars, obviously, but for an acknowledgment of belief as perhaps a last footing for deteriorating existence.

Surrender of one kind or another calls. One-time Dark Mountain nature activist and civilization critic Paul Kingsnorth threw in the towel not long ago. His reward was a New York Times Magazine feature (April 29, 2014) in which he announced that the idea of overcoming this nightmare is a delusion. Kingsnorth deepened the level of defeat in a June 21, 2019 Emergence Magazine podcast, "The Language of the Master." He argues that modern written language is a tool of ecocide, but that there is no solution. In fact, the primary fallacy of language, he avers, is in setting up

reality in terms of "problems" to be "solved." Thus not only is there no hope of altering reality, the very idea or conception of doing so is delusional! Could there be a more supine response to the reigning Horror Show?

More important viscerally in our everyday lives is the amount of suffering we experience. For about a year, I've tried to be there for a very close friend who lives with suicide on a very real daily basis. I have a feeling that most of you know, or know of more

individuals than ever who are in extremis.

For some, surrender is not an option. Ultimate redemption still beckons, and they will play it out to the end. As did courageous Will Van Spronsen, who died in battle against unfreedom, summer 2019. -July 2019



Regional Collapse, Regional Liberation or: The Primitivist Theory of Combined & Uneven Development

Artxmis Graham Thoreau

Introduction

The spread of Capitalism and Industrialism was predominantly a 'Western' phenomenon, which slowly disseminated among the world through trade, and colonial and imperial relations.

The centers of industrial-economics, or the First World, outsources the process of primary industry -- the extraction and collection of natural resources to the Third World. The First World then takes this industry and turns it into secondary industry -- the goods themselves -- manufacturing.

With the expansion of decentralized production, we see a more efficient system of the development of technologies and general goods in the First World, while the Third World provides the basis for that system. It is no secret that the Third World is under the systems of neo-colonialism and imperialism, their labor and resources extracted at an unfair, and uneven rate. This creates a hierarchical system of power, creating an interesting situation in the fight against Industry: If civilization and industry did not come across the world evenly, then we cannot expect the collapse to act in such a linear, immediate manner.

Historical Precedence

In the words of Leon Trotsky, "...[T]he entire history of mankind is governed by the law of uneven development." Trotsky saw development as uneven, meaning the world does not progress at the same pace, either through economic developments or cultural norms. It also would include secondary characteristics such as population density.

Even within a single state, we can see developments that do not progress equally. The greatest example is the North-South divide of the United States. Where the North embraced and grew under the Industrial Revolution, limiting the need for slave labor, in exchange for a wage system; the South kept a primarily agrarian economy, relying more so on slave labor and plantation systems.

However, the North and South were of course not isolated from one another, but had constant relations, positive and negative. The North was able to finance their industrialization through taxes on imports, many of which impacted the South more so than the North.

Besides the North favoring an industrial, free-market economy, and the South's preference of agrarian slavery; the city-scape and transportation methods were vastly different, due to the factors of economic differences.

Industrialism allowed the North to enlarge their urban areas. The North's largest cities in 1860 were New York City and Philadelphia, whose populations were roughly 813,669 and 565,529, respectively. Contrast this to the South in the same year, whose largest cities were New Orleans and Charleston, with populations at 168,675 and 40,522, respectively. The North's

If we understand the rise of civilization, agriculture, capital and technology as uneven, and sometimes in completely isolated areas, how can we expect the collapse of industrial / world society to be some sort of global apocalypse? We can't.

two largest cities as listed alone added to 1,379,198 and the South's added only to 209,197. Only one-tenth of Southerners lived in urban areas, while the North held one-quarter in their urban areas. (Information from Civil War Gazette & National Parks Service).

The North also held over 7/10ths of all railroads, allowing a growing effective method transportation of both people and goods. This also served important during the Civil War. In contrast, the South utilized horse-drawn carriages and steamboats more often.

Perhaps another example of this theory of development can be shown, but more on the side of 'combined' rather than 'uneven.' For this, I will cite two passages from Trotsky, the main proponent of the theory:

"The meagerness not only of Russian feudalism, but of all the old Russian history, finds its most depressing expression in the absence of real mediaeval cities as centres of commerce and craft. Handicraft did not succeed in Russia in separating itself from agriculture, but preserved its character of home industry. The old Russian cities were commercial, administrative, military and manorial – centres of consumption, consequently, not of production. [...] The chief roads of Russian trade, moreover, led across the border, thus from time immemorial giving the leadership to foreign commercial capital, and imparting a semi-colonial character to the whole process, in which the Russian trader was a mediator between the Western cities and the Russian villages. This kind of economic relation developed further during the epoch of Russian capitalism and found its extreme expression in the imperialist war[...] The law of combined development reveals itself most indubitably, however, in the history and character of Russian industry. Arising late, Russian industry did not repeat the development of the advanced countries, but inserted itself into this development, adapting their latest achievements to its own backwardness. Just as the economic evolution of Russia as a whole skipped over the epoch of craft-guilds and manufacture, so also the separate branches of industry made a series of special leaps over technical productive stages that had been measured in the West by decades. Thanks to this, Russian industry developed at certain periods with extraordinary speed. Between the first revolution and the war, industrial production in Russia approximately doubled. This has seemed to certain Russian historians a sufficient basis for concluding that "we must abandon the legend of backwardness and slow growth." [...]

As Trotsky explains above, Russia's unique development was largely due to the nation's relationship to Western Europe through foreign financing, which can be seen as a growth mitigator and a semi-colonial oppression. This led to a mix of Russia's 'backwardness' (feudal relations

and industry (from the West).

Interestingly, the United States also had its own combined development, as it had skipped the stage of feudalism, or any pre-existing mode of production, for that matter. Instead, it was born among competing Western nations, predominantly Spain, France, and Britain in the later years. While it did begin mostly as an agrarian nation, it did not have the 'tributary' aspects of Feudalism. This may be an explanation for the exaggerated North-South economic divide. Also, the historically large amount of slave labor, shared by the North and South, may have also been caused by this phenomenon - as it had not developed its own cultural economic identity.

Compressions and Descalings

The progression of technology and culture has not developed on a totally linear path, but rather a complex series of 'compressions' and 'descalings.' A compression (or acceleration) is seen in developing countries' pseudo-industrial developments paired with their more tribal or primitive social organization. A descaling is more in-line with the fall of political, economic and/or technological capabilities of the post-Soviet states.

Compressions and Descalings can come in different intensities. For example, the descplings of the post-Soviet states is hardly comparable to the situation in which Western Rome fell into smaller, eventual Nation-States. The Soviet Union, under the New Economic Policy and the 5-year plans of Lenin and Stalin respectively, accelerated scientific, technological, agricultural, and cultural developments under the influence of their respective systems, but also due to relations to other countries. The Soviet Union, despite holding contrarian ideology, held trade relations with countries like the United States, Canada and those in Western Europe. This could include bartering products, hiring foreign construction and engineering firms, and standard credit/cash-for-product trade.

These relations, especially under the first two 5-Year plans between 1928-1937, compressed or rather, accelerated the Soviet industrial system.

Exploitation

While the Soviet Union benefited heavily from these accelerations, other countries did not. Russia, before the Bolsheviks, had a semi-colonial relation to Western Europe; today, areas of Asia, South America and Africa have similar relations to pre-Bolshevik Russia. It creates a culture where these developing, exploited countries are "inserted...into this development, adapting [the West's] latest achievements to its own backwardness."

These countries are victims of exploitation such as neo-colonialism and imperialism. They are given foreign aid, machinery, and corporate and political influence from the West only as long as they use it to benefit their oh so benevolent benefactors.

With the growing environmental crisis, there will be a larger and larger cause for 'green' and 'sustainable' technology. Such issues include the health issues from producing Silicon, impacting both miners and the environment. Silicon is currently the most popular material in Solar Cells.

But health issues are the least of our worries, especially in the developed world, where health and work codes are most advanced. Instead, it is the Developing World where the highest price has been paid for humanity's rare mineral addiction.

Take the Democratic Republic of Congo, where 60 percent of cobalt, a material popular in batteries, is mined. Excessive human rights abuses, child labor and environmental negligence have been birthed by the growing market for cobalt, especially under the guise of electric vehicles. Coltan is mined primarily in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Brazil and China, and this production has constantly stirred what can be called Coltan Ethics. Almost all the listed countries have been accused of human rights and child labor abuse, either in the extraction or processing of the materials, according to the International Labor Rights Forum. Coltan of course is used primarily in smartphones and computers, a large 'necessity' in today's day-to-day life.

Many companies like Apple only temporarily ceased buying materials from countries like Democratic Republic of Congo after large reports of slave conditions were released in 2016 and 2017, despite smaller reports repeating the same horrid information years prior. Apple has even moved to purchase those materials from China, despite having their own disastrous human-rights and ecological issues. China even has their hands in the DRC, so this is more a round-about purchase than benevolent market decisions on the side of Apple and others. So, evidently, this growing Green Revolution is not as sustainable as one may believe.

Some may make the case for Socialist or Communist relations as a solution to this exploitation, but there simply is a lack of evidence to show the end of capital is the end of all exploitation. Citing Marx and Co. as prophets is only an appeal to authority, not an analysis of previous socialist experiments or 'post-Socialist' states.

Regional Collapse

The above-mentioned information may very well seem irrelevant to the Primitivist movement, and more in line with Communist rhetoric, and this is true. Most talk of exploitation is more associated with a critique of class society than technology.

However, this does not mean we cannot adopt Communist analysis for our means. It also gives us the basis of a more realistic analysis. Where many Primitivists (such as Kaczynski) see a total collapse (either quickly or over a period of time) as feasible, other Primitivists such as myself and John Jacobi instead push for the idea of "regional collapse."

This is not to say we dismiss the idea of a total civilizational collapse, or don't want it, but we don't see it as necessarily realistic. If we understand the rise of civilization, agriculture, capital and technology as uneven, and sometimes in completely isolated areas, how can we expect the collapse of industrial / world society to be some sort of global apocalypse? We can't.

While globalism expands via increasingly effective methods of travel and communication, we may very well see domino effects -- a truly crippling strike can indeed cause a rapid collapse, but an apocalyptic worldview is more cinematic than realistic. The timescale of such a collapse will indeed be quick in a historical sense. For example, Rome's collapse was a collection of mass diseases, financial issues, infighting for power, incompetent leaders and a total complexity that far outweighed any available energy (food, manpower, technology). These collective issues spanned almost 300 years until Rome's total collapse between 476-480.

By regional collapse, we essentially mean regions of varying sizes and cultural diversity will see localized movements against industrial / world society. These movements may or may not share our ideological views. But, whether or not they mean to, they are fighting against industrial/world society. Religious fundamentalism, tribal conflict against larger nations and so forth are examples. This method of revolution, of course, is a sort of balkanization.

We can see inspiration in movements that base their seizure of power through balkanization, such as the Zapatistas. In the words of John Jacobi:

The Zapatistas, of course, are the most obvious example of the latter. In the '90s they utilized new internet technologies and the political power of NGOs to win a sufficient amount of territory for their social ideals. They survive to this day, and have, in most respects, won. Not nearly enough to challenge industrial society, they are nevertheless representative of the kind of balkanization we should like to see in the future.

Furthermore, Jacobi said:

Even since 2001 there have been a number of revolutions, successful insurgent struggles, and related radical political events. That these are only regional supports the author's contention that revolutionary struggle alone cannot solve the global ecological crisis, but there is no reason to dispose of regionally-confined revolutions as a tool in our toolkit. It is entirely feasible to imagine ecologically-based social transformation happening through a series of revolutions, just as Enlightenment ideas started in France, spread to the rest of Europe through Napoleon, and eventually made it to the New World with the American revolutionaries and Simon Bolivar.

And finally:

But if the preservation of traditional communities and the collapse of industrial infrastructure is to be assured, we will need to figure out a way to mobilize these regional phenomena for an offensive against industrial society.

These regional collapses or balkanizations are extreme examples of the above mentioned descalsings, with massive implications in all regards. What is needed is a mobilization and critical support of these movements under our ideological framework. What these specifics will be are beyond us at this time.

In addition, the continued exploitation, unless solved in the near future, will continue to create situations of conflict, mostly those with many parties involved, and with the new rules of engagement.

Jean Baudrillard best put this as: "Today's terrorism is not the product of a traditional history of anarchism, nihilism, or fanaticism. It is instead the contemporary partner of globalization."

Regional Liberation

With our proceeding statements of regional collapse, descalsings and uneven development leading to exploitation, we have come to the last major point in this piece -- our support for regional liberation. This has heavy similarities to the Leninist conception of National Liberation, where a nation has the right to fight against colonial or imperial powers in order to define their own destiny in terms of socialist development.

However, of course, our support comes from challenging the stability of regions, economically and politically. With the rise of multi-party conflicts in exploited nations and semi-colonies, at home and abroad, there is a possible future of Primitivist support and even influence in these events.

Of course, not all regional movements will necessarily benefit our goals. However, tribal insurgencies, certain national movements, religious uprising, anti-Western demonstrations all are possible events in which we can place our critical support or even assert possible influence, either through a future, above ground movement; or disseminate our ideology through other, secret methods.

Typically the regional liberation side of balkanization will likely exist in the Developing world, or areas within developed nations that are 'backwater'. For example, in China, the peasants stand in stark contrast to the urban centers. In America, share-cropping exists in its own contrast to Western development. Internal semi-colonies in America may also prove to be hotbeds of such liberation movements.

Otherwise, balkanization movements, either with politics that are Primitivist or not, will have their own reasons. These may be a result of political turmoil, desertification or other destabilizing events.

Our goal should be to bring these movements under a larger movement or political identity. If not, our support for them will be crucial. Global crime, terrorism, and war will be our situational allies. Pairing with other political and/or religious radicals, and tribal or oppressed national groups, especially those already involved with their own conflicts, will be of good use in our toolkit.

Federation of American Scientists published a piece in 1996 titled "Global Organized Crime" and the following selection makes an interesting point:

[...] Many terrorist groups that engage in violent acts are motivated by specific political causes, such as Egyptian Islamic Fundamentalist terrorists who use violent means to protest their country's current government and Western influences, most organized crime groups are only interested in political power for the security it would provide their organization and are primarily motivated by money.

The international economic threat, posed by Global Organized Crime, in an increasingly global economy is among the major "new" threats to national security. The major economic powers and the less developed nations did not previously share a collective problem of this nature. Global Organized Crime does not just affect a select group of financial institutions or regional areas, it affects international financial networks and economies at a national level.

The author believed such Global Organized Crime threatens our economies and political structures, global and national:

Transnational organized crime groups pose more of a threat to international financial markets as the world economy becomes increasingly interdependent. Laundering billions of dollars in organized crime money worsens national debt problems because the large sums of money are then lost as tax revenue to that country's government.

Global Organized Crime can have a damaging effect on political structures, especially the fragile new systems of government found in the former communist or totalitarian regimes. South American drug cartels have a destabilizing effect on governments through their financial support of local guerilla rebels, such as the Sendero Luminoso in Peru and the Revolutionary Armed Forces in Columbia, who share their animosity toward the government and who exchange protection for money and arms supplies. The Sicilian Mafia have used their economic power over local businesses and banks and their supplies of cash to corrupt politicians, judges and Law Enforcement, assassinating many of those public figures who will not cooperate. Media polls indicate that the many Russians believe the "mafia" is more powerful than the government. As people feel that the government is powerless to stop organized crime, they turn to crime leaders for protection and political institutions begin to deteriorate. Fear of organized crime undermines the credibility of political reform and may encourage support for anti-democratic, hardline politicians such as Russia's Vladimir Zhirinovskiy who promised during the 1993 campaign to end organized crime in 3 months through mass arrest and execution.

The global networks of criminals, terrorists and corrupt government officials and their complex methods of smuggling goods could easily be transferred to the smuggling of nuclear materials on a massive scale. While Global Organized Crime has become increasingly more involved in the transfer of arms, encouraged in part by conflicts in the Balkans and former Soviet Union which proved to be profitable for the Russian and Italian mafia, the smuggling of nuclear materials seems to be currently isolated to select incidents and mostly to amateurs. Russia no longer has the nuclear materials protection that it had during the Cold War when materials were controlled by a tight, centralized system under a politically powerful government. In the past year, the FBI has seized major shipments of nuclear materials in Eastern Europe, including large seizures of cesium in Lithuania and uranium in the Czech Republic. As Global Organized Crime groups become more powerful and as nuclear materials become more vulnerable (through poor management, underpaid desperate workers in the nuclear facilities, and government corruption) the threat becomes more serious.

International drug trafficking poses a threat to the social

fabric of all countries.

So not everyone who will be contributing to the balkanization of society will have ideological motivations: some will simply be in it for self-motivation, whether that be in relation to religious loyalties, community ties, or money. But because these interests naturally clash with the dominant society, they function well as a source of radical political energy and potential.

Social Stress, Community Succour

With the many contradictions in our society, including the above mentioned rise of global crime and self-motivation, we find the foundation of our movement. We must, above all else, fuel the social stresses within society. We must add oil to the fire. Anti-automation and anti-globalism sentiments are examples of what we can put under our influence. Sympathize with those hurt the hardest; cashiers, transportation workers, tool makers, tailors, farm workers, secretaries and receptionists, and waiters/waitresses -- all of whom are considered above 50 percent of risk of automation, threatening the workers, their livelihoods, and families, according to the United Kingdom's Office of National Statistics.

We must also learn from past radical currents, understand their strengths and failings. The Anti-Globalization movement that spanned as far back as the late '80s, and gained traction in the late '90s and early 2000s is one such movement to learn from -- factional unity, propaganda, protest tactics, etc.

Anti-Automation, Anti-Globalism, as listed above are likely candidates for propagating our ideology, and this can be seen historically. Green anarchism, especially the early forms of primitivism and forms of luddism, began to grow within the Anti-Globalization movement. It isn't a leap in logic to see that Green anarchism could take on a larger, more influential role, should a similar movement arise in the coming years, especially as the climate change (that is truly ecocide) situation worsens, displacing thousands and threatening the biosphere at large. By the early days of January 2020, over a billion animals have estimated to have died in the Australian bushfires alone. Thus climate change protests are also of keen interest to us. Even Green technology opposition could be an entry point for our ideas, with hopes to expose the capitalist selling point for what it truly is.

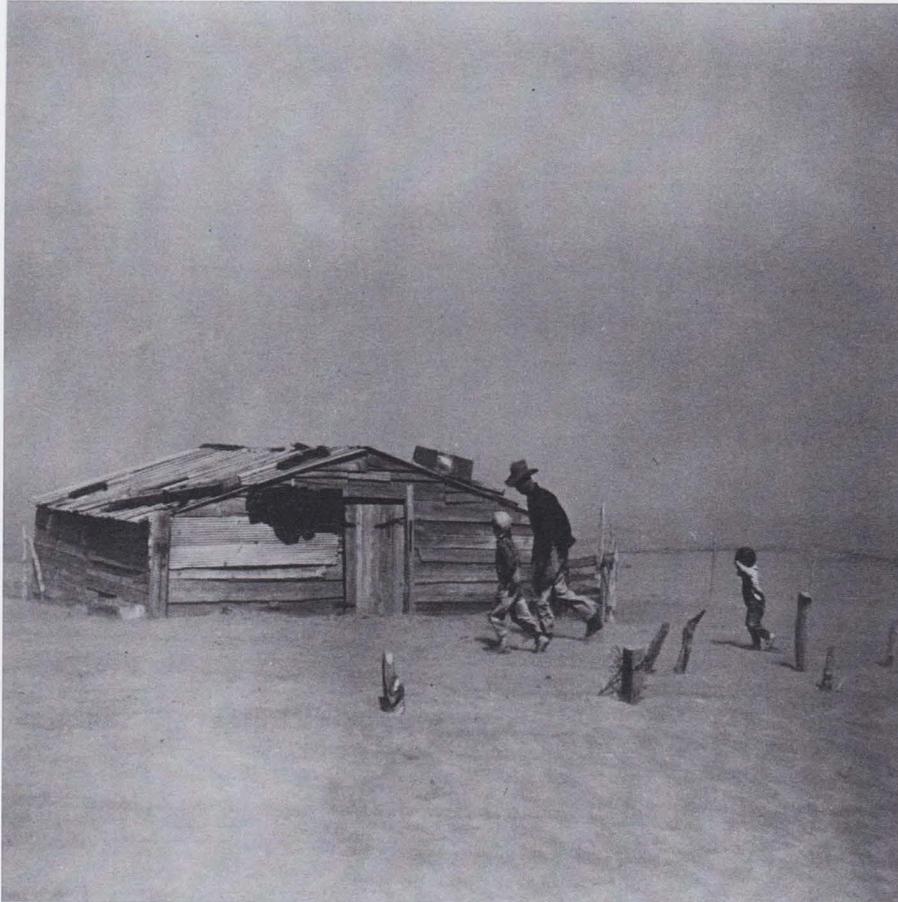
As we propagate our ideology, promote social stress, we must also form community assistance programs. The Black Panther community programs come to mind, especially defense, education, and "Free Breakfast for Children." A truly militant movement cannot hope to succeed without 'positive' dissemination of our

ideas. With the growing climate crisis, and economic frustrations due to technology; our movement must seek to align with those in need, to support and give a helping hand.

This applies especially to lower class communities. Mercy Corps reported:

Climate change threatens the cleanliness of our air, depletes our water sources and limits food supply. It

disrupts livelihoods, forces families from their homes and pushes people into poverty. Research suggests the planet has lost around one-third of its arable land over the past 40 years, in large part due to climate disasters and poor conservation, and every year more trees and soil are lost. More than 1.3 billion people live on deteriorating agricultural land, putting



them at risk of depleted harvests that can lead to worsening hunger, poverty and displacement. Soil is being lost between 10 and 100 times faster than it is forming. And natural disasters are becoming increasingly frequent and destructive. The number of people affected by natural disasters doubled from approximately 102 million in 2015 to 204 million in 2016. Fewer people were affected in 2017, but at a higher price, with the year's events costing a total of \$335 billion and driving a 49 percent increase in economic losses over the previous decade. These damages can be nearly impossible for families living in poverty to overcome. As climate events worsen, people are also threatened by more gradual changes, such as climbing temperatures and declining rainfall.

Through our own methods of community work, we can begin to find sympathy in those we need -- the

down-trodden, those who are the byproducts and 'reserve army' (as Marx says) of industrialization.

A Final Note

While the above-mentioned theories have basis in Marxist, Communist and Far-Left analysis, I by no means agree with their overall goals. Primitivism as a semi-coherent ideology is still young and absolutely should look to a plethora of other, history-tested

ideologies to supplement itself.

As always, the ideas and theories presented here will continue to be tested as Primitivism spreads and is challenged. At no point will I ever imply my ideas are set in stone, or my theories are immortal. I hope for my ideas to be challenged, both in discourse and in action.

Artxmis is co-host of the *Uncivilized Podcast*

A truly militant movement cannot hope to succeed without 'positive' dissemination of our ideas.

WHAT SAVAGES WE MUST BE -FLOWER BOMB

New morals, Same governance

Most movements who attempt to make social change en masse rely on the 'appeal to morality' tactic as a primary method of gaining support. For example, 'Meat is Murder' is a common catch phrase within the animal rights movement. This catch phrase relies on the assumption that all people are against murder since, by the same logic, murder is morally reprehensible. But this assumes that there is a singular, universal morality that guides everyone's decisions when, in reality, it may have different interpretations to some, and only guide those who embrace it to begin with. For example, some self-proclaimed moralists defend the violent manifestations of patriarchy; others advocate white supremacy and many moralists support violence towards non-human animals. 'Common sense' is only common to those who make up the membership of a specific group, who feel the need to universalize its principles. But 'common sense' does not apply to others outside that group who have self-interests that run contrary to its assumed collective 'good'. Often times, it is not a lack of morality that is problematic but the very existence of morality; the set of principles and values independent of the complexity of self-interest, which externally guide and justify one's actions.

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Anthropocentric morality provides the justification for a wide range of eco-destructive and domesticating disasters. Representing a worldview that constructs the human/animal dichotomy, anthropocentrism is reinforced by a capitalist-industrial society that requires the large-scale death and destruction of wildlife in order to exist. The 'righteousness' of human domination provides the socio-political normalization required to pacify any potential for emotional outrage against this systematized violence. So between vegan morality and anthropocentric morality, which one is 'right'?

Morality is a social construct that does not represent a universal truth, nor the interests of all people. While also failing to account for the complex circumstances in which moral-based decisions are impractical, morality limits the scope of decision making and individual action. Therefore, in order to condition morality on a mass scale, rigid obedience is required which necessitates an equally rigid violent apparatus to enforce it.

Obeying morality of any type requires putting aside individual experience and personal motives of self-

interest. This also means disregarding the pragmatic considerations concerning the practical consequences of one's morality-based decision. In society, morals are socially conditioned in order to maintain a standardized system of beliefs. This system discourages individualist thinking and questioning of not only that system, but of the foundations of authority in general. The primary method for this discouragement is to advertise a desired belief as a 'common sense' or normality that 'everyone' knows or follows. This immediately places the group above the individual. With individual self-interest, one might refuse to obey without questioning, therefore group-think is socially reinforced to discourage individual responsibility, creativity, and thinking for one's self. Examples of the deployed socialized hostility towards individualism include labeling those who assert their individuality as 'selfish' or 'egotistic' and therefore undesirable.

A movement that moralizes veganism means instituting another social system that would enforce new morality-based laws and norms. Not only would this require an (ironically) violent apparatus for reinforcement, but would still come without a guarantee of a more 'peaceful', 'compassionate' capitalism. As long as there are systems of governance, (including the contradictory "compassionate capitalism") there will be rebels. As long as there are laws, there is corruption within the apparatus itself that enforces them. As both a historical and contemporary social project attempting to create peace and compassion on a mass scale, moralism has failed.

Beyond morality: no government can ever give us freedom

The same apparatuses of coercion that reinforces morality (religion, the state, etc.) are the enemies of freedom. While one might say these institutions could reinforce the vegan morality that would liberate non-human animals, these same institutions require individualist subjugation to their collective 'good'. But their good wouldn't be a 'good' of my own; it would be their thinking over mine, empowered by its assumed universal truth. This is the same logic of control and domination that is used by those who dominate and consume non-human animals. Guided by the values of human supremacy, there is a sense of entitlement that positions them above question. The same apparatus that conditions morality holds that 'beyond question' position. But as an individual, not only do I question it,

I reject it all together.

My individualism is empowered by self-interest and informed decision-making. My refusal to surrender my mind to the 'collective good' of consuming the flesh and secretions of non-human animals is a reflection of my own rebellion. Along with the inspiration from other individual vegans I realized the power of thinking independently, selfishly, and egotistically -- against the mass society whose normalized traditions and values conflict with my interests. As an individualist, being vegan is practical in extending individual autonomy to non-human animals. My refusal to socially reinforce their commodity status allows them the natural right to exist as their own autonomous individual selves, the same way I would expect to be respected by others. I refuse to individually participate in the mass normalization of their domination.

Anarchy, for me, means individual negation to laws, order, and systems. This anarchy not only opposes both vegan and anthropocentric morality but morality all together: morality being the abstract form of governance that attempts to subjugate my individuality. My veganism requires no external governance to enforce or guide it. It is an individualist choice that reflects the consistency and practicality of living my life against authority.

For veganism to be logically consistent with animal liberation, it must be anti-authoritarian. From this point forward, the totality of capitalist, industrial civilization must be called into question. Being vegan and pro-capitalist is a contradiction since the full functioning of capitalism requires large-scale exploitation of natural resources, subsequently destroying and wiping out entire eco-systems. Capitalism requires the expansion of technological industrialization to accommodate the demands of mass society. Mass society requires the ever-expanding displacement of wildlife to house the growing human population. Civilization is rooted by agriculture which is predicated on the basic formula of taking more from the land than putting back. This results in irreversible damage to all eco-systems that directly affect non-human animals.

To be vegan and pro-statist is a contradiction, since veganism aims for animal liberation, while the State is the antithesis of liberation – reinforcing laws that utilize physical force to coerce all beings into compliance. The common denominator with the State and vegan morality is the shared positions held as 'universal truths' above the individual. Both coerce; one mentally and the other physically. Both compliment each other's intentions on conditioning 'the masses,' and both encourage the disregard for individual self-interest, creativity, and self-responsibility.

If the basis of animal liberation is freedom, empowering a governing agency to enforce moral-based laws upon individuals is a contradiction. It reinforces speciesism through the division of human and animal; if humans are in fact animals, and the vegan aim is animal liberation, why wouldn't 'human' animals liberate themselves from the same shackles of both speciesism and governance as well? Speciesism is reinforced through human supremacy, and if human supremacy is to be dismantled socially, animal liberation applies to everyone. From this point of view, government is not needed for granting rights: the right to bodily autonomy and equality comes with the dismantling of governance -- both the governance of morality and statism.

It is not a morality that governs my actions, but rather an individualist desire to wage war upon all systems, moral or not, that attempt to subjugate me and destroy the earth I require to survive. My decision to become vegan did not come from a vegan morality or a new law prohibiting me from consuming flesh and secretions. It came from ungoverned free thought which helped me view society in a critical way, discovering pragmatic ways of enacting my own project of liberation. My vegan anarchist praxis is a shared affinity with the non-humans who fight against the constraints and torture devices of modern technology, slaughterhouses, and the human-made hell of industrial society. There is no God, government, or morality to save us. Only our individual selves, the decisions we make and the actions we take.

Arming the will to survive with attack

One common tenet of morality is the commitment to non-violence. As an individualist, I find violence to be useful in some circumstances, and impractical in others. But it is this open-ended utilization of violence that morality-based non-violence prohibits. When it comes to animal liberation (or from the statist perspective, animal rights), veganism is often advertised as a "cruelty-free", "no harm done" or "non-violent" movement. This not only ignores the historical examples of successful animal liberations through violence, but it also promotes a limited range of strategic activity. The reinforcement of a non-violent morality discourages the use of violence against the institutions and individual agents of speciesist domination. Human supremacy utilizes every and all avenues of violence to maintain its control. To limit the arsenal of resistance to mere defense rather than incorporating attack is to strategically limit the range of possibility and potential in advancing animal liberation. When animal liberation is confined to the legal arena of statism, the agency of individual insurgency has been surrendered.

Within mass society, speciesism is not just confined to grocery stores; it is also embedded in the social and cultural traditions reinforced by individual

What Savages We Must Be Continued:

participation. Therefore, individuals socially reproduce the normalization of non-human animal abuse, control, and domination. And while some of these individuals might emancipate themselves from the speciesist mindset of human centric entitlement, others might embrace and defend it. Therefore, violence becomes a necessary task carried out by those individuals who refuse to stand by and allow the social reproduction of anthropocentric morality and practice.

I find affinity with those of the wild that struggle against the machinery of industrial society and those who fight to defend the ecological habitats within which they survive. The need for intensified confrontation with speciesism is one that encompasses an anti-authoritarian strike against the ideology and institutions of capitalism, the state, and anthropocentric morality. Beyond mere legislative reform, animal liberation from this perspective necessitates the destruction of all cages and apparatuses that physically captivate non-human animals. Simultaneously, a war waged against the forces of 'human' animal captivity and enslavement opens avenues of exploration beyond the superiority complex - the role and identity of 'human' as distinct from animal and wildness.

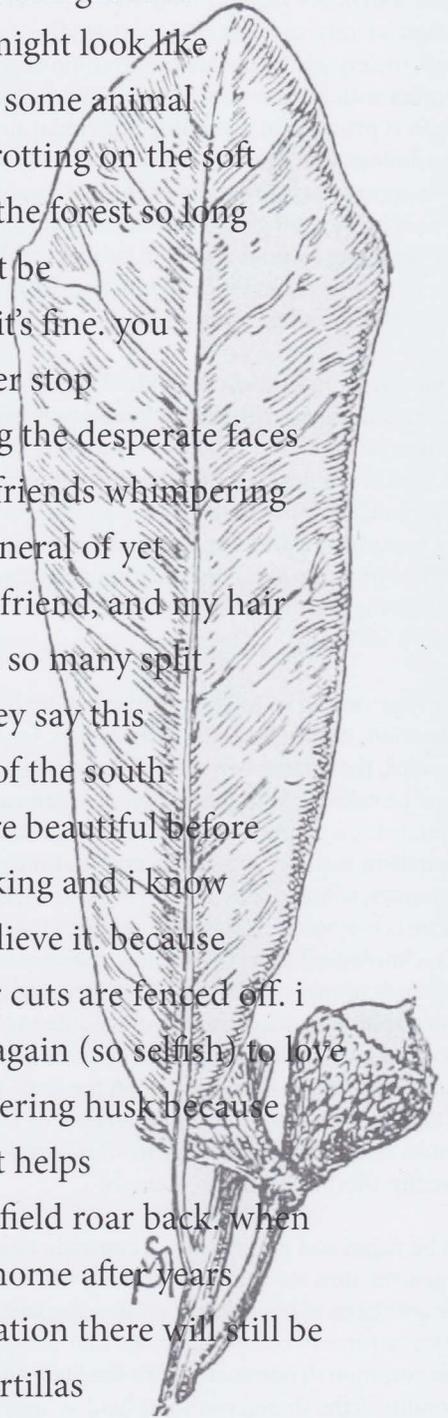
Through spontaneous ruptures to the civilized order, vegan savagery asserts resistance through attacking the foundations that produce enslavement. From non-participation to feral insurgency, anarchy is the personification of any individual with the courage to become wild against domesticating subordination.

But vegan savagery is more than just violent veganism: it is the celebration of life against the laws of morality, civilization, control, and domination. It is the refusal to internalize the capitalist-industrial view of others as mere objects to exploit, consume, or enslave. This allows individuals to define themselves as their own autonomous beings, armed with the agency to attack those who attempt to subjugate them.

As a vegan anarchist, my fight for freedom is parallel with the struggles fought by the wild since the dawn of industrial society and civilized domestication. What savages we must be -- fighting for freedom with every breath, reclaiming our lives through every act of violence against the machines of social control and domination! While the movements of morality continue to ignore the vital reality of amoral violent necessity, some of us continue to wage war against speciesism with nothing more than a fire for freedom in our hearts. In solidarity with the wild, and in defense of the ecological terrain I call home, my fight is fierce and ungovernable. Toward veganism beyond morality, toward industrial collapse and total liberation!

**atrocities
ren hlao**

i said: atrocities. i said:
someday i might love
it. love might look like
a riot or some animal
carcass rotting on the soft
floor of the forest so long
it cannot be
named. it's fine. you
will never stop
picturing the desperate faces
of your friends whimpering
at the funeral of yet
another friend, and my hair
only has so many split
ends. they say this
section of the south
was more beautiful before
the fracking and i know
that i believe it. because
the clear cuts are fenced off. i
will try again (so selfish) to love
this shivering husk because
i know it helps
the cornfield roar back. when
i arrive home after years
of navigation there will still be
warm tortillas
on the old sloping table—
and the floor
forced to support it.



PERPETUAL APOCALYPSE, PERPETUAL RESISTANCE: THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS ON YELLOW FINCH AND RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

INFUSED WITH A TRANSCRIPT OF OAK'S CONVERSATION WITH YELLOW FINCH TREE-SITTER, RHUBARB, CONDUCTED FALL 2019

What follows is thoughts and ideas spawned both by a long-time interest in anti-civilization praxis as well as Oak's trips to Yellow Finch autonomous zone in 2019. For more information on the resistance to the Mountain Valley Pipeline and Yellow Finch check out Appalachians Against Pipelines on one of their social media platforms. You can also check out the audio of our interview with Rhubarb in Oak: Wither the System, our first audiozine episode. The following thoughts should not be seen as being endorsed by or associated directly with the movement against the Mountain Valley Pipeline or the folks at Yellow Finch.

As we pulled down the small gravel road banners and signs began peeking out through the woods. Some signs promised resistance: DOOM 2 THE PIPELINE. Others, from the gas company, seemed to convey the inevitability of the devastation planned and underway: STREAM CROSSING.

As Yellow Finch came into view it was clear that there was nothing remotely utopian about this resistance. Here was a pipeline, cascading over mountain after mountain to the north, poised precariously to come down another steep hillside and run directly into an intentional coalescing of disparate souls in makeshift camps and tree platforms, all of them committed to stopping what is right in front of them, bearing down with its undeniable reality.

Oak Journal: So, what's been going on recently there? When we were there, there was this sort of constant helicopter doing some drops of what I'm assuming is like an herbicide/seed blend and was basically buzzing the camp every, I don't know, every 6-10 minutes for about an hour?

Rhubarb: Yeah, so that was happening for a while. It's actually tamped down; I haven't seen the helicopter in a few days. But it was -- so directly across from me, I'm in a white pine, is the pipeline route. So, it's right up to the road basically before you hit the tree-sits, to give people a sort of sense of that. And they, you know, cut and hauled off all of the trees and so it's just a big strip of dirt. And they were doing these fly-bys with a helicopter to spray that sort of weird aqua-marine seed/fertilizer goop that they spray all over stuff to keep -- partially to keep the easement from eroding. They've

gotten into a bunch of trouble for the amount of erosion that's happened, just because they just indiscriminately cut and then like the whole side of a hill falls into the road or whatever -- or washes away in these sorts of streams.

And so that's sort of been going on. It's a pain in the ass. Yeah, the helicopter. The other big stuff that's gone on is back in July -- or starting in the spring really there was an attempt at an injunction that would use eminent domain against the tree sitters and they don't have people's names so they just use Tree Sitter 1 and Tree Sitter 2, so they weren't actually able to serve papers to the tree sitters. So, they just sort of stapled them to the bottom of the trees. And so it was pretty weird. It's a weird legal strategy for them to use because they're using eminent domain, which is primarily used against people who own property -- so it's funny. That didn't go through and was rejected and so they're not able to use the federal US Marshals to try and extract us out of the trees, they're going to have to do all the dirty work themselves. And so there's sort of a new attempt to push that through and so they're going to be going to court tomorrow about that but it's sort of expected that that legal strategy is not going to really get them very far, especially since they haven't been able to serve people papers and they don't really have people's names and things like that.

Yellow Finch is an autonomous zone/tree-sit blocking the Mountain Valley Pipeline, a joint venture most often associated with, though not exclusively funded by, Equitrans Midstream, a natural gas company. The pipeline is designed to carry fracked natural gas from northern West Virginia to southern Virginia -- all just a few hours from the behemoth industrial corridor of I-95. I-95 facilitates 40 percent of the United States' GDP.

Yellow Finch is part of a tapestry of local resistance campaigns involving direct action, traditional activism and paper-wrenching (filing lawsuits and formal complaints with the aim of delaying or stopping construction). This gathering of diverse tactics has resulted in the 304-mile pipeline being pushed to a state of uncertainty, with the expected date for an operational pipeline coming and going in 2019. Rhubarb, a tree sitter at Yellow Finch, reflected that perhaps

this economic damage will serve to disadvantage investment to future pipeline projects. This might be true to some limited extent but what has become clear in the last 20 years of fracking and state-side hydrocarbon development is that there will never be a lack of pipelines to resist. [Note: This point may be undermined by the current collision of COVID-19 and dropping oil prices, due partially to the oil glut instigated by Saudi Arabia. It is possible that prices fall to the point where state-side hydrocarbon production is economically prohibitive at large.] The paper-wrenching, which has put an indefinite stop to the pipeline at the time of this writing, may serve similar goals of economic disincentive but, and unfortunately, even as MVP is mired in technical, bureaucratic, and physical road-blocks, a 75-mile expansion of the pipeline into North Carolina was just recently approved. It seems difficult to endgame a scenario where civilization does not take what it needs to continue. In some respects, individual action and decision-making is lost to the inertia of the mechanistic dead-world constantly proliferating and chasing some nightmare endpoint of entropic disaster.

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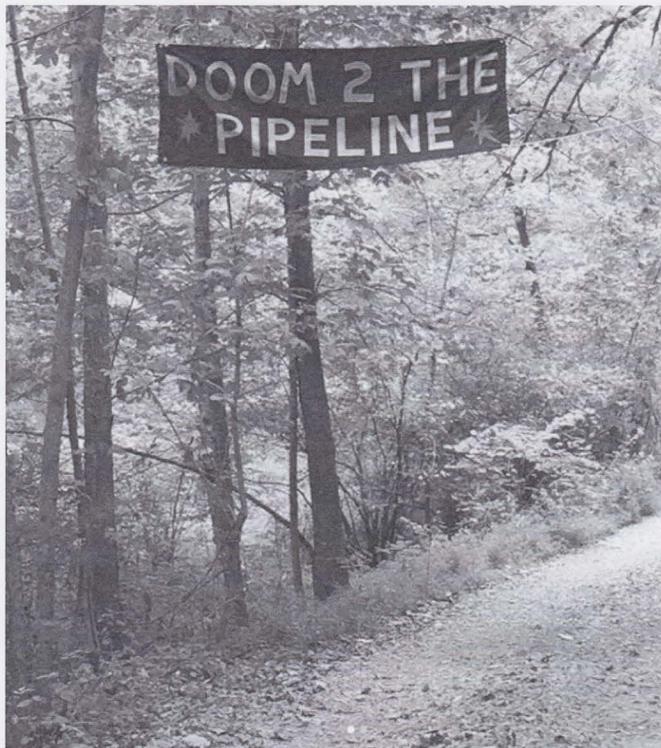
While there's much consternation around upheavals in economies as the result of proposed massive progressivist changes to energy systems in response to global warming, the likelihood that such an imagined positive transformation will take place on a meaningful scale is exceedingly slim -- even if propelled by a politics of reimagined industrialism codified by legislation. If carried out by state, corporate or artificial intelligence a massive energy transformation will look authoritarian, destructive, and, ultimately, like so many plans of dramatic centralized transformation, it will look like a quickening pace of apocalyptic lived reality -- souls from sky to dirt caught fire in the unending will of growth on scales all too comprehensible. Such programs of re-industrialization seek to carry out a utopian vision in which the needs of modern civilized life can be met with something new, delivered by a kind of progress which purports to provide abundance out of thin air. We can find some certainty in this forecast because we are living through this transformation

currently, the industrial backbone of civilization is quickly morphing and adapting to continue its logic of control and consumption -- after all, natural gas is a 'transition' fuel.

Humans, particularly those in industrialized and technofied nations, will not generally accept the losses to convenience and perceived ease of life concomitant with reducing overall energy consumption. We are bound to illuminated devices that focus us on distraction as some permanent category in itself. Not for one second would the population at large accept energy disruptions on a major scale without considerable bellyaching. This doesn't preclude it happening, but it means that co-development of diverse energy systems will likely be the reality for the remainder of civilized life and any promise of technological purity in the realm of

powering the Leviathan will remain fundamentally utopian and unreal.

Oak Journal: It seems incredible that it's been a year. And then I heard someone mention on Saturday that the local prosecutor had even said that, you know, stay away from there. And I thought that was really interesting and -- that obviously the state police -- they don't have the federal marshals but I'm sure that the corporation can push on state police and state legislators in order to make some moves. But it seems very dangerous for them to do so, that's pretty interesting.



Rhubarb: Yeah, and there was an extraction attempt where a climber went up a tree and it seemed like maybe they were only contracted to cut things down and so when there was somebody in there they didn't try to haul them out or anything. And so, I think a private climber to try and extract us would be their route eventually. That hasn't happened and there's sort of a weird culture in terms of these climbers where they're often rescue workers and so they don't usually like doing weird corporate dirty work, if it's not consensual they're not as jazzed about hauling us out of a tree. So hopefully they don't find somebody who will do it. But, eventually, money talks, is sort of my gut on that.

Oak Journal: Yeah, like they'll find somebody?

Rhubarb: Yeah.

Oak Journal: Speaking about it being a year, what are some of the key reasons why -- you mentioned this vibrant local community support -- what are some of the reasons why you think it's been able to last a year, what has it gotten right?

Rhubarb: I mean, one of the things that's been really remarkable about this campaign is that in the past, if people are sort of familiar with the broader people who use these tree sit tactics or (inaudible), this part of the country the trees are much smaller than on the west coast. And so, on the west coast you get tree sits that last years or whatever. Over here, until very recently, until this campaign, the record was about 30 days. So, when we started having the tree sits on Peter's Mountain with the monopod, which lasted, I believe 56 or 57 days, that sort of started to blow the records away for this part of the country. And the reason is the people -- the trees are just smaller over here so you can just get a cherry-picker and get somebody. But it sort of became -- the precedent was set that this company, for whatever reason -- whether it's because of the Standing Rock factor or the PR around the Appalachian Trail -- just the community backlash. They are just very hesitant to go hard and just get people. And so, they played a war of attrition and we've played it back really well.

And it's a little unclear, based on the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Mountain Valley Pipeline whether we're slowing winning or we're slow losing, you know? Because we're costing them a ton of money and so in the broader strategy of things are we -- if we're able to defeat this pipeline, if we're able to defeat ACP -- and right now ACP looks, to me, like it's very doomed but I don't know -- if we're unable to defeat these two pipelines or only one of them or something, we're still going to be shaping the industry to the effect of: we're going to be destroying the ability of future lines to really get access to capital because people will be scared.

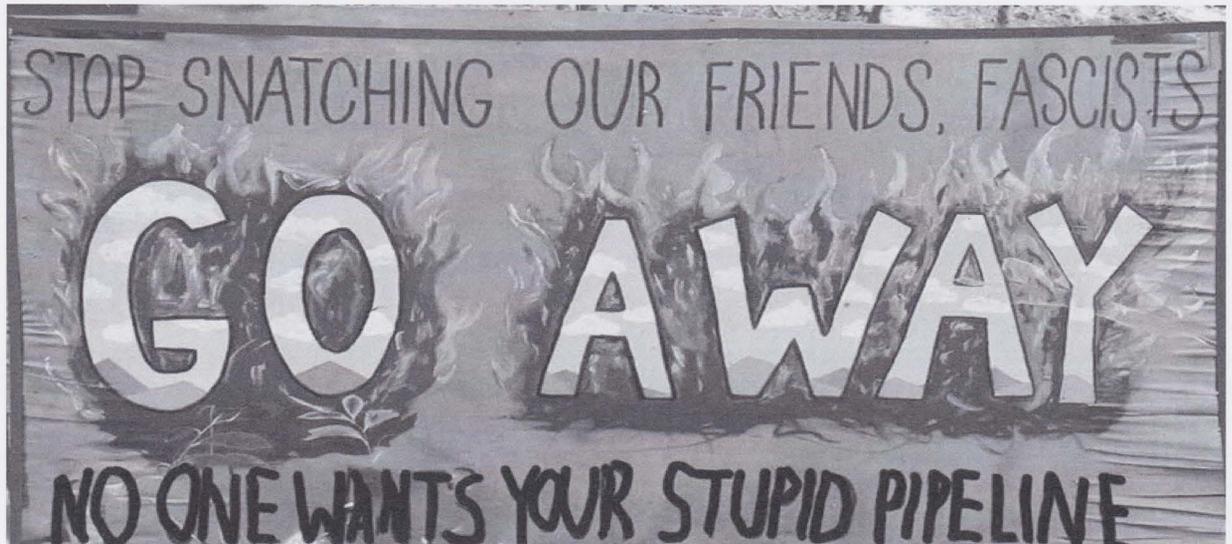
And so, in 2018, the US Chamber of Commerce released a report that -- this analysis that the, quote/unquote "keep it in the ground movement", loosely all these anti-extraction movements put together, had cost the industry \$91.1 billion. And so, they said this is bigger than the economies of 12 states or whatever. Which is like -- in some ways it's their propaganda to say like, oh my god they're costing us too much money. And in some ways, it sort of looks like trying to beg the government for a sort of second Green Scare. Where they can use those figures, they made up against us to create new legal terms around (inaudible) or other things. It also just means that they're really fucking scared of us (laughter).

So whether we win this one or whether we win ACP, it's destroying a lot of the industry, which in our state of affairs is not fast enough for infecting -- we want to stop it so it doesn't lock us into this fossil fuel that will just destroy us even more via climate change -- but it's what we've got and it's going pretty okay according to their fear mongering.

Yellow Finch displays something both necessary and incredibly difficult, a relatively non-ideological intentional composition of people who live together both within and opposition to the reality which encompasses us all. Yellow Finch depends upon contributions and food deliveries, though they actively forage the surrounding forest. It displays a dynamic approach to resistance which is non-utopian, autonomous and grounded in lived reality. The power of its existence is that it continues and as it continues it reorganizes itself resiliently, outlasting by several orders of magnitude most all attempts at a sustained tree-sit in the east.

When the call-out for Oak was written there was a sense that the resistance to civilization was moving in an interesting and possibly new direction, that there may be opportunities and openings to live without civilization and tear down portions of it. This set of possibilities exists outside the contextual framework of civilized discourse and the technological echo-chamber that constitutes most contemporary dialogue. In other words, this sense of opportunity and possibility was found outside and in direct contradiction to the dominant modes of communication. The proceeding problem was predictable: how to create a media project which fostered discussion and incubated this feeling of possibility without utterly destroying the conception by allowing its content to fly into the social media cyclotron. Whether or not Oak succeeds in some measure as judged against this goal is yet to be seen,

...to deplore the quaking resonance of resistance with the gaze of some nihilist fortuneteller is to forsake the very essence of being and to capitulate to a beast so immense and unbeautiful that it can destroy souls just by espousing and making known its horrid list of deeds.



but the shimmers of light that break through in settings like Yellow Finch support this feeble and hungry thesis that something is possible, that to deplore the quaking resonance of resistance with the gaze of some nihilist fortuneteller is to forsake the very essence of being and to capitulate to a beast so immense and unbeautiful that it can destroy souls just by espousing and making known its horrid list of deeds.

In its most salient intention, perpetual apocalypse, conceptually, is the attempt to come to terms with past and current destruction, not through a ritualized mourning of the world-wide destruction (which is constant and deeply unknowable to scale by a single person or small community) but instead through acknowledgment of the basic sickening reality that is immediate, unignorable and part of our daily lives. The failure of the monstrosity is real, it does not prove a sneaking hypothesis or fulfill a prophecy, it destroys and kills and maims and tortures in ways we can sense through our actual beings. Perhaps by embracing the immediacy of this war against all that is holy and real we uncover some hibernating inclination to stand from our bent knees. It is not that we will win or lose, whatever that means, or that collapse will happen overnight -- this is the simple realization that amidst this destruction and devastation we are still, most importantly, alive. We are witnesses to a kind of destruction unfathomable to countless generations; we stand with open eyes upon a force whose very conception was not even a spore upon the fertile mycelial field of reality for generations incomprehensible in depth. While our ultimate survival as a movement of resistance or destruction is completely uncertain, that is the exact case for civilization as well -- only on a scale that is utterly panic inducing.

This perspective is not a nihilism or an optimism, neither is it pessimism or faith -- all of these terms seem lacking, and to engage in active identification of this sort is to participate in a kind of very Western magic and fortunetelling. To read the tea leaves and decide our

fate is not only deterministic, it systematically reduces agency to the limits imposed by an imagined future. For all the talk about primitivist idealizing an idea of the past, nihilists, particularly in the American context, resign future to a faith in nothingness while abandoning the potency of the present. The claim that the ultimate futility of struggle is inevitable is perhaps an important psychological exercise, but it contains no more essential truth than any other claim to know the future and the possibilities within it. Humanity has an awful track record of getting fundamental predictions incorrect and to assume that we can see more clearly now because of either more information or a better distilled critique or theory is to play a game of progress which ignores the ultimate failing of most political theories and programs, of which scientism can be counted. To claim that we can plan for a global revolution by following a few simple steps is as absurd as claiming that all actions done in the face of civilization carry with them an assumption of ineffectiveness. This perspective is for the dead, as the only truly futile action is done in the vacuum of a casket. Options, choices, decisions are made which create impacts among a living world. Despite the utter apocalypse perpetually driven across the entirety of mapped existence there exists life within all of it, even the most devastated areas.

Apocalypse is, after all, an anthropocentric myth.
-John Gray

Philosopher and critic John Gray has written extensively on the nature of apocalyptic thinking and its twin, utopianism. In Gray's estimation, millenarian and teleological belief systems are products of religious thinking and, when we correct for this error, we can throw off the dominant political themes of the modern era: communism, national socialism, neo-conservatism, and modern liberalism. Gray's condemnation of the religious and utopian thinking in these major

civilized political tendencies is highly convincing. It seems inarguable that the major ideologies who define modern political struggles all stem from the same poisonous root, not necessarily in analysis or critique, but in the political project they subscribe for their followers. For Gray, what unites these projects is their belief that through force and political will (typically through control of the state apparatus) there can be a fundamental change in the human condition. For many revolutionaries this logic is displayed in the form of a Guillotine or a cleansing of society.

Unfortunately, due to Gray's unsupported beliefs and cursory knowledge around human nature and pre-history, Gray turns to realism and statecraft, of the kind counseled by Hobbes, as a way to possibly combat the destructiveness of the eschatological, narrative-driven political approach of many political programs. Of course the assumptions embedded in Hobbesian thought are not new targets and turning to Leviathan for answers immediately reconstructs a state-oriented worldview which precludes the largest body of evidence (pre-history) from any sort of calculation as to the question, which even Gray cannot avoid: what do we do?

To claim that teleological understandings of the world are inherently incorrect disregards that the very act of belief manifests actions and, therefore, and since humans are nature, teleological processes are always happening on some scale -- the erasure of the monotheistic God-character from philosophical thought does not eliminate the wants and desires of the world. In other words, we cannot dismiss a narrative simply because it is not grounded in something real and provable because all paths of action relay intention from a part of nature, as humans are and always will be.

While Gray is correct to condemn utopianism it simply does not follow that because of this condemnation we are sentenced to a statist reality in perpetuity, tied inexorably to some fatal Hobbesian human condition. That is its own narrative and not one without consequences, as Gray does fleetingly acknowledge. It is for this reason that a geographical and scale-driven analysis of apocalypse, in its colloquial meaning of vast and insurmountable devastation, is critical to understanding the process unfolding in front of us.

To understand apocalypse as a cultural force and landmark that moves perpetually across the world recognizes that many macro analyses of crisis and destruction are ill suited to provide a framework for understanding what is and will always be localized experiences. The devastation we see in voyeuristic fashion on our technological devices is undoubtedly interconnected, but the struggle to overturn all of society and save the world are likely to be failures

(though to condemn them outright is in itself a form of fortunetelling). More importantly, any grand project for reconstructing the world will likely lead to mass death and destruction, as has been concretely shown in the history of revolutions.

Oak Journal: I was really intrigued by what you said about slow winning or slow losing. It sounds like you're saying that, to a certain degree, because you've made it this far, because Yellow Finch has been there a year, because Peter's Mountain, Miner, Red, the collective blockade resistance, that there's a certain inevitability of it being some kind of win. I mean, how we want to define winning or whatever.

Rhubarb: I mean, I take the broad movement strategy look of like, if we're trying to impact the industry. But I also think these are very -- like, this seems pretty fucking winnable. It's like pretty remarkable and I think the more we put into it, and people have already put so much in. It's like -- I don't remember -- someone was saying it's over 40-something actions, but that number was old. And so, you know, this stuff adds up. Even when somebody's like, oh I only locked down for three hours -- well that means a lot to the company. Like the whole workforce is smoking cigarettes on union time or whatever. And all of their equipment is rented because it's sort of fly-by-night companies and things like that, so it adds up.

Oak Journal: Yeah, you can tell -- it was immediately apparent as soon as we pulled down the first road there that there were just a million staff. There's people just sitting there watching, there's teams of people in trucks, there's people in helicopters -- like the momentum of a singular hour of work is so tremendous and so scularly hard to even grapple with, the amount of destruction that they're able to cause so quickly, that the fact that there's been so much resistance -- yeah a 3-hour lockdown that has very real consequences, not just financially but also to the land and everything else. I guess that kind of leads into how you see the resistance at Yellow Finch fitting into a larger resistance, whether that's against pipelines, hydrocarbon extraction, capitalism, the state, wherever that goes for you, how do you see that tying in?

Rhubarb: I think the vast majority of the folks around here are anti-capitalists of one stripe or another. And I think it's like -- about four years ago a -- somebody snuck into a gas industry meeting and got their sort of state of affairs. And it was sort of like they realized that the fracking wells weren't doing as well as they hoped -- they were lasting 5, 8 years instead of 10-plus they were hoping. And sort of they're running out of scheme on all this infrastructure but their whole goal was to sort of

lock it in and build as much infrastructure for export as possible, even though they knew that a lot of the people in the industry would have various stranded assets or would be bust in a couple years or whatever.

So I think the broader movement who is sort kicking off around that -- maybe circa 2014 -- a lot of those pipeline fights were failures, and some were successes depending on what you want to call a fail and a success, but I think we're seeing the pipeline and infrastructure fight takes a certain amount of time to come to this point where it's the construction phase and we're sort of out of that construction phase, of that initial wave.

And so, a lot of what the anti-pipeline stuff that I'm seeing, a lot of new speculation is going south -- like Oklahoma and Louisiana and Texas -- and so I think what we do here is going to impact what happens there. In terms of this broader fight against capitalism I think this is a big deal. Energy systems are behind the whole thing to some degree, especially when you get to the level of what's going to be fueling trucking, shipping, those sorts of those things and a lot of that is crude bunker oil. But other things are based in gas. So I think what we impact here matters a lot and I'm skeptical as to like, you know, if you can stop a few pipelines it's going to end capitalism but it's going to like -- and you get the effect of when (we fought) coal it made gas more appealing. And so that's sort of a problem within our anti-capitalist work or whatever, especially in this. Are we going to hit one industry and benefit the other because that's the way markets work?

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And so, I think the more we go at this from as many angles as possible the better. And I think there's a sort of ascendant liberal thing around the climate justice movement, whether that's Sunrise or whether that's like Extinction Rebellion, and having those sort of frontline struggles that are anti-capitalist will put in that direct action fight and not in just some symbolic way is really important. And how we like bring that fight past the local level, I feel like there's lots of way to do it, I don't know if there is one way to do, but I think that's really key in shaping what our resistance movements look like and making sure they don't go the route of some washed-out Green New Deal thing and then we all die.

The mounting issues often ignored by our anthropocentric culture are knocking more and more frequently. The tired image of bio-centric advocates being a 'lone voice in the wilderness' remained, through much of the modern era, a reality. The context of energy development explains this thoroughly. Over the last 160 years the literal power of civilizations has grown exponentially with technological complexity growing at such a rate that jumping off the train of seemingly

inevitable progress was advocated by so few that it seemed nothing but an eccentric nostalgia for what was surely permanently lost -- "you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube," as one attendee of a John Zerzan talk remarked years ago. Unfortunately, the clock has been ticking on what is a very likely chaos-inducing scenario of technological, militarized, energy-dependent states competing for the resources necessitated and facilitated by their very existence -- caught in a feedback loop of exponential growth which has been analyzed ad infinitum since at least the late 1800s.

Anarchists and those who no longer feel the desire or need to defend civilization -- much less extract their solutions from its intestines -- offer perhaps the only path forward which does not engender further destruction on the scale we have become so accustomed to. By breaking from statist solutions and the supposed 'realism' needed to navigate the sectarian realities around the globe, anarchists can actualize decentralization in their everyday lives, navigating the devastation and increasing rate of localized apocalypse by living without and against civilization at large. This is not a call for utopian intentional communities, often ridiculous in their insular fetishism of process and intention -- this is an acknowledgment of both our current participation and the often-facile nature of our resistance. If we cannot live without civilization and show others how to do so, all while defending some real geographical space, then we are fulfilling the prophecy laid out in the tropes of Chomsky and others that primitivists and anti-civilizationists are asking for mass murder by seeking the end of civilization. By denying a narrative of utopianism and embracing a pragmatic resistance which utilizes our inherent and inseparable connection to the earth, anti-civilization anarchists may be able to actualize a world (many worlds) outside of civilization.

Oak Journal: What is this experience like up there as experiencing the wild, your observations, do you notice anything happen, like adaptation of even your gaze and stuff being at that height?

Rhubarb: It's very beautiful. It's -- being in the tree canopy definitely does something to your brain. And actually, spending most of your time looking at rustling leaves instead of a phone screen or whatever is definitely good and important for remembering what I'm fighting for. I also think it's gross and hot. (Laughter)

And like I live on a plank with a smelly blanket. And so, I think there's a certain romanticism around this but also, it's pretty pragmatic. I read a lot of books and I think that you can sort of get lost in a different reality and then remember, oh, yeah, it's kind of nice right

here but over on the next hill everything's being torn to shreds. And that's -- it's sort of a little bit of a back and forth in terms of remembering that.

But there's also a big support camp of people who are here for you and I think that's not true for a lot of tree-sits. I think this one's been very fortunate that the support camp hasn't been wiped off the face of the map or pushed away. And I think this campaign in particular has been really good I think about highlighting that level of care work that goes into this. And a lot of the glamor goes to the person who's locking down or in the tree, but most of the work is the care and support that allows that to happen. But, yeah, it's pretty lovely -- but also sweaty and gross.

Oak Journal: Do you see Yellow Finch as being an autonomous zone of some sort that's been successfully defended for the last year?

Rhubarb: I think so. I think people -- I think there's a lot of romance around these sorts of like roughly anti-capitalist or anarchist, anti-authoritarian spaces -- and they do matter. People don't work and they eat dumpstered food and control their lives here -- but it's also this sort of temporary reality and so I think if you were to take a snapshot of what a support camp looks like -- or this support camp -- without remembering the strategic elements of the movement that aren't just feeding me lunch or whatever (laughter) -- you can get a certain romanticized view of what it's like. But, yeah, I think it's definitely an autonomous zone in its own right,

it's not Le ZAD but it's definitely a part of it.

In our current moment, or the current moment of those participating even tangentially in the machine, there exists a pointed attempt to make everything relevant. The result is an analysis so incredibly polymorphic and useless that it serves as nothing more than a lame commodity -- data traded over networks, all of which are of course monetized in some way. But, and quite unfortunately, the pace of updates creates a feedback loop of relevance, a self-perpetuating hastening of everything, which seeks to constantly respond to the pace of development by being reactionary and non-contemplative. In this neutered consciousness, accented by unthinking reflexive illuminated text, there exists an undeniable compulsion to participate, developing concomitantly with the need for relief or escape. The project of creating autonomous geographical realities will and has included creating an internal sense of relevance that is immediate to experience -- an experience which can make the social machine continually less relevant to daily existence.

For a life outside and against civilization

- SK



Feral Magick

- Jason Rodgers

“Energy is Eternal Delight”- William Blake (34)

Humans are born with a massive potential, a feral energy waiting to unfold. We are all born both beast and god. Yet almost immediately we are smashed down. Genital mutilation teaches that the world is a mean place, puts the infant in its place. Animal compassion is cut off. The child knows that they are alone. They can rely on no one. They might learn rely on themselves, but the moment you do that you are diagnosed as having Oppositional Defiance Disorder. We are beaten down, made cogs in a planetary work machine. We become grown up robots, who must cut ourselves off from our wondrous perceptions, because now they make us hurt too much. We are born feral beast gods, but we don't become grown up feral beast gods.

Existentialist author Colin Wilson put our problem like this: “My most basic insight is this: that there is something wrong with human beings. When you have a bad cold, you have a continual sense of oppression; you don't seem to be able to draw a really deep breath; you feel as if you are suffocating. And you are certainly aware that this state is not normal. But all human beings are suffering permanently from a kind spiritual head cold, and they are not aware of it.” (565)

Or Raoul Vaneigem put it this way “Most people live like sleepwalkers, torn between the gratification of neurosis and the traumatic prospect of a return to real life” (151).

Colin Wilson began his writing career exploring how people rebel against this circumstance, mostly through literature and philosophy, in books such as *The Outsider*. A critical breakthrough was when he began to explore occultism. He initially did so with more traditional skepticism, but soon he grew skeptical of skepticism as well. He realized that magick was a shorthand for something that had been repressed by society, by domestication: “In the animal kingdom, ‘magical’ powers are commonplace. Civilized man has forgotten about them because they are no longer necessary to his survival” (43). Survival isn't all there is and the misery we feel is heavy upon us.

In Wilson's thick tome *The Occult: A History* he presented a general overview of important occult and magical practices and beliefs. One might be tempted to dismiss such esoteric and obscure material. Doing

so misses the point of these explorations. They are all attempts to cut through the limitations we have on our consciousness. These can sometimes be misdirected, yet they are some of the only ways people have explored this.

Wilson argued, “human consciousness is theoretically capable of this kind of power. Man is literally a god: a god suffering from laziness, amnesia and nightmares” (568). As far as what to do about this:

“How can we summon these powers? It would be more to the point to ask: what prevents us from summoning them? The answer is: the blinkers, the narrowness, the fact that my consciousness is occupied with trivial issues such as why my car uses so much oil and whether a certain girl is being unfaithful to her husband. The only infallible way to develop these powers is for human beings to systemically turn away from triviality, to reject the near and concentrate on the far” (185-186).

I think that what he is criticizing here could be called socialization and domestication. Magic ties in with decivilizing and rewilding. These are particularly important, as we look at the history of revolution we find a repetition of the tale of revolutionaries overthrowing one power and then quickly replicating the same power structures in their new workers utopia. Old patterns replicate, as the state and civilization have been engrained in our bodies. Gustav Landauer described how “the state is a social relationship; a certain way of relating to one another” (214). The structures of control exist within us. Thus this is where an insurrection must start.

Wilson portrayed this well when discussing the normal ways we deal with a problem. Usually we either do something actively about it or we passively accept it. But what about when the obvious actions are all bad. He proposed a third way: “he makes an immense effort of concentration, an inner convulsion. The mental body ‘contracts’, and the result is a new sense of power, control and freedom” (568). From this point new options will arise. This is particularly important in the desperate double bind we find in civilization.

What I find most important in Wilson's book is that these practices are worth looking at precisely because they are attempts to develop new forms of consciousness, new conceptions of reality, and to connect ourselves back to innate abilities which we have lost our access to. It is obvious that many of these are false starts, dead ends, or even labyrinth traps that lead no where. This is no reason to entirely reject them. Most critical theory suffers from these same traps. Few would council a complete rejection. What is important is to attempt to find what is value in these concepts.

Whenever these sorts of subjects are raised some are

quick to cry out “Wingnut!” For instance, that epitome of rationality, Ted Kaczynski (The Unabomber), has criticized anarcho-primitivist John Zerzan: “It’s worth noting that Zerzan apparently believes that our ancestors were capable of mental telepathy” (147). It was apparently worth noting, but not worth explaining what he saw as wrong with this. This was stated in the context of a series of criticisms Kaczynski had of anarcho-primitivists. Apparently merely stating this was enough said. This is the sort of knee jerk materialism that folks like Charles Fort lampooned to no end. I believe that telepathy is possible, but I am not certain. I am an agnostic. Being an agnostic on such a subject might put me in the wingnut category, but only because those passing the judgment are so certain of their own beliefs.

The citation provided by Kaczynski is to a page in Zerzan’s “Future Primitive” essay, most likely referring to the passage: “Ritual, as shamanic practice, may also be considered as a regression from that state in which all shared a consciousness we would now classify as extrasensory” (26). Hardly a wild occult claim. Zerzan’s theory of language is worth look at, as it does share certain similarities with Wilson’s work. Both believe that there are limitations that have been placed upon our expansive being. Both seem to consider this a byproduct of civilization: “To ‘define’ a disalienated world would be impossible and even undesirable, but I think we can and should try to reveal the unworld of today and how it got this way. We have taken a monstrously wrong turn with symbolic culture and division of labor, from a place of enchantment, understanding and wholeness to the absence we find at the heart of the doctrine of progress” (Zerzan *FP* 45). Symbolic language is a major cause of this, “in this sense it would have likely marked an early turning away from a life of openness and communion with nature, toward one more oriented to the overlordship and domestication that followed symbolic culture’s inauguration” (Zerzan *FP* 25). For Zerzan, language is a barrier to existence: “Being alive in nature, before our abstraction from it, must have involved a perception and contact what we can scarcely comprehend from our levels of anguish and alienation. The communication with all of existence must have been an exquisite play of all the sense, reflecting the numberless, nameless varieties of pleasure and emotion once accessible within us” (Zerzan *Elements* 31).

Language uses words to define and stabilize the feral. Zerzan said “Symbolic categories are set up to control the wild and alien” (Zerzan *Running* 13). An even more important facet of language is grammar: “It is grammar that established language as a system, reminding us that the symbolic must become systemic in order to seize and hold power. This is how the perceived world becomes structured, its abundance processed and reduced” (Zerzan *Twilight* 5). It is grammar that structures the perceptual grids that organize perceptions

of existence. These are structures that the individual has nearly no control over: “A language is defined by grammatical rules (not of the speaker’s choosing)” (Zerzan *Twilight* 5). For Zerzan this contains the entire apparatus of society: “The ensemble of symbols represents the social order and the individual’s place in it, a formulation that always leaves the genesis of this arrangement unquestioned” (Zerzan *Running* 4). For him this is an active process that maintains domination, for “only what is repressed is symbolized, because only what is repressed needs to be symbolized” (Zerzan *Running* 4).

This critique of language and grammar does have precedent in more established areas of linguistics and sociology. According to Paul Watzlawick, through the “punctuation” of communication we apply meaning to our experiences (Watzlawick 61). The decision of how to divide and categorize creates language grids and reality tunnels. He stated that, “ordering sequences in one way or another creates what, without undue exaggeration, may be called different realities” (Watzlawick 62).

Zerzan has looked at how language developed, with probably the most important aspect being the reification that occurred as words moved from verb forms to nouns. Much of this occurred in prehistory. He said, “At the close of the Paleolithic Age, as a decreased proportion of verbs in the language reflected the decline of unique and freely chosen acts in consequence of division of labor, language still possessed no tenses” (Zerzan *Elements* 40). Following the transition from verb to noun, the next major shift was the introduction of tenses: “Once the structure of speech incorporates time and is thereby animated by it at every expression, division of labor has conclusively destroyed an earlier reality” (Zerzan *Elements* 40-41). In linguistics this was when words became a time-binding agent.

He gave “counter-examples such as chess-playing, composing music, or using tools” (Zerzan *Elements* 32) of consciousness that is not reliant upon words. Most people can remember times when they existed in these such ways. If we were to open ourselves up more, most people could also probably think of times when they experienced something similar to telepathy. But of course telepathy is a crude, imprecise way of explaining this (a reification maybe?). Unfortunately we have nothing better to use.

It is difficult to evaluate Zerzan’s theory of language. It seems like such an impossibly extreme critique (this is its greatest value as well). Most likely going through it point by point there would be many points where I disagreed with him. However, he is one of the only ones who have been willing to try to make this critique! Most people just accept language. There is no need for rigid, ideological, uniformity (one which he does not

ask for). We could probably safely say that he is wrong on a number of points, but to show this we would need to go even further in our critique of language. If I were to venture a guess, I would say that there is some form of language that is found among the earliest humans. Zerzan's work on the shift from verb to noun does a lot to explain how this was alienated. The most important part of his work is most likely the exploration of grammar.

There is a major divergence between the ideas of Colin Wilson and John Zerzan. Zerzan would most likely be inclined to reject the exploration of the occult and magick. He has been critical of the rise of the shaman as a form of division of labor. He pointed out the intersection of ritual and domestication: "This theme of ritual points to an absence that it falsely claims to fill, as does symbolic culture in general" (Zerzan *FP* 27). He also argued that "Rites serve a safety valve function for the discharge of tensions generated by emerging division in society and work to create and maintain social cohesion" (Zerzan *Running* 12). I am inclined to agree with a good deal of his critique of the role of the shaman in the transition from Paleolithic to Neolithic. Yet there still seems to be some sort of knowledge and wisdom that we might be able to snatch back from these traditions. The spiritual and occult traditions contain not only these means of control, but also a counter-tradition. Sometimes these traditions of control and de-control might even be intertwined. Most importantly, these occult traditions contain a very high idea content, foregrounding issues that are otherwise repressed or marginalized. Esoteric scholar Gary Lachman spoke of how "when I studied philosophy, I discovered that, while the kind of philosophy I encountered in university for the most part either ignored those aspect of reality which I was most interested or dismissed them as nonsense, the 'rejected' tradition of the occult, magic, and esotericism was more than open to them" (3).

It is possible to contrast magick or sorcery to religion. There is a similarity between the two poles, at some level. They do not form a sharply delineated binary, there is crossover. The crucial difference is that magick and sorcery are chaotic, tied to vital dynamic existence. It has to do with contact with this existence, in a way that not only vitalizes, but disorders everyday life. Religion, on the other hand, has to do with attempting to order, stabilize, and force into hierarchy chaotic existence. Many magickal practices have a religious component, while many religious practices have a sorcery aspect.

The possible usages of the occult and magical traditions could take the critical form that our usage of language does. Zerzan said, "I am writing (obviously) enclosed in language, aware that language reifies the resistance to reification" (Zerzan *Elements* 42). It is possible to make

use of language in an attempt to disentangle ourselves from language. Doing so always runs the risk of further entangling ourselves, but what other option do we have? I would say that a similar attitude should be taken for occult practices.

If some folks make fun of John for considering telepathy, all that much worse for them. This is a good example of the failures of the imagination of many radicals. They willingly cut themselves off from the realm of the marvelous. There are others who were not as inclined to reject an expansive consciousness and being. Raoul Vaneigem described a sort of telepathy, "there is a silent communication; it is well known to lovers" (103). A document from the Temple of Psychick Youth described how "critical empathy, love with horns, is the nearest we have to telepathy. A mutual intuitive reflex" (P-Orridge 231).

Novelist William Burroughs said "I know from my own experience that telepathy is a fact. I have no interest in proving telepathy or anything to anybody. I do want usable knowledge of telepathy. What I look for in any relationship is contact on the nonverbal level of intuition and feeling, that is, telepathic contact" (Junky 127). In 1953, Burroughs took a trip to South America, in search of yage. This is a hallucinogenic plant that was rumored to give telepathic abilities to the user. As he described it in a letter to Allen Ginsberg "Yage is space time travel" (Yage 50). It is worth noting that for him his "general theory since 1971 has been that the Word is literally a virus, and that it has not been recognized as such because it has achieved a state of relative stable symbiosis with its human host" (*Adding Machine* 47).

In Feral Faun's most well known polemic "Feral Revolution" a similar exploration of how civilization drains us of vital existence was laid out, as well as some preliminary concepts of what to do against this. Faun started by looking at how life felt as a child: "But I never forgot the intensity that life could be. I never forgot the vital energy that had surged through me. My existence since I first began to notice that this vitality was being drained away has been a warfare between the needs of civilized survival and the need to break loose and experience the full intensity of life unbound" (4). Civilization has taken something away from us, and we still know it. Faun advocated a resistance to this: "I want to experience this vital energy again. I want to know the free-spirited wildness of my unrepressed desires realizing themselves in festive play. I want to smash down every wall that stands between me and the intense, passionate life of untamed freedom that I want" (4). The old leftist models of revolutionary councils and activist sacrifice are a replication of the structures of civilization. Instead forms of decentralized insurrection are how a feral revolution would occur. This feral revolution occurs not only in the outside world, but also

individually and internally.

Feral Faun began as a Christian Anarchist, then lost his faith. For such reason he has a sharp critique of religion “in relegating creativity, passion, freedom and ecstasy to the realm of the spiritual, religion safely takes them out of the realm of daily life and puts them in their ‘proper’ place where they cannot become a threat to civilization” (FR 35). However, this did not get in the way of his use of magick to regain this spiritedness. By eliminating the religious ideology, he found “that everyone of these experiences was a physical, bodily, sensual experience, not an experience in some sort of ‘spiritual’ realm” (FR 36). For him magick was best understood through “the lycanthropic metaphor”: “I felt that I had turned into some non-human creature. Civilization has become so much a part of our definition of the human, that our minds seem to view experiences of uncivilized sensuality as experiences of inhuman sensuality” (FR 36). This was written in 1988, but earlier (in 1983) in “Lament of an Armored Werewolf”, he stated this even more explicitly: “I would be a wild and howling werewolf, but the armor plate still hides my fur and keeps my limbs from moving freely. Yet beneath the armor, I know the fur is there. It breaks through in spots, for the armor is not real. It is a spell cast on me that I am beginning to see through. And I know it is not a change of armor that I need for my claws and fangs are all I need to rip through every chain and fetter of civilization and to free once more the animal I am” (Rants 2). Magick is key to this destruction of civilization: “There is a magick in this which destroys all power, the magick which is the erotic pulse of our chaotic, joyful universe” (Rants 2). I am reminded of something William Blake wrote: “The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man” (Blake 36).

An interesting document that explicitly explored the intersection between magick and anarchy is “Liber Nihil: The Book of Nothing- Magickal Nihilism” by Hunter. This began with an exploration of how the concept of formal truth colonizes and controls existence, and “what flourishes outside these gates of certainty remains unbound; wild forests of thought, uncharted ideas, hidden pathways, experiences unknown and yet-to-be-reduced to description” (18). This piece consciously modeled itself on the occult texts used by groups like the Ordo Templi Orientis or the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, in much the same way Discordians and Subgenii appropriate the forms of liturgy and evangelical tracts. Max Stirner’s concept of the creative nothing was applied to magick: “Thus the creative nothing which spawns from the individual is also the magickal nothing” (25). Ceremonial conceptions of ritual is replaced with play (“aesthetically-driven experimental acts” (29)).

Through exploring the use of hoax documents such as *The Necronomicon*, “Liber Nihil” attempted to explore how magick can be consciously used to break down belief systems: “the immense power to make-believe must always be constructed on non-belief, and remain suspensions of belief rather than entrenchments of such” (45). A conscious, active nihilism is a very healthy thing. It is a necessary core component of any anti-civilization project. This relates to a verse by Blake: “This I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid” (Blake 39).

Nihilism can easily degenerate from active to passive nihilism if it is the stopping point. Peter Gray has explored ways that could encourage feral growth beyond nihilism. Gray’s speech “Rewilding Witchcraft” also provided some interesting concepts for how witchcraft and magick could become a force against civilization. This piece was based on Wicca, the magickal path that I have usually found least appealing. In opposition to the tame, new age version, he argued “that Witchcraft is quintessentially wild, ambivalent, ambiguous, queer” (3). He specifically critiqued the tame version, for instance that “People are having their needs met by the online simulacra of witchcraft” (3). Advancing this point, he said “My argument is that witchcraft became too tame, that the response to this have been too inward-looking and that the new witchcraft will need to take account of what is being done to the wild” (4). In this we might again find the division between religion and magick. In contrast Gray argued “Rewilding is alas the final position of an ecological movement facing catastrophic losses” (5).

Gray said “Witchcraft is embedded in the landscape, and our witchcraft must recognize that even the landscape of dream is emanated from the physical world, the body of the witch” (6). This resonates with a big self model of conscious egoism. I can’t tell where my self ends and my environment begins because there is no sharp division. I am expansive, I am my environment. I see my interests in the flourishing of the feral around me, for it makes me more powerful. Ecocide is an assault upon me. The actuality of phenomenon such as of mass extinction must be confronted. Gray wrote “Some will be afraid of this knowledge; witchcraft should be liberated by it, liberated from petty concerns to pursue lives of beauty, liberated from the sleepwalking into death that our culture has made for us and our children. So I counsel, confront death. For witchcraft to be anything other than the empty escapism of the socially dysfunctional and nostalgia for bygone ages, it needs to feel the shape of its skull, venerate the dead and the sacred art of living and dying with meaning. We are all on the fierce path now” (8). The harsh reality must be accounted for, which does disqualify escape as a viable option. Gray said,

“Witchcraft cannot retreat to the wilderness, because there is no exterior wilderness left; instead we need to exteriorize our inner wild. We need to wake up the animal in our bodies. This is witchcraft as contagion, as living flame” (10).

Nihilism magick and feral witchcraft are not opposites, at least in the binary sense. They instead convey complimentary tensions, the interplay of destruction and creation. Some nihilists fall into a Eurocentric trap, becoming the passive nihilists Nietzsche warned of. Or turn into death fetishists and anti-life advocates. But death is the prerequisite of life. Chaos is not the entropy of Newtonian physics. Mother Kali’s destruction is the generation of life.

Kevin Tucker looked at the issue of witchcraft through an anarcho-primitivist lens, stating “when the patriarchs of Puritanism began to preach of the evils of the lurking wildness of witches and beings that stride the fence between civilization and savagery, the dispossessed sought this out. In searching for a way out, they identified with the antithesis of state power” (110). In this way concepts like witchcraft do show an important line of flight or escape route for those who would like to get away from the planetary work machine. In this sense it might be taken as a counter-tradition, the forms of wisdom and consciousness that were counter to the centralizing tendencies that developed in Europe. It seems clear that there is a gendered component to this as well, with the prosecution of witches being often specifically a means of controlling women. Using the vessel of magic, spirituality, and poetics a sort of resistance may have been passed down. I don’t believe in the more intricate models of formal, multi-generational, witchcraft secret society that some Wiccans seem to advocate, but the idea that folk traditions maintained a sort of resistance culture seems to be not only possible, but likely.

There are many involved in magick who already view a natural affinity between their occult practice and anarchic wildness and de-control. Chaos magick pioneer Peter Carroll stated “The beginnings of the new psychic awareness have acquired a definite subversive flavor. Magic is aligning itself against oppressive forms of order in many fields” (114). Jack Parson, a member of Aleister Crowley’s OTO stated, “It is therefore the function of magick to lead each individual to the realization and expression of his total self on all places of being and experience” (91). One of the core texts of the Temple Ov Psychick Youth was “Thee Black Book”, a guide book to sigil magick. This is an atavistic form of magick in which a statement of intent is reduced to an abstract glyph, first by eliminating repeated letters then arranging the letters together in an overlapping, abstracted, magical symbol. This glyph is then activated by focusing on it when entering a trance state (the

most common probably being the moment of orgasm). Genesis P-Orridge said, “Sigils generate thee confidence for commitment to Individuality by showing each of us who we are; and that, once known, is something that can never be taken away” (98-99). This highlights what is most important about the sigil, it is an attempt to focus and actualize desires. The technique has seemingly proven effective for many (including myself). It is a question about whether this is due to it triggering mental processes that encourage one to achieve the desired result, or if it actually changes reality based on resonance.

Yael Dragwla wrote a letter to Jim Keith’s zine “Dharma Combat” in 1988 about how she “called for all readers of Panygeria who wanted to do something to change things by using magick of whatever form, to let me know, as I wanted to get together a magickal task-force for this purpose” (14-15). Yael was not only involved in occult circles, but also anarchist ones. She was an associate of Hakim Bey and Bob Black. This highlights the possibility of using magick as resistance. This is reminiscent of one of the most important events in the 1960s, when radicals encircled the Pentagon with the claim that they were going to levitate it. The folks who went on to form the Yippies were involved with this. Ed Sanders wrote an incantation for the banishing of the demon that lived inside of the Pentagon. This is often portrayed as a prank, but occult underground filmmaker Kenneth Anger participated as well, connecting the action with the serious occult tradition. From this point many radical things occurred in the radical counterculture. It provided a stunning event to seduce others towards the counterculture perspective. It also was probably confusing and terrifying for many military drones working in the Pentagon. It functioned as psychological warfare in a way that straight radicalism never could.

The closer to formal ceremonial magic one gets the more aspects of hierarchy one finds, the more religious it becomes. This may have to do partially with the divide between high magic and low magic. High magic was what the rich people did. Low magic was what the underclass did. Those practicing high magic sometimes wrote things down, to be deposited in the library of the lodge (or whatever). Low magic would most likely have been an oral tradition. The high magic gets privileged as an authoritative discourse. Even in this form there seems to have been a counter-tradition. There are aspects of Hermeticism that gave rise to the visionary anarchist poetics of William Blake.

There were also long standing counter-traditions that were explicitly outside of the dominant culture. Look at the anarchic tendencies in the Sufi lawless dervishes or certain radical strains of Taoism. With the collapse of religious authority in the 20th century this only became

more explicit. Rudolf Steiner was closely connected with individualist anarchists like John Henry Mackay. Aleister Crowley declared, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law". Austin Osman Spare created a form of magick that seemed to want to erase everything civilized from the magician. It gets to an even more extreme point with anarchist chaos magicians, Earth First! pagans, and eco-druids. I see clear points of affinity. This affinity could even be found by those who think of themselves as atheists.

Most of the anarchic occult traditions could be broken down into three components: deconditioning, altered states of consciousness, and causing change based on resonance. Deconditioning and altered states of consciousness are the simplest to defend. Deconditioning is directly related to concepts such as rewilding/decivilizing, gestalt therapy, and Foucault's biopolitics. Structures of control are not something external to us, they become inscribed in our bodies and consciousness. There are techniques that can be used to combat this. Altered states of consciousness are important because they expand our selves beyond the atomized cipher, encourage an expansive being. Altered states of consciousness reveal how much our ordinary waking life is sleepwalking.

Causing change based on resonance is a little more difficult to prove or defend. It is impossible to empirically prove this. The easiest way to defend it might be to draw parallels to concepts for insurrectionary anarchy. In the modern world hegemony and totality are so powerful that a direct attack on them would be futile. So instead one attacks in alternative ways, using actions that have resonance to find the weak points in everyday life. These are the points of attack, and they function to destabilize the totality in ways that reverberate through the whole system. These occult currents can encourage us to think in such a way.

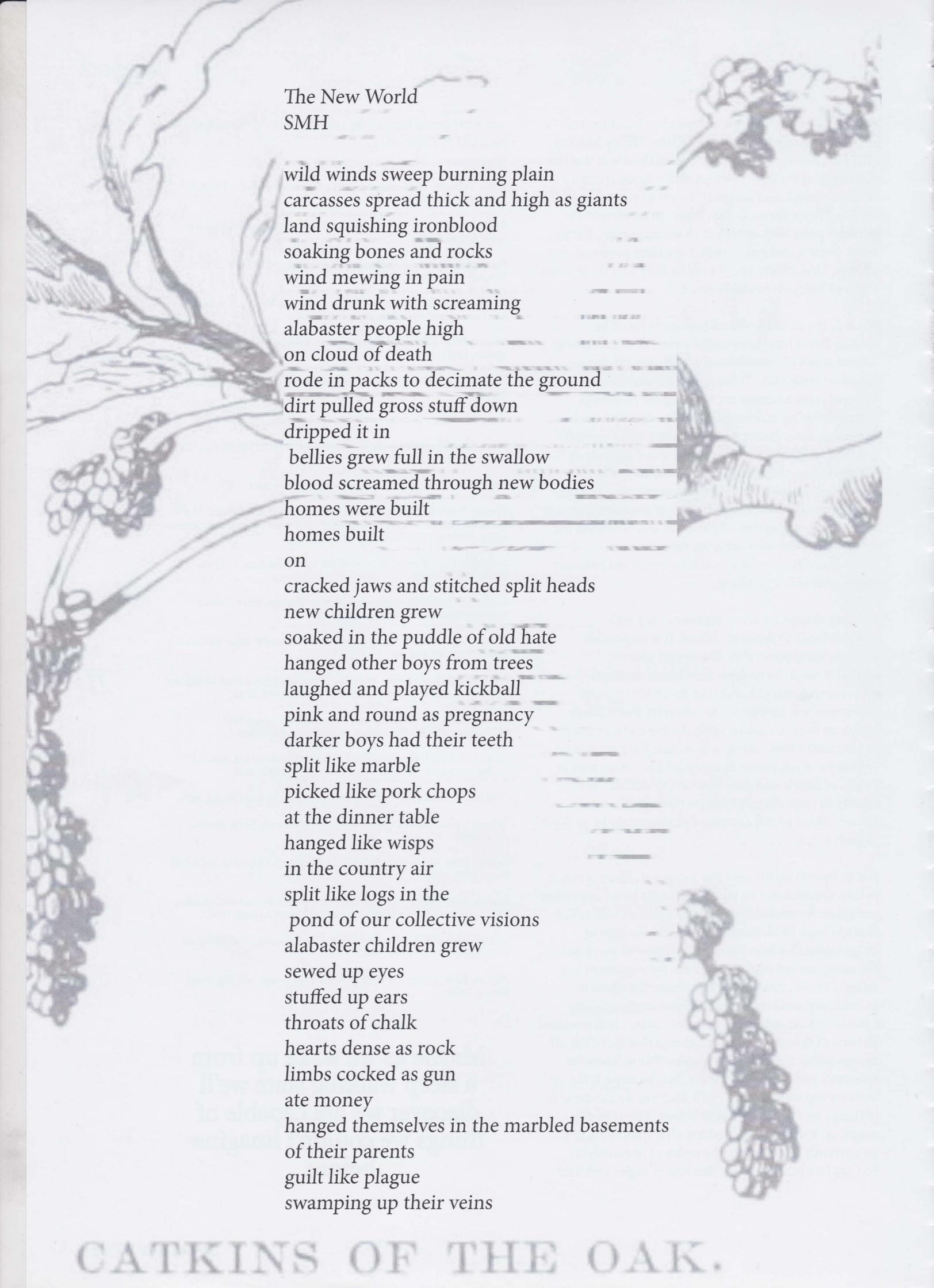
But to leave it at this feels like a cop out. There is more to this. Occultism, like telepathy, might be an imprecise metaphor for something else, some sort of wild talent that has been hidden away. Blake said "in ages of imagination this firm persuasion removed mountains; but many are not capable of a firm persuasion of any thing" (38-39). Realism, in this sense, functions as an arbitrary constraint that has been unconsciously naturalized. As more of the control system is dismantled all sorts of things could occur, things that we've cut off as impossible right now. It is impossible to know for sure until you are actually there. Maybe as we wake up from a sleep walking state we'll discover we are capable of things we couldn't imagine before. This might be magic, or it might be something else, something that we currently assume is in the realm of impossibility. So I say let's journey down this line of flight, and find

out what could happen by rubbing out the notion of possible or impossible.

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**Maybe as we wake up from
a sleep walking state we'll
discover we are capable of
things we couldn't imagine
before.**



The New World
SMH

wild winds sweep burning plain
carcasses spread thick and high as giants
land squishing ironblood
soaking bones and rocks
wind mewing in pain
wind drunk with screaming
alabaster people high
on cloud of death
rode in packs to decimate the ground
dirt pulled gross stuff down
dripped it in
bellies grew full in the swallow
blood screamed through new bodies
homes were built
homes built
on
cracked jaws and stitched split heads
new children grew
soaked in the puddle of old hate
hanged other boys from trees
laughed and played kickball
pink and round as pregnancy
darker boys had their teeth
split like marble
picked like pork chops
at the dinner table
hanged like wisps
in the country air
split like logs in the
pond of our collective visions
alabaster children grew
sewed up eyes
stuffed up ears
throats of chalk
hearts dense as rock
limbs cocked as gun
ate money
hanged themselves in the marbled basements
of their parents
guilt like plague
swamping up their veins

CATKINS OF THE OAK.

WITHOUT INTEGRITY

AN INTERVIEW ON THE GLOBAL STATE OF HUNTING WITH JAMES V. MORGAN

James V. Morgan is a rewilding human, hunter, and anthropologist with nearly two decades of experience living with and learning from numerous hunter-gatherer groups around the world. James has worked directly in analyzing large amounts of governmental hunting data and has observed hunting situations on nearly every continent. James currently resides in Alaska.

Conducted via phone Fall 2019

Oak Journal: How would you describe your background?

James V. Morgan: I've spent almost two decades now working on rewilding, personally. Which included a priority to learn how to hunt small game, big game, basically everything about hunting. And learn how to fish, how to use wild foods and animal food entirely. And the entire package: for food, clothes, other materials. So, I've got going on two decades of experience playing around with that using primitive technology to the furthest extent that I can learn it and also using other technology. That's something we can talk about, the differences there.

Oak Journal: Yeah, I definitely want to get into how technologically dependent the whole situation is now. But I guess to kind of start, for context, how do you view the history of hunting in the human and hominid past, if we can even separate them, but your kind of general feelings there?

James V. Morgan: Well we wouldn't be human if it wasn't for learning how to pursue animal foods. All the anthropological knowledge we have informs us that's the case, that we would not have evolved to be humans or homo sapiens if our ancestors had not begun to try to utilize animal foods in one way or another. It's as deep back as it goes for hominids, it's as deep back as it goes for primates. Probably 6 million years or earlier. All the evidence shows that primates were at least eating insects, including other things too, fruits.

Essentially, all humans evolved from primates who are omnivores, all primates are omnivores, and every human culture on the record is omnivorous. So, primates all consume insects and meat scavenging evolved there, with primates, at some point. Where there would be a carcass of some kind, probably killed by other predators, like lions, primates would move in, start nibbling meat off the bones there. And we know for sure that hunter-gatherers in Africa practiced a lot of meat-scavenging activities, even to the point where -- there's documentation of San hunter-gatherers chasing lions off of their own kills and then stealing carcass parts from those lions. And that's pretty phenomenal stuff right there.

San hunter-gatherers, they ID a lion kill -- where lions have killed some kind of antelope or water buffalo -- and they basically develop a strategy, they get a group together and develop a strategy to move in on that kill. And they'll approach the kill silently and then at that moment that they choose they rush in and chase the lions off that kill and then steal a leg or whatever parts they can grab and take off with it. So, if San hunter-gatherers are doing that then it's very likely that humans have been doing that for a long, long time -- probably up to Erectus period and likely earlier. We're talking at least 2 million years of that tradition, of meat scavenging and even chasing predators off of the kills that predators have made. It's a very significant thing to notice in terms of how we evolved as hunters.

The other thing aside from meat scavenging is persistence hunting. As I just mentioned, you have hunters chasing large predators like lions off of kills. And then we have this documentation of persistence hunting in Africa, again, among San hunter-gatherers. And this is actually chasing animals down through a long, slow process of following them and basically running them down.

You can find some documentation of persistence hunting in the book *Born to Run*, a pretty famous book that a lot of people have read. So, the idea is this: of all animals humans have the most long-range endurance as runners. Of all animals, humans have the endurance to run longer than any other animal, and that's because humans perspire, we sweat. And other animals that sprint really fast, they don't perspire. So, what happens

is eventually they get worn down and they start panting and they can't keep going. But the human can just keep persistently going after them.

So, the animal, the prey, might just rest for a little while and pant and then it'll run off again, sprint again. And eventually it gets to a point where they can't keep sprinting and, at that point, the hunter-gatherers, they move in and then they strike that panting animal that's just completely worn out, they strike it with spears or arrows and take the animal that way.

And it's been shown that San hunter-gatherers will go on these persistence hunting pursuits for 5, 6, 7 hours -- 8 hours, they'll just keep going and going. There's a video that John Marshall made back in the '50s or '60s where the San hunter-gatherers had struck a giraffe with a poison arrow and they pursued that giraffe for a couple of days until they were finally able to get it. And then they sent a runner back to the main group and then brought everyone else and then just settled in right there where the giraffe died, and they'll camp.

San hunter-gatherers use arrow poison, as do many other hunter-gatherers; for arrows, blowgun darts, and spears, so their projectiles don't generally just kill an animal. What happens is, it takes a long time for the poison to set in. After the poison sets then they're in the pursuit of this animal until it dies.

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Oak Journal: Is that still happening now is -- it seems like there would be a lot of land that would be needed in order to employ persistence hunting.

James V. Morgan: It's confusing what's actually going on in the Kalahari now because there've been so many people coming in trying to make films and get people to do things that might be just propped up and kind of set up for a film instead of something that's actually occurring. So, it's hard for me to say for sure what is actually happening. Some people will say that San hunting and gathering is virtually extinct, but others report that there are a few remaining groups that are largely dependent on wild foods.

I'll talk about another type of persistence hunting that I've personally witnessed in Siberia where there's Mongolian Elk being hunted on primitive skis, traditional skis, hand-made skis in the snow. And this is a group of Uriyangkhai hunters who track elk on these traditional skis that they have, in deep snow. And then when they find out where the elk are, they chase the elk down the mountain. They purposely set it up so they're above the elk when they find them and then they chase them down the mountain and then they pick one out, the one that's struggling the most in the deep snow, and they eventually corner that elk and they approach it on their skis and they dispatch the elk. They

have bow and arrow that they've used in the past and then the documentation now, it was even in National Geographic, they use a rawhide lasso and lasso the elk by its antlers. And then, as they're holding it, a couple of the ski hunters rush in, tackle the elk and then hold it down and slit its throat with a knife.

That's been going on at least in the last decade. But, importantly, based on some petroglyph images of ski hunters that been dated at around 14,000 years, persistence hunting on skis may even extend back into the Paleolithic.

Oak Journal: It seems like persistence hunting is one of those things that, archaeologically, it's really hard to find documentation for I imagine?

James V. Morgan: Yeah, absolutely, those rock paintings in the Altai Mountains might provide the oldest verified documentation, other than that I don't know how they'd figure it out. But if the San are any marker for human evolution, which they probably are -- and there's been a lot of arguments about that. One general feeling from archaeology is that San culture is at least 40,000 years old. And thus a lot of their cultural practices probably stem way back, probably since speciation of homo sapiens according to some geneticists. And so, if you look at all their practices, including their persistence hunting, chasing the lions off the kill, you can at least assume -- it's very probable that those practices stem back to speciation of homo sapiens, now we're dating that at about 300,000 years ago, potentially, and probably even earlier.

Oak Journal: There's a general consensus that hunting has been going on how long, I don't know?

James V. Morgan: How long? If chimpanzees hunt, which is proven...

Oak Journal: Well hunting's been going on since life.

(Laughter)

James V. Morgan: There you go. How long has a primate been hunting? How long as a hominid been hunting?

Oak Journal: Right.

James V. Morgan: Since there was a hominid at least. But hunting has evolved into all this messed up stuff from what it was, which we should talk about.

But first I want to say that we shouldn't romanticize chimpanzees as hunters because chimpanzees are all messed up when it comes to their social relations. They have all kinds of malicious intent from male

chimpanzees against female chimpanzees and young chimpanzees and they don't necessarily share meat. There'll be a good hunter and then that meat that they get will be not distributed, it will be hoarded, things like that.

So, you have this whole concept of chimpanzees being pretty non-egalitarian. And one of the most important theories in anthropology is that homo speciation represents this evolution out of this primate state of non-egalitarianism into egalitarianism. That humans evolved as this cooperative primate, the first truly cooperative primate. And that's how we started developing into these large-brain hominids, because we learned to cooperate and because we learned to develop this egalitarian practice. And that egalitarian practice is probably rooted, first and foremost, in sharing food. Sharing the harvest, especially meat, because unlike fruit meat comes in a large package that not every individual can always successfully obtain. And, probably, in sharing the meat that certain people get, bringing it back to the group and distributing it, not fighting over it.

So, it's very significant that humans evolved, likely, in that pattern.

Oak Journal: Hunting is part of this legacy of egalitarianism in human evolution...

James V. Morgan: Perhaps we would not have even evolved to be a large-brained primate if it wasn't for that. Not just the hunting, but the sharing and the egalitarianism. So, again, it's absolutely significant for thinking about hunting, but also highly significant for all anarchists and activists that are trying to figure out how we're going to get out of domination.

A good way to explain it is this. There's one theory of evolution which kind of assigns humans as being the -- there's this demonic male and humans evolve in this chimpanzee-like hierarchy and violence and then eventually these egalitarian groups figure out how to get along somehow and figure out how to cooperate. So, humans evolve with this chimpanzee-like non-egalitarianism. And then there is this opposing theory says, no, we could not have evolved to become who we are if we wouldn't have first become egalitarian and then that egalitarianism led us to developing larger and larger brains and to us effectively becoming the most cooperative ape on the planet. And I of course side with this later theory, I think it makes a lot more sense. And the demonic male theory doesn't make as much sense. Our capacity for intimate cooperation is one thing that makes us different, so it must have been a critical factor in our speciation.

Oak Journal: Is this kind of counter to this vegan

idealism around herbivorous animals? That -- the degree to which you consume other living things that happen to be animals is not necessarily directly correlative in any way to the egalitarian nature of your society, or your dynamics between individual members of a species.

James V. Morgan: One way to answer that is that hunting and wild food in general, whether it's hunting, animal products, fishing, hunting or gathering -- that, right there, is what allows autonomy. That's a free practice, anyone can go do that, as long as they have the skills and ability to do it, and we talk about domestication basically amounting to dependency. If you're trying to be autonomous and not dependent on structures of power or on domesticating the land and the resources, do you want to have in your pocket the skills to get wild animal foods even if you want to be mostly vegan? Do you want to have an acceptance of the need to get animal foods at certain points in time? Or do you want to have this strict vegan ideology that basically backs you into a wall that generally ends in domestication? Find any -- any -- authentically free vegan people that have ever existed. Well, first of all, there's no vegans that have ever existed until industrial civilization.

Oak Journal: Yeah, definitely closing yourself off.

James V. Morgan: Really closing yourself off. There is some documentation of some more or less vegetation-dependent hunter-gatherers, but none that did not consume any animal foods.

India is an often cited example of a traditional vegetarian society, from what I understand, it's the poor in India, the agricultural peasants who became vegetarian out of necessity and the elites in Indian, they kept eating meat while ideologically promoting vegetarianism to their serfs. And so, vegetarianism might have been fostered as a politically driven religious manipulation for keeping the peasants from having a demand for killing cows. Vegetarianism in India was religious and political propaganda to serve elite interests.

Oak Journal: And there's definitely some parallels with what we're seeing today with the way that diet is being used as a political tool -- to say, if you eat this way than these are your values; if you eat this way than these are the other values. The supposedly plant-based diet is basically all these commodity crops that have been the fuel for population growth and the feeding of the mass of people -- just reconfigured once again. So it's kind of crazy to think that there's these parallels across -- obviously there's all this continuity but sometimes it's startling to think about it, that that same politicization of your food and your diet and what you

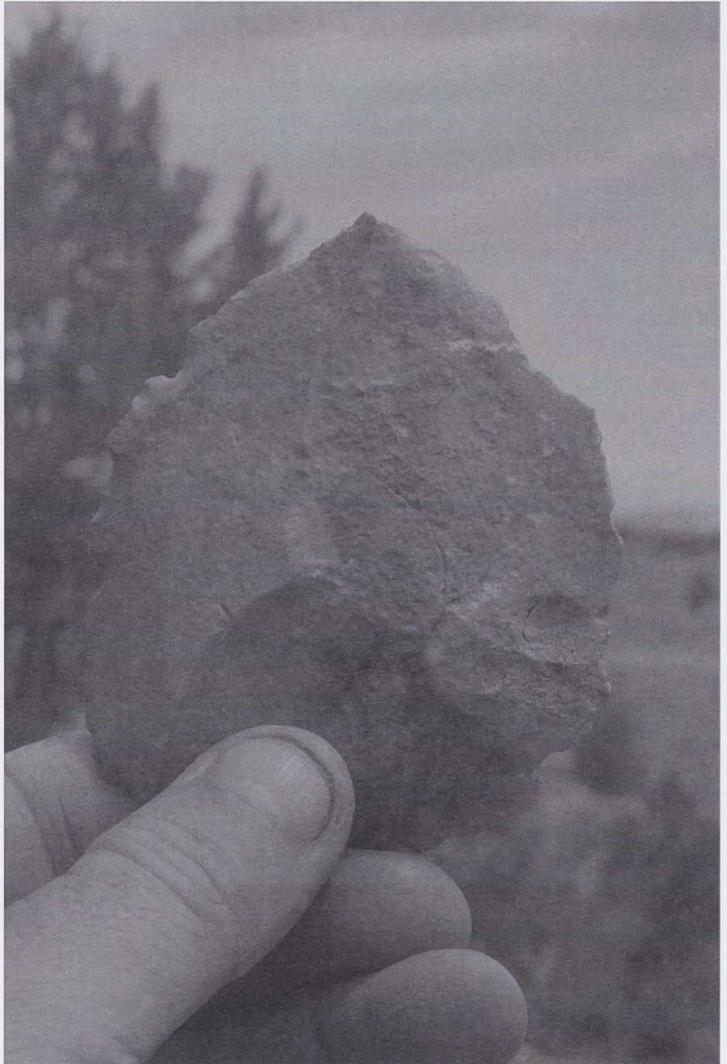
eat is happening all throughout the history of civilization -- seeing it play out again and again.

James V. Morgan: It's all to keep propping up mass civilization first for elite interests, but now unfortunately for actual survival. The eco-liberal mantra: we can't reject mass society, mass technology and mass civilization -- we just need to find a way to somehow stabilize it. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying everyone eating meat or going hunting is a way to stabilize it. Absolutely not. But then again, the whole plant-based thing doesn't recognize some of these fundamental realities that need to be brought into the fold. I will say that it should be recognized by primitivists, thinking people, hunters and paleo-types that a good amount of tropical hunter-gatherers around the world were significantly plant-based, at least periodically, and continue to be. At least for the last several thousand years, we don't find this huge dependence upon keto, high-fat among hunter gatherers in southern environments -- and that is pretty significant for understanding how some autonomous hunter gatherers have survived over time. Especially people need to keep in mind that the last surviving free indigenous people on the planet, those in the Amazon and on the Andaman Islands, do incorporate large amounts of vegetation, particularly fruits and tubers in their diets.

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It is well known that tropical hunter-gatherers rely a lot on starch of different types; wild starches. And then, a lot of hunter-gatherers in the tropics have been rice adapted for five, six-thousand years. And they continued their hunter-gatherer lifestyle with trading rice and that has all kinds of sketchy implications in the context of resilience that we cannot ignore, but there's a fair amount of them that have stayed autonomous to large degrees while incorporating rice into their diet. I'm not 100 percent certain about the long-range health implications but they're pretty fit people, I've seen a fair amount of them first-hand. And it just adds into the chaos of all these arguments and should also be stuff that people need to be discussing. Not necessarily that being dependent on domestic rice is a good thing, but more so acknowledging that rice incorporated by contemporary hunter gatherers is not necessarily this giant influx of carbs for them, its more so a substitute for thousands of years of reliance on wild starches.

Oak Journal: Yeah, I think it's all about whether you're even asking the right question or interrogating the right problem when you go at these things. Like, obviously, it's not necessarily about are you eating X-percentage meat or X-percent from hunting or buying meat at the



store -- what we're talking about is getting away from these staple, civilized crops that basically bake in the entire structure.

James V. Morgan: Absolutely. You know a better way to discuss the entire dilemma should be intermittent fasting because hunter-gatherers are master intermittent fasters, master fasters. Wherever they have lived, their whole lifestyle is built around this ebb and flow of what's coming and going. And being in full acceptance of that and not being fully dependent on things and being able to be like, okay, we don't have this for now so we're going to eat that. Or, man, we're really hungry we don't have nothing, and we can make it for 7, 8 days with barely anything -- because we don't got nothing right now. Same with their incorporation of some of the carbs. For a little while they get some rice because they had some extra forest products that they traded for some rice or they traded away a wild pig leg or something for a little bit of rice. But then they're back in the jungle for a period of time and they ate all the rice and then they're just living on wild foods for a while. And they're just adapted to that flexibility, the ebb and flow.

And civilization just wants stability, and everyone becomes super dependent, they think they need this thing all day or every single day. But then with the trend with intermittent fasting, I mean I know for myself; you start to experience that ability to let go. If I am Paleo dieting for 10 days, I'm good, I can handle it. If I get suddenly end up in some other situation where I'm eating rice and being vegan, I can handle that. The diet topic gets pretty complex but this whole idea that we need all this stuff all the time, that's a major domesticated line of thinking.

Oak Journal: Right, and it all works against the resiliency that we will need as a species and as communities to live without civilization.

James V. Morgan: That's right. And, not only that, it works against autonomy. The ability to actually operationalize an anarchist community and situation. Because, really, what we have to target is dependencies, dependencies on power, however our dependencies evolve, physically and psychologically. And how we get food is perhaps the most critical element of our dependencies.

Oak Journal: From a rewilding perspective how has hunting been part of your rejection of domestication, from a personal level or from experiences you've had with other hunters or other societies?

James V. Morgan: Hunting, fishing and gathering is the most autonomous way of obtaining food, period. Myself, now going on two-decades of spending time with indigenous people, most of whom are hunter-gatherers or former hunter-gatherers, I've learned a lot about hunting from spending time with indigenous people who have long hunting traditions and I've hunted a lot with different indigenous people, seeing exactly how they go about it and their perspectives on it. And I should add to that too that I have a family member who's a professional hunting guide. That's given me exposure to the whole other side of it, the modern trophy hunter side, which I'm not going to promote but by learning how all that works and spending time out in a hunting context with people like that then you learn a lot about this very domesticated industrial end of hunting

Well, as I'm saying, domestication to me, the underlying thing with it is dependency. Basically, becoming dependent on power. So, in the case of hunting, and wild food in general, when you're able to obtain food out on the land under your own means, without having to be dependent on other entities of power for technology and for food production then you actually develop autonomy.

I would say that anarchists and people who are taking seriously getting out of this mess we're in need to prioritize development of real food autonomy, however it can be done. And I know that's easier said than done. But it needs to be recognized within the whole milieu that wild food, hunting, gathering, whichever it is, presents for us the highest level of freedom and autonomy in terms of our survival. When you can harvest wild food and have the skills to do it and have the ecology to do it, which unfortunately a lot of people don't have, you're the freest from the forces of power and authority that you can be. And not just food, any of your basic needs, if you can get those in wildness than you have no dependency except on wildness. And, therefore, you have this intimate relationship. And this represents a really important positive feedback loop that builds an entire spectrum of both social and ecological relationships that we need to have.

Critical on that stuff, I would say too, is recognizing that ebb and flow and not getting caught in this ideology -- oh it's only wild food, I can't pursue anything but that -- because that's just unrealistic, especially in the context of where most people are living in the 21st century. It's like, the more wild I can get with getting my basic needs the more autonomy and freedom I have. But sometimes I've got to give in a little and get these other foods or find another way to get my needs met through other channels that are more industrialized, more civilized, taking advantage of that hunter-gatherer capacity to take what comes, because a lot of the resilience of indigenous people lands right there, especially colonized indigenous people maintaining their culture. Only a very small select few do not have deeply embedded dependencies on industrial civilization at this stage.

Long before fossil fuel, most indigenous people have generally always been willing to incorporate some of these things that come from the colonial world, and now the industrial world, because they recognize it's a smart decision in the moment. Right now, this is going to get me what I need. And it gets really tricky too though because it's so easy to develop dependencies, psychological and material dependencies, on these goods and then all of a sudden start shifting your whole way of life towards, how do I get this thing that you now supposedly need. I call it evolved dependency.

And this is a really important mechanism that people need to watch out for, allowing these evolved dependencies to happen. While, at the same time, knowing sometimes it's a smart decision to take a bowl of rice or eat a piece of bread, dumpster some bagels. But you've got to be so careful about how your dependencies evolve. It's just like you smoke once cigarette and then next thing you know you want 10 cigarettes every day. Oh, you're going to get a smartphone so you can make calls and check your

e-mail every now and then? Next thing you know you're plugged in and you can't put down the smartphone. This is this real tricky human thing that we've got to deal with. Sort of this discipline that's required if we want to move out of this stuff. And it's across the board, with food, with hunting, with technology, everything else.

Oak Journal: How does that tie into what we've talked about before regarding being not having? You're describing having a relationship to all these things as being part of your being, your ebb and flow and path through the world, not as part of like a property or an accumulation or a habit which ties us to the larger structure and that dependency?

James V. Morgan: Yeah, the dependency and then the accumulation, that's one thing that small-scale hunter-gatherers tend to not do is turn any of these needs that they develop into an accumulation or a surplus that they're going to turn into more profit. They'll have access to an abundance of something if it's coming from the industrial world or otherwise and then they'll enjoy that abundance for a while, but they don't get hung up on it, they are able to let it go. And this is not to say, oh let's just go with it -- you know, all these things out here, if we just kind of moderate our use of them, it's not going to mess us up so we should just be more accepting and not so idealistic about wildness and all that -- I don't want to go down that dangerous path at all. But it's also recognizing sanity and not to get too wrapped up because these are tricky decisions that need to be made, they need to be well thought out if we're going to have a real effective way forward.

And I don't have all the answers on it. But what I want to point out, above all else, is that, absolutely, hunter-gatherers are masters of adapting to whatever comes their way. And it's shot them in the foot too, because modern hunter-gatherers, most of the ones that still survive have failed to reject things coming from civilization that have ultimately really harmed them and put them in a very bad position. And when you talk about that with indigenous people a lot of times they're offended. In fact, if you're not indigenous and you talk about this, you're considered paternalistic. The whole politically correct thing is they should be able to choose for themselves what they want to incorporate from the modern world, it's up to them, analysts like us shouldn't dictate it for them. However, those of us who've really studied how these trajectories evolve, we're able to implant some knowledge that informs people that, look, it might take 100 years but after 100 years of your dependency on this thing this is where things are going for your culture. And we should be able to stand up and talk about that.

Oak Journal: And it's so hard for us to even see that in the choices that are being made in modernity, within

industrial civilization. I mean who takes a 100 year look at a new technology? Nobody does. So that part of it seems very human. We're not perfect, rational ultimate beings of total wisdom or anything.

James V. Morgan: I'll say the smartest thing that anyone trying to deal with all these issues we're facing on the planet right now can do is immerse themselves deeply in the nuances of the anthropological record, because it provides the picture to show us exactly where we're going, how we got ourselves on this path, how we can get ourselves out of it by seeing 100 percent legitimate evidence for these cultures that never were on this trajectory and that maintained authentically sustainable ways of life for probably hundreds of thousands of years. And there's no way to dodge this reality. So, when people start saying, oh humans are just evil and we're destined to fuck everything up and there's no hope, no way out. No, we have plenty of evidence to show long-range, sustainable, resilient culture that is not fucking up the planet. And, in fact, that represents 99 percent of human history.

What's primitivism? To me, it's being a 99 percenter, not being a 1 percenter, recognizing that 99 percent and what it is and the significance of it. The absolutely massive significance of it. Because it actually is the dominant paradigm of human history. This other stuff is just this little microcosm -- and I don't want to downplay it because the changes and the events that have occurred in that microscopic amount of time, they're massively significant and insane. Look at where we are.

There's kind of two answers, right? Either this world we are in now is all meant to be, or it wasn't meant to be. It's such a short time since agriculture and since the development of fossil fuels, which is such a little blip in time, 160 years ago, look how much change there is. Is this all meant to be? Is this where we're supposed to be going? Well, what we do know is we've got at least a million years of sustainable human life that's got no evidence for fucking everything up, both ecologically and socially. And that is immensely important. If there's any message that, right now, this world needs to hear it's that one: we can solve it, as a species we can fix this stuff, but we need to recognize the mechanisms that got us into this position.

You get all these naysayers, primitivism is not the answer -- well, they're not paying attention. And I'm not trying to promote academia and all this scholarship but the map to the maze -- it's all there. If you spend enough time looking at the long-range view that you can find in the anthropological record, it's all apparent. And, in fact, some of the smartest people who've written a lot of the good books about our ecological crisis, mainstream people and otherwise, they all recognize

this. It's all right there. And then you get these naysayers. And, I think, in fact, the naysayers are just hooked on their phones, they're hooked on technology and their comforts and they're too afraid for their personal survival to step outside of it -- they don't want to go there. So, then they just -- oh, there's nothing to this noble savage thing, you guys are just romanticizing. But the evidence is just so powerful for the whole entire anarcho-primitivist package. It's all there, it's super strong, it's stronger than the evidence for climate change (laughter) ---or at least anarcho-primitivism provides us with the most logical answers for how we might survive climate change (more laughter).

Oak Journal: I think that ties into dependency as well, when you're talking about naysayers and, basically, reactionary responses to primitivism. If you're dependent upon something than you're likely to defend it. And that's a concept that people are pretty much onboard with, generally. People are very aware in pop culture of Stockholm Syndrome or something like that and it's like, what the fuck do you think is happening in mass?

James V. Morgan: What got me on this trajectory, Steve, is that, you mentioned people aren't even looking, they can't look 100 years in the future -- well, what we need to be doing is looking thousands and thousands of years in the past to understand where we're going in the future. And so, everyone needs this long-range view. And if there's anything important to promote it is that long-range view, that big-picture perspective.

Unfortunately, the reality with that is the big-picture perspective like that, it is a Western perspective, it's a colonial one. Indigenous people don't like it, their adaptive psychology has largely been one of being in the moment. And that's a pretty gnarly contradiction but the fact is that modern science and academia has put all this legit comprehensive analysis stuff on the table. A lot of very legitimate things and it just forces us to have to look at this bigger stuff.

Oak Journal: I guess that the counter argument would be that that approach has been a failure so far? What would you say to that?

James V. Morgan: Well it's been a failure because of exactly what we were just talking about, these dependencies and that people want to defend them. The problem is that the whole academic industry is entirely dependent on industrial capitalism, all their funding, their entire way of life is immersed within civilization. And so, the people that

have done all of this research, when it comes down to the wire, they generally always sided with kind of your standard, liberal, go-nowhere, half-ass mentality. And they generally always land with defending whatever it's going to take to keep their professorship, whatever it's going to take to keep funding their research. So they get into research, pumping out another project, pumping out more writing in academic journals and then they need that list on their CV so they can get another grant funding and another project funded and they keep it going and then they're tied into the university and they're making \$100,000 a year so they bought themselves a nice house and they've got to pay mortgage and then they have kids and then they just get wrapped up in this civilized system of dependency themselves. So, they'll just defend it at all costs even while they're bringing to the table all this important knowledge that could actually get us out of this mess.

So, yes, it's a really twisted, messed up situation.

It's like all these people that mean well, they've got these ideas, we're going to protect wildlife; we're going to do this research to try to solve this problem or that. They're just trying to navigate their way as good as they can through capitalism but, even more so, their own full-fledged dependency on the capitalist, technological system. And generally, what happens is you don't have these people ever saying, you know what, I'm not going to go down that road. Generally, it's like, nope, we can't do anything other than play along. There's no going back, there's no chance to alter it. It's: how can we navigate best within the system rather than reject the whole thing. And that's liberalism, right?



Oak Journal: Right, that's liberalism and all of its fucking horror.

James V. Morgan: Just a massive surrender. And then candy-coating it with all this do-gooder stuff. And, actually, beyond that, they believe in it.

Oak Journal: In your view what is the general paradigm of civilized fishing and hunting as it exists now?

James V. Morgan: Well it goes back to this topic of hunting being anti-domestication. Hunting today is full domestication. I mean, people are, they are obtaining wild food, but they are doing it in a way that -- not only does it dominate wildness, they are dominated by technology and dependency on the industrial system in order for their hunting practice to even work.

So, they don't make any effort to separate that out.

Oak Journal: So, what are some of the examples. Is it like a technofied scheme primarily -- I mean, obviously it's a convergence of a mental pathology and the availability of technology and the state and capital organizing all these things into the situation we have now -- but what does that look like? What's the process for people who are going out and either trophy hunting or paying big sums of money to get on the land and hunt?

James V. Morgan: Well, the whole process starts with domesticated culture in the first place. Because when you're outside of a subsistence hunting culture, which is basically hunting for -- in its rawest form is hunting to be, not to have. This starts evolving with the first complex hunter-gatherers who are actually harvesting for a surplus, harvesting more meat so they can store it -- not so they can make it through a winter but storing it to use for trade or for certain individuals to develop power over others in a group. So, hunting becomes, right there, something outside of basic need. And that evolves slowly through the development of civilization to the point where hunting, as a part of civilization, becomes this sort of alienated thing that's more about gaining power and gaining wealth and gaining prestige than it is about that actual connectivity as a human animal and as a socially cooperative omnivore.

Essentially, as hunting becomes more rooted in civilized psychologies you start to see a large amount of energy being channeled into a drive for status and then, beyond that, it becomes a hobbyist sort of thing where hunters are really into wildlife and being there, camping and everything. But the intention is never really to undomesticate it's just kind of this temporary visit in wildness. And then, these hunters, they always return to civilized life after they've done their killing.

So, what you have is with the first agriculture civilizations and then forward -- you still have hunting, it's always been there. Hunting is a tradition for nearly all human societies but, particularly in agriculturalist societies it became a tradition mostly for elite men.

Sport hunting, which is what we would call most hunting today that people are familiar with in the United States, that's rooted all the way back probably in the first complex civilizations -- and even, maybe, became sport for complex hunter-gatherers too. Maybe it became sporty rather than for subsistence, but I think it was more for prestige back then. Across the board, once people start developing wealth and they're sedentary -- they're largely still hunting.

You can imagine these Mesopotamian kings, or whoever, going out and hunting for certain animals that were still wild in the Levant, gazelles and things like that -- and they were doing it for sport and they were doing it for prestige and of course they're using the meat, they're using the products for certain things, ornaments -- maybe they're giving those things to specialists who are turning those things into products that they can use for trade.

Across Asia is this ancient trade in wild products for Chinese medicine -- that's all based in prestige. So many of these Chinese medicinal things are idealized from wealthy people, emperors because they need to have this thing so they can bolster their power and bolster their prestige and their image. So, this whole tiger penis soup or rhino horn and all that stuff, that's all products of hunting but these are products of a whole different type of hunting than subsistence hunting. When you fast-forward to the modern world, that's still what we're up against here. This whole thing about ego, prestige, image, power, and wealth -- and I'm not going to say that there isn't that element of people simply wanting to hunt for wild food, because that's definitely there, there's a lot of angles -- but we do have a largely ego-based hunting culture across the West.

Oak Journal: Do you see sort of a delineation in the people you encounter who are out hunting, especially in the West, between the sport hunter and the -- we'll call them, not subsistence hunters, but hunting for maybe an economic reason -- do you see an difference in attitude to those two approaches or is it basically manifests of the same thing but different motivations?

James V. Morgan: Absolutely, I could ID all kinds of different sectors of hunters out in the field when I'm hunting, every season. And you can definitely delineate these different attitudes just by checking out people, what they're doing, what equipment they have, and talking to them about what they're out there for.

TATHAGATA

BY TRACE FLEEMAN Y GARCIA

Mesquite smoke

and the

sweet sticky

wound of the tathagatas,

Algaenaeous marble

Turns in 10 centuries time

To fossil jade, petrified bamboo

Smoothly crumbled like ash in the hand.

Leathery fesh eaten by rats,

Return once again to where I came from.

There are certainly huge cadres of rural Americans who do hunt for food. It's traditional for them. It is all about getting that food but it's also this traditional thing where it's like an identity; we hunt deer every year; we always get some deer. But they're not in it for antlers, they're not in it necessarily for prestige, they don't care if they get the biggest animal. These kinds of people don't care about the technology either, they'll usually do whatever it takes to get their meat. They're not really interested in the spiritual side of it or the low-impact process or learning to undomesticate their hunting process and not being dependent on the economy or technology to do it. But they're also not in it for the prestige and the sport.

Then you do have these super wealthy people, I mean -- general to the rest of the world's level of wealth -- really wealthy, Western trophy-hunter types. Or people who watch a lot of outdoor channel shows. They won't stop at nothing to have whatever technology they need to be successful. A few states have had to ban drone hunting, hunting with drones -- scouting for game with drones is what they call it. This idea that they're going to use drones -- and they'll use any piece of technology, especially motorized transport to make it easy. You've got game cameras, you've got feeding stations.

So, when you get to the extreme end of trophy hunting, I guess I'll call this the Safari Club International hunters. They go to Africa, they do these canned hunts, it's all set up. These African game farms, there's some big territory that these animals live on but it's all fenced in. And you go there, you choose what animal you want to buy, there's a menu. You choose the animal; you pay that price -- and for each kill that you want to make it's a certain price depending on the species.

From what I know about it it's set up to where you're going to find that animal and you're going to be able to kill it without much of a challenge. A lot of it is waterhole based so they put these hunters out at these water holes and wait for the animals to come there and the hunters are just in blinds and they just wait. Animals come to get their water, boom, they're done. They're so hemmed in on their game farms they've got nowhere else to go. These Trump brothers they put all these photos up of them doing that for however many years.

And what do they do? Some of these Safari Club hunters they kill elephants for sport. But it was illegal to bring elephant trophies back into the United States to protect elephants and to stop the ivory trade. So, with Trump one of the first things they did there in the Department of the Interior was to make it legal to bring African elephant ivory into the United States from Africa. They want to put that whole elephant head on their wall, if not the entire elephant in their house. So, the Safari Club is generally these very wealthy people and you go in their homes and their entire living room is a trophy room from animals from all over the world. They spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars, to line their houses with these big trophies that are taxidermied full-sized animals or shoulder mounts.

We've got hunts in Alaska -- they're \$40,000 a pop to kill one animal with a guided hunt, these luxury hunts. So, we're talking super high-dollar stuff.

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And the big trophy hunters who have a lot of money generally tend to be members of Safari Club International and they drive this elite, modern hunting culture. Around the planet, they organize hunting in all these different countries, they bring wealthy hunters to places in Asia to get these exotic species and places around the world. So, to me, it's a very corrupt industry and it's bolstered by mostly right-wing, wealthy people. It's a pretty interesting phenomenon.

I'm not certain if the Trump brothers are members of Safari Club International members, they probably are, but that's definitely the type of hunter that's in the Safari Club International. There's a lot of doctors, dentists and elite people. Every year they have a banquet, the SCI Banquet, and all the members get to come and show off what trophies they got and then they'll get an award. And it kind of doesn't even matter what means you took to get the trophy. It's just you got the trophy and you put the award on your wall. It's this really egoist hunting paradigm. So, I call them the Safari Club International type, got to watch out for them.

And then there's these other hunting clubs which are, to me, more legit. Like Boone and Crockett, that's the rifle trophy association and they've got different

standards for the trophy and they specifically have rules that if you didn't get the animal, if you didn't kill it under fair-chase methods, if you used airplanes or any sketchy technology than it does not count, it cannot go in the record book. So, they've got to make sure that everything is done legitimately and then there's all these people trying to cheat the Boone and Crockett so they can still get in the record book.

So, it's a weird culture.

Oak Journal: So, basically, if you're in the Safari Club, then you can legitimately buy your way in. You can buy a guide and you can drone scout and all this stuff and it's fine because that's just part of it.

James V. Morgan: I don't want to quote their exact rules but, yes, you can legitimately buy your way in. And that's what it is, it's all about buying your way in. And they'll have a list of their species and they want to get each one and they want to have a trophy for each one of those species, around the world.

So, earlier you had asked me what species costs \$40,000 and I interrupted you, one of the really big ones is Kodiak brown bear. Every one of these elite hunters has to get their Kodiak brown bear, that's the biggest bear in the world. So, you've got these elite hunters every year trying to get these special permits to hunt these brown bears and literally they're \$30-40,000 a pop, once you get the permit, to have the guide and the whole thing.

And they just want to get in, get their giant bear, get their pictures with it and then they'll take the whole bear out and usually they'll have the thing fully stuffed into a big life-size bear, the richest ones will do that. And the ones who can't afford that will create some sort of trophy out of it. So, it's a huge industry killing these brown bears. Now the alternative, to get a brown bear, if you can't get a Kodiak or an Alaskan one which is a lot more expensive, is to go to Russia where it's all corrupt and you can pay \$20,000 to get your brown bear in Russia. But then, over there, because it's all corrupt, brown bear populations are in way more trouble than they are in Alaska.

Brown bear is generally considered the same thing as a grizzly bear, but the way we differentiate that usually is that brown bears are called coastal brown bears, they're coastal grizzly bears or coastal, *ursus arctos*, and then interior brown bears or grizzly bears, the ones that live more in mountains and in interior environments, not coastal ones. And so, the coastal ones are always way bigger, they are the largest ones because they eat the abundance of marine resources. And the interior grizzly bears are smaller.

Oak Journal: They want the biggest ones that they can

get.

James V. Morgan: Yes, 12-foot is the big deal -- they all want to get at least a 10-foot, and that's measured from the top of the head to the rear end.

If they don't get a 10-foot they're really bummed. I've actually seen it happen, where this guy, he got a 9-foot, some dentist, got a 9-foot and he was all upset about it. And that was his only bear, so he had to take his 9-foot bear home and whine about it.

Oak Journal: So, if you're an aspiring elite then you might need to go to Russia where it's a little bit cheaper, but you want to make sure you get the right size.

James V. Morgan: There's actually guys like that. There's these really wealthy hunters who can afford it all and then there's these guys who become obsessed with it and they'll spend their entire savings -- they'll save up for years and years and years just to do that one trophy hunt, whether it's for grizzly bear or Dall sheep or whatever it is. They'll save up for years and years and -- that'll be that one big thing that they do in their life is get to go on that one hunt. And they'll drop, 30, 40 grand. And there's no guarantee of success either.

Oak Journal: And it's all for some status -- if you're doing it one time it's totally not related why humans, going back to the 99 percent, it doesn't relate back to that at all. You're in another fucking world.

James V. Morgan: In a way it does. There's maybe that primal thing, you're hunting a bear -- you can go tell people, yeah, I was hunting these Kodiak bears. And these people will be so impressed. (Laughter) But, yes, mostly it doesn't connect back. Ego, you know.

Oak Journal: When you were talking about Safari Club International, I was thinking about that move "The Game", are you familiar with that?

James V. Morgan: I'm not.

Oak Journal: Late '90s, Ice-T plays a homeless dude in LA and these...

James V. Morgan: Oh yeah!

Oak Journal: These rich, white, trophy hunters -- it's the greatest hunt is to hunt these nameless, faceless, non-people that they pick up and release into the woods.

James V. Morgan: Well, on that note, I once ended up staying in a small stone lodge in the Drakensberg Mountains of Africa, South Africa, because I was backpacking in these mountains -- and they're actually pretty wild still -- and there was this lodge that we

came across and ended up spending the night there because it was a shelter. And then found out that this stone structure was formerly a Bushmen hunting lodge -- and I don't mean the Bushmen stayed in there, it was a 'Bushman hunting lodge' for Afrikaners who had a tradition of hunting wild Bushmen back in that time period when they colonized South Africa.

Oak Journal: Holy fuck.

James V. Morgan: So, the Afrikaners made a sport out of hunting down the wild Bushmen, the wild Bushmen left in the different areas of South Africa.

And to twist that all around, the etymology of the word "game" -- connect that together -- game is video game or sports game or this game that you're going to play. Well what's the name for animals that people hunt? Game. So, which came first? The animals, the hunting tradition, and then these other games evolved somehow after hunting was the only game in town.

And that was a good game when it was at that basic primal human evolutionary level.

Oak Journal: And the perception of what the stakes are. That's what strikes me about all this Safari Club -- and especially what you just said -- the perception among the people that are doing these things, that the stakes are somehow really high for them. You know?

James V. Morgan: Exactly.

Oak Journal: When it's all just not true. It's so demented I don't even really how to like -- yeah.

James V. Morgan: And you know, we enjoy games, as people. We enjoy that act of physical and mental challenge to be out doing something. I mean we evolved in that game of hunting, that's where the word game comes from. And I enjoy my hunting game too. It's, to me, one of the best things I can do with my time. It's one of the finest things I can do with myself is to be out there on the land in pursuit of that game. But it has been completely twisted around into all sorts of evil connotations from what it originally was. But hunting was the original game, it was the human game, if you want to look at it that way.

But back to this other spectrum, to what I call subsistence hunters, well these are poor people -- it is traditional for them, for their families, the way they were raised -- but they don't have anything, they actually are hunting for food. And the way that I view it, they're putting in the minimal inputs to be successful at hunting to get the largest return back. Versus these sport hunters who are putting in these large amounts of resources to get this little micro-return back.

Oak Journal: It's sort of a microcosm of the entire civilized dynamic there.

James V. Morgan: Yeah.

Oak Journal: I was reading earlier today that a lion hunt in Zimbabwe is \$100,000 and of course there's this argument played out there about how that gets money and the money funds these reserves and obviously that's a pretty shallow analysis of what's happening. But even with that, I was reading that only 3 percent of that money even goes back there so it's kind of just a lie on its face anyway. But how does all that affect and, including in the West, in the North, how does all these elites being evolved in sport hunting and trophy hunting, how does that effect indigenous access to game? Is that a situation that's just totally fucked?

James V. Morgan: Mostly entirely obliterated across the world. There's going to be some select places where there's still a lot possible. But, mostly, it's obliterated. Africa is a huge example. I mean, here, we evolved in Africa as hunter-gatherers and hunter-gatherers in Africa barely have any access to their traditional way of life. Most of the land has been sucked into these large private parcels of either conservation farms or hunting farms or a mix of the two. And there's an entire massive industry run by these elite people. They spin the whole thing as like, it's the money that comes from hunting -- this high-dollar sport hunting -- that allows the conservation of these species. And so that's the big argument you get across Africa, that it is these wealthy landowners and these safari hunting operations that allow the species in Africa to go on, aside from the few large national parks that exist in Africa, the rest of it's all being done through industry, you know, 'the free market.'

I should also mention that in equatorial Africa it's a different situation where there's not game farms and the pygmy hunter-gatherers in equatorial Africa there's numerous groups, the Baka, the Aka the Mbuti, the Twa, the Mbendjele -- their situation is different. They're jungle hunters, tropical forest people. They are being decimated by the logging and destruction of the equatorial African forest. So, regarding large game they face a different set of problems than the ones the Savannah hunter-gatherers face, such as the Hadza and the San.

So, obviously, this trophy-hunting culture is 99.9 percent hard-right, conservative thinking people and they have a lot of money. So, to answer your question, the entire paradigm is that whole free-market ideology and like, no the government can't save the animals, it's private property and our hunting money and private hunting that's going to save all these animals. And

you have Ryan Zinke [Editor's Note: At time of this interview Sec. of Interior, current DOI Secretary is David Bernhardt] type people trying to sell off public land in Montana.

So, this private land they sell off, what does it do? It becomes a hunting ranch. Well before it was equal access to all the public to go hunting. In the United States private lands, especially in the West, is this huge issue of the ability for an average person to hunt big game. Because the ranchers, the landowners, are controlling huge amounts of the wildlife habitat. And they're turning their ranches into hunting ranches across the West because they can make a lot of money. Hunting has gotten more trendy. They say hunting numbers are down, well, maybe the per capita number of hunters is down but, for the wealthy, hunting has become more and more trendy.

So, there's these places, like in Wyoming, where -- I call it hundred-bucks-and-a-truck hunting. That's how most rural people grew up. You've got a hundred bucks and a pickup truck, go out and get yourself an elk or a deer. Meaning a hundred bucks for your fuel and whatever you need for some food and this and that -- you should be able to get yourself a deer or elk. Well now the access is so hemmed in and so constrained, a lot of these places where older people would go and easily be able to get themselves an elk now are owned by these private ranches. They want \$14,000 a pop to hunt elk on these lands.

I mean, this just goes right back to those emperors and those kings that I'm talking about.

During medieval England, poor people, peasants, paupers they weren't even allowed to hunt, and hunting became this elite game that was played by the landowners, the people in power. And I think that occurred in all of medieval Europe, not just England.

If the average pauper got caught hunting deer then they would be executed, hung, or severely punished. So, the elite started controlling hunting access somewhere in that period with large-scale agricultural civilizations and empires.

Our whole entire Western colonial culture evolved with hunting being that sort of elitist thing in a lot of ways. As soon as colonization happened though these European people were all of a sudden showing up to these places that were seemingly, to them, free land. And all of a sudden, they were let loose to become hunters and develop a more equal, autonomous hunting culture, but it was still rooted in that colonialism.

Oak Journal: Where we are in West Virginia, all the property around us, even though by most maps you

would think it would be National Forest, it's actually a game club and they own basically all the adjacent property to the National Forest. So, in a way, even though they don't own the National Forest, they basically own all the access to it. And you have to buy a fairly expensive share every year in order to be able to hunt it. And there's several of them out here like that and it's how a lot of the people hunt, or a lot of the people with money or the people that move out here from the city or retire out here. They'll buy a share and that's how they do it. And they can maintain their elite status by doing that too.

James V. Morgan: That's how most hunting is around the world today. It's very much like that. Even in Europe where there is public land for hunting, you're still required to join the club and pay all these fees. You can't just go get a hunting license. The United States, Canada, Russia, these are the last places on the planet where there still is this ability for the common man to be able to go learn how to hunt in pretty large spaces. But what you're talking about is absolutely a growing trend. There's a whole bunch of game farms now, across the U.S., and it's convenient to the domesticated hunter with a bunch of money. And they have all these exotic animals. You just go, you pay a fee, they let you lose on the land. You go find that one animal and you kill it and you can pay for these different African animals and whatever. Texas is a huge place for these ranches like that.



Then you go home, you kill your trophy, you put it on your wall and all of a sudden you just killed an African animal and all you did was drive an hour outside of Dallas. Then you put that on your Facebook and you're Mr. Great White Hunter.

And the examples could go on and on and on. But the other one on that to note is the guiding industry. The guiding industry is a special interest political entity in the world of hunting regulations. And the guiding industry is a bunch of good ol' boys who basically run the show. They get guiding permits for public land and then they sell these hunts for \$10,000 or more a pop on public land. So, they monopolize these huge parcels of public land, they basically own the hunts on these lands for the whole season. And that doesn't mean you or I can't go hunt on those spots but when you show up to that spot you've got a guiding operation that's basically taken over the whole place with camps, their hunters on top of all the game, you've got their guides in

there scouting out all the game and getting everything prepared before the season even opens. You have these wealthy hunters supporting these guiding operations that are basically stealing public land from all the people that want to just get out and get some meat for cheap and not have to put in all these resources -- and subsistence hunt.

I know spots where you literally -- you can look up different harvest data for different animals and I know spots where you can look it up and you can see where a guiding operation has basically monopolized every single harvest of every single large game animal in these certain specific areas. And local people have gotten nothing. And you can also look up and see how many local people reported trying to hunt in that certain area. The way it works now, in the United States at least, is you get a permit and then you're required to report back to the game department and say, okay I hunted, this is where I tried, I hunted this many days, I was successful

on this day, this is what I got -- where I wasn't successful. And you can look all this stuff up and figure out -- you can get a really good picture of what's going on.

And what you basically will see is that it is moneyed interests who dominate hunting.

Oak Journal: Yeah, worldwide, basically you're saying...

James V. Morgan: Except for the deep -- now we're getting back to domestication right there. Where all of these people are eliminated, where the power of money and technology is eliminated from controlling and dominating hunting is any single place where the terrain is deep enough and inaccessible enough that domesticated hunters will not try to go there. That's where the last remnant real true wild hunting and wildness actually exists. Because these people, domesticated people, need distance-demolishing technologies to do anything. They can't even fathom what it would be like to actually do something on their own two feet for an extended period of time. They might want to go kill something -- but these guys won't pack it out. They might pay their guide to do it, to pack 100lb loads for three or four miles. But they're like, 'woah man, you mean I have to carry that meat out right now?' I am not going to say that all of these hunters don't have an interest in the meat, or that they always waste meat, but there are definitely plenty of cases where people are out killing only for antlers or horns -- straight headhunting, ya know.

And I've seen these hunters, they're just hideous in terms of their actual capabilities. And I'm kind of sidetracking but it's actually disgusting. I call them the Great White Hunters because they think they're so great because they went and did this hunt. But they really couldn't handle anything on their own, especially when you try and take things to a more primitive technology level.

Today's Western Great White Hunter, they romanticize 500-yard rifle shots, sniper shots. They think that's what's really cool. Which is marksmanship, firearms, sniping, not hunting. And some of them do -- look, there's a lot of archery hunters that pursue archery hunting because they actually have to stalk and get closer. So, there is that aspect. But there's also this -- you'll constantly hear these comments like, yeah, I dropped it at 350 yards! What they're bragging about is how good of a shot they are. But that doesn't mean you're a good hunter. That just means you know how to shoot a gun.

For these types of hunters to actually go on a real stalk, like the kind of hunting stalk that homo sapiens have been doing since our existence, humans have probably been doing for at least a million years or more, they can't even fathom it. They don't have the patience. They can't get down on their hands and knees and crawl through it. So, there's a whole separation right there between primitive hunting and those people.

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Oak Journal: To illustrate the point, what is the common amount of gear, from the motorized unit to the guide to pocket technology, what is the total technological apparatus that they are taking out there with them?

James V. Morgan: Every piece of technology is a separation, right? Anything that we're using, any tool takes away that direct connection to whatever is in nature to a degree. So, every little tool is a mediator, but some of these tools are so expansive that they just serve to really separate. So, for example, that 500-yard rifle shot, that's a massive alienating mediator. Then you bring it all the way down to the most primitive forms of hunting that we're aware of, which is, for example, persistence hunting, actually running down game as a predator. That's probably the most connected way to hunt. And then once you start moving to projectile technology -- well, let me step back. What would be the next step? It would be spearing in the hand. Which, we have evidence that people were using hand spears and people still do, actually. In fact, I was in the Amazon with Hourani hunters that do still use hand spears -- they don't throw them, they thrust the spears at peccaries that they run into in the jungle. These are really connected ways.

Once you get to projectiles, atlatls, bow and arrow, then you are developing a little bit more of a separation, but it still requires a huge amount of diligence connection and concentration to the whole wild world around you. And to make a stalk with a primitive weapon requires you to put in, usually, a lot of deep meditational time in the forest or crawling across the prairie. It makes you develop all this patience. Being able to sit silently for hours and hours and hours at a time, I've sat for five hours at a time without even moving. And that was one of the first realizations I had, wow, this is what meditation is. Before that my mind was always just racing.

So, there's some documentation about how short the distance of indigenous kills are, that distancing between where you make that kill and your actual touch of the animal is an important thing. So when you're just hunting like that -- for example, when I hunt with a hand-made long bow I have taken off just with my knife and three arrows in my hand and my bow, just to keep it really light so I can keep it super dynamic and just move. That's a really free feeling, because you're not being hampered down by having to worry about having all this stuff. Sometimes in my quiver -- I have a couple different quivers but, for example, in the buckskin quiver I'll stuff a little extra long-sleeve shirt in there, a water bottle, my butchering knife and then my arrows are in there. And then I have my long bow. This is just bare minimum stuff. If you kill something while you're out there with that bare minimum stuff -- once you learn you can pretty much take care of the whole thing, do all the separating with a knife. A lot of hunters will just carry a deer straight out wherever they've got to go, but if you're killing bigger animals then generally you need to separate the parts and get them stabilized for packing out because it's going to take you a few loads.

There's a huge amount of discussion we can talk about regarding this technology and everything with: Okay, how are you getting to where you're going in the first place? Where are you camping? Are you camping? What are you doing with your meat? Where's the meat going to go? All of these logistics are, in the modern world, entirely different from the old world. The way that I like to say it is that long ago people, they're moving and they're probably going to end up camping somewhere really close to where they actually successfully kill a big game animal, they don't have all these logistics that we have to worry about here.

Oak Journal: I guess in that context it's not even a concern for some of these hunters, they've already hired it out. All of that planning and intentionality is not needed because you'll just spend the money to buy the tool to do the thing. Or have a guide, or motorized equipment -- whatever, I'm sure people use helicopters

and air transport.

James V. Morgan: All of it. In Alaska a huge amount of this stuff happens with airplanes. And then all the meat, everything just goes out in a plane. And sometimes they've got to pack it a little, but they usually try to make stuff happen where it's easy reachable -- these super cub planes can land almost anywhere. But the primary way big game is harvested in the United States -- and I should say that my experience has all been in the Western U.S., and I know in the East and Midwest people do things a lot more simple just because of the nature of the terrain and it's just smaller deer and it's just easier -- once you get in the West though and the big country and the big animals, starting from elk, moose, caribou, bear and so on -- this is serious big game hunting, this requires a whole other level of planning and effort, especially in big country, mountainous terrain, real wild country with long distance. So most all the hunting in the Western U.S. occurs, I would say, primarily using an ATV. For most of these hunters, hunting without an ATV is unheard of, they won't even consider hunting if they don't have an ATV.

So, the way that that works for them is -- and I've heard -- this is pretty much a direct quote, I don't want to kill it unless I can drive my ATV right up to it. So, they don't want to pack it at all. They want to drive right up to it. Slap it on the ATV and go. And there's a lot of road hunting too, which is just using a highway vehicle of some type, usually some kind of truck. And you'll get the same deal from road hunters. They'll just drive up and down these dirt roads, mining roads or farming roads or whatever, and they never get out. They just drive up and down all day and they only want to kill something if they can just step out of the truck, shoot it. So, they're just waiting for something to show up that close. And what they'll do, a lot of them, they'll drive the truck off the road right up to the animal and then they'll have a wench and wench the thing into the back of the truck and go home.

So, once these people get their animal home then they'll usually hang it in their garage or something and slowly butcher it. Then there's the other aspect of all this, which is game processors. That's a whole other part of the hunting industry. A lot of people, they don't want to -- butchering a large game animal is a lot of work, it takes time. They just send it to a game processor, pay for it to get done. Then they're spending hundreds of dollars to have someone take care of it all and they basically learn nothing.

The primitive hunter -- going back to the archery, or even just with a rifle but doing it all on your own, you're actually learning every step of the way. You've got this animal down. First of all, you have to dismember it properly. You have to get all the meat stabilized, which

usually means hanging it up, so it gets air and not laying on the ground. If you're going to pack multiple loads -- you can't carry a whole elk in one load. A whole elk is going to take you six loads of carrying. We're talking 80lb loads, six times, and let's say you've got to go 3 miles each way.

So that's 36 miles, 18 of which you are carrying 80lbs over rugged terrain. And any real hunter should learn how to do this, at least that's what I think. Hunters should learn how to experience that, because one thing I tell the people when they're sort of complaining about the effort involved in packing meat out -- it's like, look, you just took a life. And one way to respect that life is to carry its body on your own back for a while. That's one way that I try and frame it, because it's hard work out there when you're packing these heavy loads over this rugged terrain. And I always try to tell myself, look, you just killed something, and you owe it to this animal to carry its body out -- you should at least be able to do that. You should at least be able to carry this animal's body out on your own back if you're going to go ahead and kill it. But, really, when you talk to a lot of hunters, lots of modern hunters today, one thing they hate to talk about having to do is packing meat, carrying meat on their back out. They always want to complain about it.

But the thing is, you learn how to do this, not only is it really important for your level of skill and awareness for, in my opinion, something fundamental to being a homo sapien on planet earth, for most people who have lived on planet earth for most of our history. It's also really empowering in terms of undomesticating because you learn that you can take care of all this yourself. You can actually -- you can kill this animal, you can feed yourself, you can do it all with a minimal amount of technology and it's a huge amount of nutrition that's packed in this experience that you have. You learn how to take care of the meat, you pack the skin out, you learn how to tan the skin. You learn every bit of the process. How to extract the sinew that you're going to use. How to sow with sinew. How to dry meat so you don't need a freezer. Learn every single part of the animal that you're going to eat, organ meats, learn how the stomach is used.

It's just this huge package of knowledge that's so robust in terms of a rewilding practice. When you take it to that high-technology side you're basically losing a lot of that. They're still gaining something, obviously. For any of these hunters, there's still a connection to the wild world that they're not getting from sitting in an office or sitting in town playing with their smartphone. They're still getting some kind of connection, right? But the full connection comes from the most primitive, least mediated pathways.

Oak Journal: It seems like that's the outward

justification from elites, there's all this domesticated baggage that goes along with how they're perceiving the hunt and how they're going about it but outwardly it's like, oh I'm getting in touch with my quote/unquote 'primal nature'. They have -- they're almost reflecting trends within larger society too, like long-standing trends in Western society about this primal experience which is really manufactured but it's a recurring thing through colonial history, to imagine being -- they can connect with it here and then go back to their desk job or selling stocks or whatever.

James V. Morgan: Absolutely, there's this fundamental thing about it that's important and I don't want to call it entirely negative because there is that very human thing to be connected to nature and a lot of the modern hunting culture views it like that, they don't see it as a critical thing like you or I would, in terms of an anti-civilization rewilding process. They see it like: I'm connected to nature because I go out hunting. And they're very naive. They're just kind of innocently going along, 'this is what I do to connect to nature' So, there is that positive side but it's also this massive failure to see the larger disconnect there and what the real consequences of their life is.

Hunters in some of these rural areas, their whole life identity is wrapped up in being a hunter, that's definitely true in Alaska. I'm a hunter, I got a moose, the whole life identity is wrapped up in that. In their world they're living off the land. They live off the land according to them, even though it's very minimal living off the land. But that's their identity: I live off the land, I hunt moose in Alaska, I got my moose this year. Their identity, their ego is wrapped around that. So, it's a pretty significant thing but it's just missing so many components that are vital, especially the critique of the overall domesticated dependency of their entire process.

Oak Journal: And as you said there's a ton of cross-sections too, there's probably people who when they say 'primal' they really mean this macho arrogance about engaging with the wild.

James V. Morgan: Absolutely. You're touching on it. The thing is they're coming at it foundationally from that colonial, domination mindset, right? It's not necessarily that they connected with nature in terms of the spiritual pathway that's based on sort of mutual understanding and that sort of holistic connection, that we depend on the earth and the earth depends on us not fucking it up. It's not like that. It's that very cowboys and Indians, Western, conquer the West sort of mentality. And, generally, their ego is wrapped around this, probably: I conquered the wilderness. That's how they see it.

That's why I use this saying, The Great White Hunter.

That's the reality right there. The Great White Hunter. And you'll see them, cruise around with me and go hunting in the hunting season I'll point it out to you. I'll say, check this guy out, that's a Great White Hunter right there, you can just pinpoint it looking at their whole world. And real ego-based, pompous, walking around arrogant. They've got all the most fancy gear, all the best camo, all the stuff. They kill stuff and they drive around and purposively get the antlers propped up, they're driving on the highway and everyone gets to see it.

Oak Journal: I think maybe, talking about that arrogance, this is a good time to talk about the reality of state maintenance and -- we haven't talked much about fishing but with fishing, too. The government and the private, and we talked a little bit about the elites and the privatization of a lot of hunting but how much of game availability and access and, in the case of fishing, stocking or, in the case of hunting, lottery systems -- how much is the whole system tied into basically state control?

James V. Morgan: In the U.S., most states have a game board and a fish board. And it's kind of like a congress where they make the laws for hunting and fishing. And not only do they make the laws they develop the management programs; they do all that stuff. But it's quote/unquote the 'democratic process' where the governors of the state appoint these people to be on the game board. So, they'll have seven people, tie breaking vote, the governor or whatever administration is in charge of the state they appoint the game board. Generally, it's always some good ol' boys that get appointed, that have some kind of connection to hunting and fishing but also some kind of connection to the actual industry or some kind of special interest in the whole thing just from their foundations.

They drive all this governmental stuff and how it's done in a lot of ways. Biologists do too, and there's a lot of wildlife biologists who are very sincere people who care a lot about conservation and trying to keep wildness intact. But they get sucked into -- the biologists get sucked into also becoming dependent on the larger bureaucratic game-management system. And even though the best hearted, most conscious, pro-wildness wildlife biologists end up succumbing you know. They want to keep their job, their benefits so they just kind of play along with the politics.

Basically, what you have is a right-wing politics dominated hunting management, which is pro-conservation, because they want to have the resources, the wildlife, there that they can hunt -- but it's also very much Manifest Destiny. So, it's very much manufactured; how do we control this, how do we make sure there's enough game and enough fish for all the public demand so they all can get a piece of it. And



With hunters that have an unprecedented level of technology and money to go about hunting. No one in history, no hunters in history, have had the level of technological and financial power that your 21st Century American hunter has. So, what happens is wolves and bears become the scapegoats for the inability for modern hunters to become successful at making their kill every year.

They blame wolves and bears; they don't blame the impacts that civilization has on the environment. Instead they say, what's the problem here, why can't I get a moose? Oh, because the damn wolves killed all the moose. We've got to do something about these wolves!

it's totally connected to all this industry. You've got Cabela's and Bass Pro Shop and Sportsman Warehouse and all the retailers that sell all the equipment and you got the firearms manufacturers and the fishing lure manufacturers and Pittman-Robertson Act -- which is basically saying that a percentage of all the sales from all firearms and ammunition go into wildlife conservation.

So, there's this huge amount, millions of dollars, that go into wildlife conservation from the Pittman-Robertson Act. You have this full-circle thing where they're all dependent on this massive industry which is the sport hunting and sport fishing industry in the United States. I'm not going to say it's the Military Industrial Complex but it's its own Industrial Complex for killing wild animals and, not only killing wild animals, actually manufacturing wild animals through all these different programs so they can have more and more of them so they can meet the demand for killing them.

The main point I'll make on that is going to be predator control, which is a huge thing. Predator control has been going -- from the hands of ranchers and then also hunters now, increasingly, since the wild west. And the whole point has been to -- aside from protecting livestock -- has been to try and bolster ungulate, which is deer species, cervids, elk, deer, moose and then antelope, which is a bovid actually -- they're artificially creating wildlife populations to meet an unprecedented level of demand in the modern world for hunting.

So, these governmental programs develop around predator control, which become these multi-million-dollar programs to see how they can reduce the wolf population. How do we get these wolves out of here so we can grow the game population? So, these wolves become the scapegoats. They have these programs where for quite a while they were doing aerial gunning of wolves to try and boost up caribou and moose populations in Alaska -- they do all kinds of different things, they've had bounty for wolves, they increase the allowable harvest of wolves and try to incentivize trappers to get as many wolves as they can.

They have all these programs and they refer to it in Alaska as Intensive Management. So, they don't actually call it predator control, they say it's an intensive management program. The program is there to basically artificially create a moose or a caribou population. I call it creating the world's largest moose farm, because they are interfering so much in the wild ecology that they're actually creating this huge, massive moose farm on this huge landscape, trying to build as many moose into the population as they can so when the hunting season comes around all these very wealthy, high-technology hunters can go out there as if they were in some sort of tactical military squad and just knock down all these moose.

They can kill the moose, put it on their ATV, rush it to their truck, drive home with it in their truck, bring it

home and then they can put it on Facebook and say: look at me, I got my moose, I'm a hunter, I got my moose. And it's all being done for them by this huge military industrial hunting complex industry and good ol' boy connections.

Oak Journal: And it almost seems obvious where, in a world where wildness has been so incredibly downgraded and especially in places like the lower 48 of the United States, where they would have to create this artificial situation where there's just one predator, right? That's just what has to be done given the state of the ecology in most of these places.

James V. Morgan: Look, as a hunter, it's a whole other ballgame if you're going to be out on a serious hunting trip in grizzly bear country, versus going to a place there's no bears.

A whole other ballgame. It's no joke dangerous if you're in bear country and you're actually in this context -- probably much more reminiscent of how our ancestors evolved in Africa a million years ago, hundreds of thousands of years ago, where you actually are sharing that large game hunting practice and that landscape with these huge carnivorous predators. And I would never say you're competing against them because you're not, there's no way you are. But the thing is, those animals have an interest too in the game that you're pursuing, especially when they can smell blood and smell something dead. And you can also run into these animals out there. I've been charged four times by grizzly bears and it is a no joke thing, it's as serious as you'll ever get in terms of walking out on the land and running into animals, very serious.

So, my point is that is that these hunters, they don't want to deal with that. So that's another thing in domestication, they're armed to the teeth worried about a bear coming after them. They're carrying .45 pistols, they'll put up camps and put electric fences up, so the bear doesn't come in their camp at night. Whereas myself, I could never do that, I can't go out there and put up an electric fence. And I hate carrying extra guns. I've walked into it this whole time just having faith that I'm going to make it through and I'm not going to get harmed.

That's a whole other approach that most of these guys would never take. And a lot of them would honestly prefer to have these bears gone, they don't want to have to deal with it because it's a major confrontation with their domestication. And I'm saying this with humility because I've been that close to being mauled by a large grizzly bear and it definitely puts the fear into you. And also, I've had bears -- you pack a load of meat and you come back to get more meat and a bear is taking it. Which is okay, you're sharing with that bear and you've

just got to be happy about that. But these other hunters, they're not happy about that. If they can they'll kill that bear for messing with their meat -- or, not even that, because what will happen is, they'll be saying, oh we got ourselves a bear too, kill their bear and that'll be their other trophy.

I would say that most of the fisheries in the United States are manufactured fisheries because of these same reasons that I'm talking about. Because wild fisheries are decimated all over the country, so huge amounts of the so-called fisheries are stocked, or hatchery derived. That's another multi-million-dollar industry. Even a lot of the wild salmon runs in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest are enhanced through stocking, some of them are hatchery derived entirely. In fact, there's a few salmon runs in Alaska where there's two runs that come up the river, one will be the wild run, one will be the hatchery run and it'll be two distinct runs.

And that's been done to create an extra resource to meet the needs of civilization. Sometimes it's done to try to restore a population that was destroyed by civilization. So that's another, the fishing side of it is another huge side of the hunting and fishing industrial complex.

Oak Journal: Which doesn't even begin to talk about the ocean fishing side of that, which is probably more akin to some of the trophy hunting and sort of elite sport hunting.

James V. Morgan: There's definitely that, all across the ocean, in any tourist areas, there's sport fishing. But, look, in terms of marine resources, the sport fishing out in the ocean is nothing compared to the impacts of commercial fishing. I mean, industrial ocean trawlers have got to be one of the most destructive things on the planet and that's commercialism, that's industry profit. The amount of fish that are getting pulled out of these oceans is just ridiculous. It's in bad, bad shape but that's aside from I guess our topic.

Oak Journal: Yeah, I think it's important to throw in there, it's important to remind people that it doesn't have a limited domain in global civilization.

James V. Morgan: It's non-stop. In fact, market hunting is entirely legal in the West but there's no control on market hunting for wild food in the undeveloped world. So, it's kind of unheard of to have anyone regulating hunting for money, for bushmeat in Africa they call it. Aside from the select indigenous peoples, all over Asia -- the general mentality across Asia regarding hunting is that you're hunting for money. It's not a subsistence thing. I've come across that throughout Asia. I've been all over Asia, anyone I talk to is kind of like -- you can hear their orientation is more about hunting for money. Just like their orientation toward fishing is fishing for

money.

I'll give you an example, I was in a village in Laos and there were some deer tracks around so I asked the locals, and this is in a deep, remote area of Laos in the jungles and the mountains, I asked some locals about it. I said, oh I seen some deer tracks and then they said, yeah, most of the deer are gone. And we started having a conversation about it and I'm like, oh, what happened to them? They're like, they all got killed. The next thing another guy says is, basically, the government said that we can't hunt the deer anymore because there's hardly any left. And he says, but we need to be able to hunt the deer so we can sell them. And I'm like, well that's why all your deer are gone, because you're hunting the deer as a commodity so you can sell them, rather than hunting them as your own food source. As soon as you start commodifying a resource then all of a sudden you have this incentive to kill more and more of it because you're going to get more and more money.

Oak Journal: That's actually big business, big black-market business in West Virginia, is selling deer meat. You can go to certain houses; dudes just bait in their back yard and just a constant supply and people come and buy it. It's interesting because it usually intersects out here with this class situation too where the people that are buying the meat are buying it because it's inexpensive -- yeah, it's just a pretty fucked up situation all around.

James V. Morgan: Just yesterday I was reading about this evidence that a lot of these native people here in Alaska that are selling salmon, they sell dried salmon, some elders were telling me that a lot of the money the younger folks are getting they're using it to buy alcohol, drugs, cigarettes. They found out, well, this is a way that we can support these really bad habits that are actually really destructive to our whole wellbeing and our cultures. But, yeah, they can sell these salmon strips to people. So, what do they want to do? They want to go get the fish now so they can make money.

And that's one of the processes of domestication. Like when we started talking, I said, hunting to be not to have; fishing to be not to have; gathering to be not to have, right? Growing food to be not to have. This is the crux of the whole dilemma we're up against. As soon as you start doing things to have more and more, you're initiating a process of domestication, across the board.

Oak Journal: And you're also creating property too in that process.

James V. Morgan: You're creating property and you're creating power, because someone is always going to end up having more through that process of harvesting something for a surplus for trade. Someone is always

going to win that. And that person who wins -- slowly but surely that sort of entity starts controlling everything else. And then other people end up basically becoming dependent on that entity to get what they need.

And this hunting stuff that we're talking about goes right to that. In this modern situation where now -- like I was talking about private lands, right? -- well now, if you wanted to hunt you've got to pay a landholder so you can hunt. Whereas, before, you didn't have to pay a landowner so you can hunt -- then that person has no power over you -- now they have power over you because they monopolize the resource.

Oak Journal: Right, and it goes right back to the roots of colonization directly with the trapping in the United States and the original context being based around this early commodification.

James V. Morgan: That's why colonial Europeans had to expand in the first place. They developed this entire structure of power based on certain people having more and developing dominating relationships over everyone else and everything else and these people have to grow and grow and grow. They don't ever stop. They need to keep growing it so -- there's resources here, there's resources there, let's go. And next thing you know these commodifiers have colonized the entire planet.

And, not only that, they've brought along pretty much all other humans into their whole ideology that this is how we live. And hunting and fishing, it just becomes a sport. It's for people who are -- the craziest thing is it's for domesticated people who feel this sense of needing to have some kind of connection and experience in wildness. That's part of why they want to do it so bad. And then, again, you can't ever let go of the prestige side of it because even with immediate-return hunter-gatherers there's absolutely always a prestige element associated with being a successful hunter, that's not going to go away.

I mean, that's normal. But the problem arises when the prestige from being a good hunter becomes monopolized by status-seekers and basically turns into power. The amazing thing is that immediate-return hunter-gatherers, they knew about this problem. And it's well documented that they had ways of striking down a good hunter's ego whenever there was a sense that it was becoming dangerous. And that seems to be something that immediate-return hunter-gatherers did throughout their history, to not let the successful hunter's ego turn into power. One way they did that was, let's say you return to camp with an antelope that you've killed and you're walking around all pompous like, look at me, I just killed this antelope. The other men and the women would just immediately start

cutting you down, telling you: 'Where'd you get that stupid, little, tiny antelope, that thing is nothing. What a dink, there's no meat on there.' Even if it's the biggest antelope they would just start making fun of them.

Oak Journal: And in some ways I guess it serves as a distraction as well, too, right? These people, kind of living this miserable existence and they're going to go out and hunt and try and purge and use it as a therapy -- it's not to destroy the infrastructure that's creating their misery, it's a release valve for them.

James V. Morgan: Absolutely, man, and it's a really good one. I can guarantee that. I'm not saying everyone should go hunting, because I don't want to see more people hunting. I would like to see less and less people doing it.

But I can tell you that it's got a lot of amazing attributes that can contribute to a really needed ecological awareness and overall human well-being.

We haven't even talked about taking a life, I'm not going to say that's a good feeling -- and that's something we do need to talk about. But it's a pretty darn good feeling to become a successful hunter, to succeed in getting that food under your own means. And, not only that, being able to share that with other people. You succeed, you come back to camp and your distributing that to all your friends and family and your community. It's really powerful. Because you did this on your own. You didn't have to go to work to accomplish that. You did this on your own. And that's a really important part of wildness I believe.

The other thing I want to say on that is, when you do primitive-style hunting with the least technological inputs that -- especially with big game -- for that to work it often requires other people that you're involved with who are cooperating to make that happen. So big game hunting is a really amazing way to build community, because you have to work together. If you kill a moose, we're talking about 1,000lb worth of meat. So, you've got to have a band of hunters together to get that thing taken care of. You can do it on your own, it's totally doable. But it's so much better to have a group of people out in the field with you for something that big. And it really builds a lot of important social connection.

Then, even if you did it on your own -- I killed a moose once and carried the whole thing out over the course of a few days, got it home. And then it was just -- the whole experience was solidified with me being able to go pass out each one of those moose legs to people that I cared about around me.

Oak Journal: And that building of community also ensures that the subsistence is sustainable, that it's going

to continue going. Being out there alone, I imagine, over and over and over again, reinforces the need. That if this is going to work there's going to need to be a community around it, if it's going to work long term, if it's going to be your subsistence pattern for your life and for your children's lives.

James V. Morgan: So, yeah, in most hunting cultures sharing is based on cycles of what we call generalized reciprocity where the successful hunter shares freely with the people who were unsuccessful or who weren't out hunting. But then, eventually, one of those receiving hunters becomes successful themselves and then they share it with others and so on and so on. So, in this way the entire system depends on constant solidification of social bonds.

[Editor's note: we move to the discussion of outdoor TV and the Meat Eater show]

James V. Morgan: Well, the Meat Eater guy, that just adds to the whole hunting industry discussion. You've got these other people involved in all this who basically made a career out of doing hunting shows and writing books about hunting and promoting hunting as this really amazing thing that everyone should be doing, sometimes for really good reasons, but at the same time they're also just falling into the commodification of it all. That's a problem.

But the bigger problem is the way that they promote it, it actually brings more and more people into the fold and usually with the wrong messages about the way we approach hunting, in terms of technology, our attitudes, what's important, what we should be learning, what we've lost, all of that is usually missing from these authors and these hunting show people. So, they bring in all this interest in new hunters and it kind of just creates more chaos and more destruction. And then, not only that, they disclose locations of where stuff is, next thing you know, you thought you had spots going that had low impact and that other hunters weren't going to and then all of a sudden these people are showing up.

There's all these smartphone apps and so on and so forth where people are using -- I mean it's a warzone out there, man. These kinds of people that do these shows and these websites and write these books and stuff, they're the ones, in my opinion, who are largely responsible. Because they don't protect it because they're making money off of it. So better to make money off of it than to protect, which is really bad. The hunting has declined, they say, the overall hunters per capita in the U.S., but it doesn't feel that way when you're out there. You can probably ask any hunter, it's busy, it's hard to get away. And I believe it's because of technology, even though hunting has declined there is a

trendy scene behind it.

The other one that's part of that, Steve, is locavorism, that added all kinds of hunters into the mix. Whereas locavorism started out as, oh local foods, local food growing and local restaurants and all that -- all of a sudden hunting got trendy again for that sector. And next thing you know you've got all these locavores who are, in my opinion, doing it for really good reasons. But they also approach it, too, not really getting the full implications of the technology and everything else. And they just add to the mix of it.

You've even got like the Crossfitters who are -- you know, look at Joe Rogan and stuff, right? I don't know if he's a Crossfitter, but that whole scene of trendy health and fitness people who are like: Yeah! Grass-fed meat, man! And you get these guys in the mix and a bunch of them have money and then they want to go. You get these Crossfitter paleo dudes from LA who are like spending \$10,000 on Alaska hunting trips because that's become the cool thing for them and they're getting their wild, grass-fed meat out of it. And they're coming at it with another semi-positive angle, but, at the same time, they're just increasing the impacts to it all.

Oak Journal: What might it look like in a collapse scenario, with the government and private capital basically abandoning these things or slowly abandoning them?

James V. Morgan: I would say, first of all, just go check out any of this doomsday prepper stuff, that whole culture, every single one of them is going to be talking about how they're going to survive from hunting to a degree -- stockpiling guns and ammo for that purpose, other than protecting from the hordes. If things happen in terms of economic collapse then, absolutely, all the good ol' boy hunters out there all think they're going to have an upper hand because they know how to hunt, and they've got weapons. There will definitely be a scene out there of people going after it. As a hunter myself, and a guy who's basically prepped up to be hunting too, it's a concern of mine. What's this going to be like? Because there won't be any control on it.

Right now, there's law enforcement that monitors a lot of this stuff so the people who are out of control get put in check or they're afraid to do anything because they'll get in trouble -- well that'll be gone. So, my theory is that places that are easily accessible to a lot of hunting people, it'll get pretty chaotic for a while. Probably a lot of stuff could get killed, could have apocalypse out there. But, eventually, that'll all subside because the way these people have gone about teaching themselves how to hunt and survive in the whole prepper world is usually based in domestication anyways; it's based in dependency on all these industrial products that they're just stockpiling. And they haven't really prepped themselves to be prepared to do things on a primitive level that doesn't require all these industrial inputs.



So, eventually they're going to peter out because they're just not going to be able to do it very long. And I was telling you how these guys won't hunt unless they have an ATV, that's a legit thing. What happens when they can't drive around and hunt anymore and they actually have to walk for four or five days and actually have mobile camps and actually take care of their food without any refrigeration or a freezer and be able to move their food and so on.

These are all things that rewilding-oriented hunters like myself have been basically perfecting, figuring out exactly how to do. We're ready to do that, we know how, but these other people won't. So, my theory is, you know, they're going to run into trouble eventually, especially when they run out of weapons -- I don't know how long that will be because a lot of them are stockpiling lots of ammo and doing reloads and all of that. But they're sedentary. That's the other thing, sustainable hunting requires mobility. Anywhere where there's a sedentary

population they're going to spread out in a radius from that village, or wherever that settlement is, and they're going to kill everything that they can reach. So, they're kind of obliterating everything in that radius.

But mobile hunters, they can go beyond that radius, they can keep going and keep going and go camp to camp. Patch rotation was something that was talked about in hunter-gatherer studies long ago, basically saying how hunter-gatherers, they rotate their patches. They'll go exploit, excuse my words, a patch of wildness for a few weeks. They'll get what they can from that in terms of hunting, fishing and gathering and then they'll kind of deplete it to the point where they got to move on, they'll move onto another patch, go another 30 miles this direction or that direction. And they're usually in a territory, so long by the time they get back to that first patch that patch is recovered, and that's going to be a few years later when they're on a mobile trajectory like that.

But that won't happen with all these sedentary minded people. Now, I'm talking about landscapes that do allow for sufficient long-range travel through mostly intact wild environments, so I'm speaking mostly to that. In terms of places like -- I don't even know what it's like where you're at and I don't even know how feasible that is, but I'll go back to saying that wherever the terrain is too difficult, most people aren't going to go there because they've lost that capacity. So, if you have deep forests, canyons, rugged places, you can probably maintain some kind of mobile system and avoid all these people through the long-range -- but that's going to get pretty tricky.

All we have to do is look to the Amazon and see the uncontacted tribes there and see that it is possible for you, with primitive technology and the right terrain, to outrun all of this shit for thousands of years, if not for at least the last 500.

[Editor's Note: The conversation moves to general background]

James V. Morgan: Years and years ago there was an anarchist article called: "From Militant Vegan to Primitive Hunter."

Oak Journal: I remember that.

James V. Morgan: That was a good one. When I read that I had actually already transitioned from my own veganism to become a hunter. So, I was like, right on, this is a bad-ass article.

So, when I was in high school, I got really into vegetarianism through punk rock. Actually, the Subhumans got me in to it, turned me on to becoming a

vegetarian. I stuck with mostly vegetarianism and then veganism for about 12 years. Throughout that period I of course became really intimate with animal relations and really, really, emotionally attached to not killing and feeling really strongly about protecting all animal life and not being involved with any killing at all. And being super supportive of ALF and veganism in general for ethical reasons.

And I was a militant anti-hunter, for a number of years. And I had dreams of sabotaging hunters and so on. But I started living in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and at that time I got interested in this whole concept of bioregionalism. That was kind of an awakening period for me because it was like, okay, how would I survive in this environment if I was only living on non-industrial local food?

Well I was in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and occupying an area pretty far above where there's feasible farming. Because of that I had gotten really interested in the Native Americans of that area and I started studying how they lived, and I got really into it at that time. And I basically started realizing how important hunting was for their cultures and for their survival. I ended up stopping to pay rent because I was really into Crimethinc...stuff, at the time. And I ended up getting a tent and going and trying to live out in the forest in this canyon in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and it was at that point I realized the only way you could survive out here or even have the chance of it was you're going to have to learn to hunt. Learn how to use animal foods and animal products. And that was my big revelation. So that required me to decide that I needed to learn how to kill and become comfortable with taking a life.

Killing is never easy and it's always messy, there's no such thing as a perfect hunt or a perfect kill, there's always some chaos that goes on. You really, really do learn the essence of yin and yang through hunting, because no matter what you can't escape that there's a dark side that's going on. And it's kind of those opposing forces, that light and dark.

And you really learn to have to embrace that. And it's basically a law of all life, right? Nothing exists without darkness; nothing exists without dying. So, you begin to start accepting that and you begin to -- you don't glorify any killing -- but you begin to embrace it, or at least feel more comfortable with it. But it's always sad, it's always hard, every single time you take a life. It's pretty important to have some kind of ritual that you do for yourself to try to show some respect. Say some prayers to that animal. I would never dictate what that should be, but for me it's really important that I follow certain protocols that I have.

But it's a twisted world, I'm not going to glorify it or try

to say it's all great. You're wrapping yourself in a twisted psychology. But the more you're domesticated and not connected to the way that we evolved as a species and how we've lived for 99 percent of our history, the more you're going to be rubbed the wrong way by it and have a harder time deciding that you can deal with it. It's a tough battle for a lot of people.

I take killing very seriously. I never take it lightly and I believe there's consequences. When I do something wrong out there then I pay the price for it, in karmic ways, in spiritual ways. And I'll just say, sort of the main rule that I have for myself is that as many of the parts from the animal as possible get used. And the other parts, no matter what, they always go back to the land in a sacred way -- in a way that's sacred for me at least.

You hear these stories about Plains Indians, they used every part of the buffalo -- it's kind of impossible to use every single part. And when you learn the logistics of hunting and dealing with a big animal like that, I don't think people were ever using every single part of every single buffalo they killed.

You're always going to be discarding certain things, guts, some bones and this and that. And it depends on the situation you're in too. If you need to transport stuff a long way then you might keep less. So, no matter what, things I don't use, I always place them back carefully on the land and kind of say a prayer for them. And I leave them so other animals can feed on those parts, because all of those parts are going to get used by the other beings that are out there in the ecosystem, even just down to the soil feeding on that stuff.

You'll learn that you were romanticizing a lot of things when you wanted to go from militant vegan to primitive hunter because things just don't work out so smoothly out there in the field. And it just becomes practical decision making -- sometimes you've just got to discard stuff. So, for example, one thing that gets left behind in certain situations is going to be the skin of the animal.

And I've packed out a lot of skins but then all of a sudden I have piles of hide-tanning projects -- I've done a lot of brain-tanning with the animals that I've gotten, but I've also made decisions like, I can't pack this skin out right now because, number one, it's not feasible take on another hide project; and number two, it's another load I've got to carry. Because sometimes these skins, depending on the animal, that's another 60, 70, 80lb load. And, again, if you're three miles in that's six miles round trip for that skin and you've got to make practical decisions.

So, you'll leave that skin behind, but you make sure you put it out in a way that's going to be respectful and you just accept that. And you learn that, absolutely, hunter-gatherers throughout history were being put in the same scenarios where they had to make the same decisions, there's no way around it.



TOTAL LIBERATION BY ANONYMOUS

PUBLISHED BY ACTIVE DISTRIBUTION AND SIGNAL FIRE /2019/ REVIEWED BY SK

ACTIVEDISTRIBUTIONSHOP.ORG

Total Liberation is a short manifesto against the dominant paradigm which offers a vision for liberation and so-called revolution that is inclusive of ecological, human and non-human struggles. While the book is largely centered around the language of the left: capitalism, revolution, workerist struggles, etc., it nonetheless begs the reader to think outside of these paradigms, while never veering far from that leftist vocabulary. Where it succeeds is in making clear that the project of dismantling hierarchy and domination, the anarchist project, must be able to be resilient and self-reliant. It also makes clear that the project of leftist resistance is likely futile and counter-productive, though the argument, while attempting to consider every possible angle of a topic like, say, "activism", becomes muddy and, at times, difficult to take much away from.

There are passages in the book that are impactful and hard-hitting. However, these passages are often hindered by the author's constant return to the economy, state and capitalism as the primary targets. There's plenty of possible quotes in the book that ring as very much anti-civilization, yet there is a definitively leftist tone to the entire text.

It shines in its strategic analysis of autonomous zones, defeatism and the crucial nature of the current moment. It pulls no punches in saying that we, as anarchists, must take ground, defend it, and leave behind the logic of campaign/possible victory -- returning to square one no matter the outcome.

"...we have at least one method for taking the struggle forward: inhabit territories, outside and against the system, whilst striving to dismantle all hierarchies within them. That's no complete strategy, but it certainly offers a solid foothold."

-Anonymous in *Total Liberation*

Perhaps the strangest part about *Total Liberation* is that the author decided to explicitly use Murray Bookchin's Social Ecology in order to argue for a concomitant struggle of earth, human, and non-human liberation. While I think it is difficult to swallow anything that comes from someone who claimed hunter-gatherers "devolved" to live their anarchic life, as Bookchin claimed, it is more perplexing why the critique of civilization, which has made the connection of these struggles central, was not the primary source for formulating and articulating *Total Liberation*. While the book does challenge civilization, it does so in the context of analyzing social hierarchies and

not from the standpoint of roots and causes which must necessarily be addressed if any so-called *Total Liberation* is to be had. I don't wish to say that all action done without a critique of civilization is immaterial, that would be absurd. But it is clear the author or authors are aware of a critique of civilization but decided to merely allude to it instead of making it a central component of their analysis. In doing so the author has left the primary target, identified ad infinitum throughout the text, as the "economy" or "capitalism". Ironically, the entire context of the critique within the book is calling and demanding for a target that digs much deeper. A target that many anarchists have spent time critiquing and analyzing, the target of civilization.

The book is certainly a grand tour of anarchy, taking aim at all hierarchy and laying out a, albeit less than clear at times, strong critique and vision for "revolutionary" action. It seems odd that, given all the book has to say about the shortcomings of revolutionary paradigms as described by leftists, the author is still concerned with revolution at all -- indeed some passages hint at a struggle to identify why the word must even be salvaged. In some sense I understand, revolution is the act we all wait for and *Total Liberation's* largest attempt is to bridge the gap of waiting -- to bridge the gap of insurrection and revolution.

While there's not enough space here to dig deeply into the nature of revolutionary language, it's fair to say that *Total Liberation* is not presenting a revolutionary ideology reminiscent of many leftist revolutionary struggles. But it is also fair to say the author is deeply informed by and concerned with those struggles. And here we have the central tension in the author's thought, the push and pull toward and away from the leftist paradigm. Furthermore, the author steers clear of addressing the utopian and eschatological qualities of revolutionary movements.

We are all in a struggle to bridge our conceptual understanding of the world with the lived reality of resistance, so engendered and made necessary by our current crises. As far as attempts to reconcile this reality in theory *Total Liberation* is a meaningful and important contribution. Given the context of our moment, we should all seriously consider the strategically questions at the heart of the text.

[A version of this review was scheduled to appear in *Fifth Estate*]

DEFIANCE: ANARCHIST STATEMENTS BEFORE JUDGE AND JURY

PUBLISHED BY DETRITUS BOOKS/2019/

DISTRIBUTED BY AK PRESS/COVER ART BY

DYLAN GARRETT SMITH/DESIGN BY BEN CODY/

DETRITUSBOOKS.COM/REVIEWED BY SK

There are far too few books like *Defiance*. Perhaps the only thing to change about the book is to make it larger -- it screams to be large format and hardcover, a sort of confrontational coffee table staple. The book is structured chronologically, allowing the reader to see both the change and consistency of anarchist statements before judge and jury. Unfortunately, it is often the case that the statements were never allowed to be read or were cut short, but what is reflected in the book is a spirit of anarchy and resilience that is simply breathtaking.

For anyone who has even gone to court for even a misdemeanor the gravity of these statements is not lost. I've had the unfortunate task of transcribing court proceedings and in doing so you develop a certain expectation for how courtroom speak unfolds -- and the limits implicit and explicit, the violation of which carry severe consequences.

Here, in this remarkable gathering of statements, we see the welcome violation of these suffocating standards of politeness and rule of law. Through each statement the hollow nature of the state's claim to legitimacy and morality is held like wax before a flame, melting in the face of these defiant souls who dare to push back against the nightmares of modernity.

"Thus we shall be in our misfortune, triumphant in our misery, victorious in our defeat. We shall be happy, no matter what happens; for we are certain that at the breath of the renovating idea others will be brought to the truth, other men will undertake our interrupted task and bring it to a good end; and, finally, that a day will come when the star which gilds the harvest will shine on Humanity without armies, without cannons, without frontiers, without barriers, without prisons, without magistrates, without police, without laws and without gods; free at last intellectually and physically, and men, reconciled with Nature and themselves, will at last be able to quench their thirst for justice in the universal Harmony."

-Georges Etievant, 1892

Look for discussion and readings from *Defiance* in Oak's Audiozine Episode To Live a Life of Integrity.

FIFTH ESTATE: NORTH AMERICA'S LONGEST RUNNING ANARCHIST PERIODICAL - FIFTHESTATE.ORG

[Note: The author is a regular contributor to *Fifth Estate* and *Fifth Estate* has helped promote *Oak Journal*]

Fifth Estate lays claim to an impressive feat, the longest running anarchist periodical in the States. Quite an incredible endeavor given the nature of politics and logistics in the United States. Each issue *Fifth Estate* combines a smattering of diverse voices and compiles them together in magazine format, addressing a broad spectrum of issues from a variety of voices across the anarchist panoply. If this description sounds a bit formless and unspecific it is because *Fifth Estate* is not a magazine with any singular focus and the content is typically not very long or particularly detailed in its development of theory or analysis. This is not to imply that the pieces are without interest or merit, but they often act as a spark or notice of intent, rather than a treatise on any large topic -- after all, only so much is accomplished in 2,000 words.

Fifth Estate remains one of the most relevant and widely distributed anarchist periodicals in North America. With thousands of copies available and the ability to find a copy in just about every major city and even many rural areas, *Fifth Estate* keeps the anarchist perspective alive and vibrant in the discourse at large. Let's hope for another 55 years of defiant anarchist publication from this critical anarchist periodical.



The Myth of Meaning

by Darren Allen

What's the bloody point?

-Kenneth William's Last Diary Entry

WITH EVERY PASSING YEAR fewer and fewer people need to be persuaded that life in the system is meaningless, although many are still convinced that the consolations, addictions and surrogates they use to fill the void that system-life creates, are overflowing with purpose.

Meaning, or reality, comes from two places, CONSCIOUS BEING and PURPOSEFUL DOING. Conscious being refers to the experience of consciousness that precedes, or is aware of, thoughts, emotions and separate sensations. This pristine sense of 'I' is occasionally sensed, or felt, after a long refreshing sleep, before all 'my' ideas slot into place, or in moments of stillness, when I am stunned by beauty or when, perhaps for no other reason than a walk in the park, I feel, all over my body, a profound rightness with life. Recognition, or knowing what is happening, takes me out of this experience into ideas, names, words and objects, which are all relative experiences; which is to say, known through relation and comparison. I know what the idea 'The big cloud above me' means by references to various relative scales, such as big-small, white-dark, fluffy-hard, above-below, here-there, and so on, but no such abstract knowledge is involved when the big cloud above is actually raining on me, or when I hug someone I am completely in love with, or in moments of sporting brilliance, when I am one with the ball, or after a hard day's work when I step into the shower. Neither do I make relative assessments in moments of great shock, when I am stunned, by pain or loss or even embarrassment, into a full experience of what is. In such moments time seems to slow down and sensations become more vivid. This is because conscious being is not a mental event, located in the head, but a physical one. The entire body is conscious — an experience which we register as vivid, bright, intense, actual and full of meaning; while mind-made time, as we normally experience it, is a relative mode of experience which takes our attention away from the conscious body and into ideas of the past and the future.

Naturally there is no problem with time, with thinking and emoting, or with picking separate objects out of the blended present. They are all useful tools; indeed the first tools that humanity ever used. The problem appears, as with all tools, when they take control of the user. When woman can no longer experience her body directly without thinking, without feeling time

press upon her, without a restless need to do or to buy something; when man cannot experience the present moment directly, when all experience comes via the thinking mind, when the strange, elusive intensity of life is instantly translated into comprehensible ideas, plans, desires and theories; then confusion and unhappiness become constant companions, the planning and recollection of time-awareness become endless anxiety and worry, and all talk of the radical awareness of conscious being sounds silly, self-indulgent and, in a complete reversal of the fully sensate truth, abstract. It also feels, to the relative self, uncomfortable, weird, worrying.

For ten millennia or more the tool of the self has been in charge of human affairs, endeavouring to eradicate the threat of selfless CONSCIOUSNESS, and the threat of the selfless CONTEXT with which it is indissolubly blended. Selfless states of conscious being, such as empathy, sensitivity, honesty, spontaneity, creativity, presence, or any other uncensored response to the context, have been unconsciously perceived as existential dangers of the first order by every monarch, state, party, priesthood, profession, government, board of directors and irresponsible parent that has ever existed.

This threat becomes greater with each successive generation. When the organs of the system — INSTITUTIONS — are still young and 'within reach' of those who created them, laws, habits and customs are still, at least partly, informed by the context; they are still relevant to society as it is, and those who created them still have some kind of power over them. But when a new generation appears, for whom institutional processes have become divorced from their original context, the 'way it's always been done' on the one hand doesn't seem to make so much sense, while, at the same time, through expansion and reinforcement, seems more real than it ever has. Key texts — once questionable and mutable — become fixed and sacred; pioneers — once human and responsive — become deified and beyond reproach; and, most insidiously, unspoken norms become reality itself, breach of which is perceived, by specialised elites now in charge of this objectified reality, as, at best, impudence, and in more serious cases, as sacrilege, madness.

Because the original meaning of the institution cannot be so readily accessed by new generations, a great and ever greater effort has to go in to interpreting, explaining and teaching 'the way it's always been done' to them, and coercing or punishing deviance, which, notwithstanding the monolithic mind-shaping organs of the system, is surprisingly straightforward. It is easy to instill compliance because, as the system evolves, the matrix of institutions which comprise it covers more and more aspects of life. The language, the science, the

'facts', the recipes, the laws, the habitual actions, the justifying myths and the pre-defined roles that form the warp and weft of institutional life increasingly define, construct, control and predict everything the individual does; and, consequently, everything he can think about what he does. This is how the handed-down reality of the institution becomes reality itself. The mind can find no escape, and all attempts at escape feel like depravity, insanity or just plain silliness. In other words because you can think about the human world you are fooled into believing it is somehow sensible or right. Knowledge about the world is the world. You can, and probably do, criticise the constituent elements of the system — the government is bad, our institutions are failing us, civilisation is falling apart — while, through the criticism, remaining an integral part of that 'world,' which, therefore, still somehow makes sense, feels 'right,' maybe even is 'worth fighting for'.

This is how all attempts at rebellion get effortlessly subsumed into the mythos of the system. The original thought, the inspiring slogan, the radical art, the rebellious speech are all manifestations of conscious revolt; and as manifestations — definable, storable, saleable, controllable intellectual objects — they are automatically co-opted.

Likewise everything we feel and do is absorbed by the system; once it has been made explicit, measurable, literal; graspable by the mind. Ambiguity, intimacy, vagueness, paradox (not to mention the great ungraspables, love and death) cannot be allowed into the advanced institution. They must be interpreted, confessed, recorded, posted, available. The biological model of mental illness, the mapping of all life, the systemic suppression of artistic truth (and the exaltation of entertainments in which the ineffable plays a subservient role, such as sport, cooking, travel, and all kinds of mediocre music and drama), the bureaucratic profiling of every person, action and emotion on earth (abetted by education, confession, therapy and digital communication), and the absorption of the incomprehensible, the elusive and the unpredictable into the crude literalism of science, indeed all literalism (postmodernism, feminism, blokeish common

sense, etc., etc.), are all unconscious moves, fuelled by unconscious threat of the abyss, in this totalising, totalitarian, direction.

Perception of this threat has to be unconscious, for consciousness is the threat. Consciousness, and the context it illuminates, is the only escape from the pseudo-reality of the system. This is why the system ceaselessly works to suppress consciousness, while never



recognising that this is what is happening. Dissidents are silenced for security, children are indoctrinated for their careers, systems men are promoted for their talents, background music is played for entertainment, motorways are built for transport, refrigerators are manufactured for convenience, forests are felled for profit, society is uploaded for efficiency, unruly

folk are tranquillised for their own good, spontaneity is banished for propriety, children are locked up for their safety, everyone is under constant surveillance for their own protection, laws which curtail nudity, psychedelic drug use, handling of dead bodies, free sexuality and self-sufficiency are passed for dignity or decency or some such other thing and technologies (or rationally-organised activities) proliferate which demand standard responses and suppress, ignore or punish impulse, individuality, reverie or fully sensate awareness (such as driving a car, or building a house or using a phone or playing a video game) so that we can all live 'normal' 'happy' 'lives'. All these reasonable, fair, fun, beneficial and logical activities end up suppressing consciousness, dulling the senses, separating men and women from their own nature and from each other, and sucking the incarnate joy from life; but that's neither here nor there for the system, or for those who serve or willingly submit to it, none of whom are capable of directly recognising what they have lost.

The second (and secondary) source of meaning, after conscious being, is purposeful doing. This means exerting oneself to achieve a meaningful goal. For the entire history of mankind — millions of years — this has entailed feeding, clothing, heating and housing oneself and one's fellows, forming close bonds with the members of one's society, finding a mate and raising children, truthfully expressing experience and playing;

and all autonomously, consciously and with an immense amount of skill naturally acquired from nature and culture without compulsion, or even instruction. Needless to say, none of this is acceptable to the system, which must force humans into entirely subservient roles, and, in order to do so, must remove their capacity to provision, care for or express themselves. In a highly developed system, people find that no skill, whatsoever, is required to keep themselves alive. Only obedience. They find that they are unable to have direct relations with their fellows, which makes them feel lonely; they find that, in matters of cultural achievement, skill is a positive handicap, which makes them feel inadequate; and they find that they are prevented from directing their own activities in any meaningful sense, which makes them feel frustrated.

To counteract the prodigious loneliness, inadequacy and frustration that the system causes — and, handily, to generate further realms of market-expansion — the system must provide people the opportunity to engage in meaningless activities; that provide nothing but solipsistic stimulation (porn, tvee, VR, drugs), that require minimal skill (modern art, modern university courses, collecting stickers, journalism), or minimal autonomy (schooled education, waged-work, Disneyland), or, if they satisfy man's need for independence, that have no bearing on the overall functioning of the system (cycling around the world, mastering yoga poses, getting in the Guinness Book of Records) or, if they satisfy man's need for a challenge, that actively support the system (winning the world cup, becoming CEO of Snapchat, wealth gathering). Humans must be encouraged to believe that all of these activities are just as 'meaningful' as genuinely purposeful doing. They must be persuaded to pour their personalities into such hobbies and ambitions (which, again, in a totalising environment is easy) and, consequently, to violently reject criticism of them as personal attacks, thereby divorcing the cloud of oppressive futility and boredom that hangs over the planet from the surrogates and stand-ins for an authentic life which cause it. The ideal, for a perfect system, is a world in which everyone is completely unconscious — unable to feel love, empathise, act spontaneously or honestly experience the present moment as it is, in all its mysterious intensity and strange intelligence; and in which everyone is totally dependent on the system — physically, emotionally and psychologically domesticated, deformed to fit its requirements and, ideally, not just unable to see their deformity, but actively celebrating it.

This is an adapted extract from 33 Myths of the System, by Darren Allen.

Earth and Anarchy

Love the earth - Defend the biosphere

-Challenge illegitimate authority

by Zach Ackerman

Introduction

Despite having an objectively good life, I sometimes feel like a creature in a cage, writhing in agony and malaise and all the while knowing that there can be more; yearning for something greater. And yet time and time again being sucked back into the maw of suffering that is its lot. Obedience is the task. A cyclone of self-loathing, apathy, and despair are the consequences.

We need a radical change. That doesn't necessarily mean that everything would instantly be perfect and utopian. Humans have, after all, displayed a propensity towards prejudice. But by removing the ills of civilization from our society, we could move past some of the things that hold us back. The perspective of this writing is implicitly anti-capitalist and anti-fascist, though it will not necessarily explore those areas in detail.

For the Earth

I notice that there a lot of tall, mighty pine trees in my area. To think that the land must have been full of these beauties before the advent of civilized life. Nowadays they stand as a tribute to a wild past. Monuments relegated to the margins. Reserved for those who take the time to stop and ponder. I ask you to join in me in a flight of fancy. Join me in a moment of reverie. Try and picture a world of freedom. Freedom that cannot be represented by any flag or contained within any border.

Sitting here in a modern house and typing on a MacBook Pro seems anathema to an anti-capitalist or anti-civilization lifestyle. Before I chose to spend some time writing this afternoon, I was visited by a feeling that I often have. I wanted to go out and experience nature. I wanted to be in the wilderness. It wouldn't suffice to drive to one of the local parks that I frequent as often as possible. I wanted to experience something more visceral. As with any grand ambition, obstacles tend to present themselves. With little prior preparation and the winter day soon coming to an end, I accepted that I would likely finish the day without a wild excursion.

This experience behooves me to ask myself some questions. How can I improve my wilderness knowledge and skill-set? What are small, manageable steps that can be taken to learn? Any inspiration to learn or study tends to draw me back into the world of technology. Driving to the library requires a vehicle. Reading on the internet has obvious technological associations. Perhaps

it is a testament to how fragmented and alienated we are that no obvious community is available for these types of things.

If we want to rewild ourselves and rewild the earth, the first step is to simply try and spend time in the wild. Rewilding camps exist, but I question how accessible they are to the masses. It's a good thing, no doubt. But my goal is to begin locally and find ways that myself and like-minded others may explore the possibilities of wildness.

So what about recycling? What about the things that we do to try and offset the massive environmental problems that we face? I met a man the other day who, with no small amount of pride, explained to my co-worker and I that everything he was wearing was made from biodegradable material, and that he drank water from a metal re-usable water bottle. Clearly some people are concerned and ready to take some kind of action. The question I pose is as follows: are this man and his clothing choices solely at fault for the predicament we find ourselves in? Are the diligent recyclers and users of re-usable shopping bags at fault? Of course not. The problem is systemic and must be addressed as such. At the initial time of this writing, the yellow vest protesters in France are speaking out against direct austerity measures that punish common working people for the actions of industrialized civilization, and as well they should. We ought to foment unity amongst one another, not a culture of blaming and shaming regarding our 'green consumerism'.

Bottom line: we need to get over the anthropocentric hubris that holds humankind as 'special' among the animal kingdom. In many ways, we are more in line with the natural world than the manufactured 'human world'. We should strive to consider the world from the perspective of all life; sentient and non-sentient, human

and non-human. Humans have sequestered themselves from the wild world with destructive consequences. The longer that we tread down the path of control over Nature and over Life, the worse it will get.

Out of Nature, Into the city

The progression into civilized life has had numerous consequences for humanity. Research has indicated, for instance, that a transition to an agricultural diet affected our lower jaw size. This, in turn, may have led to several of the orthodontic problems experienced by modern humans. The pandemic status of diabetes, obesity,

and other lifestyle illnesses attests to some of the pitfalls of modern living. Some doctors warn patients to avoid prolonged periods of sitting. A far cry from the roaming and rambling that our bodies evolved doing. Many of us spend more time than ever sitting.

Today, at least in the so-called United States, most of us are raised to pursue education as a means to better employment. We are taught that increasing our employability will increase our value to society and, in turn, allow us to live more fulfilling lives. It seems that we are being used,

as Hobbes conceptualized and Perlman critiqued, as cogs and springs in a non-human machine greater than ourselves. And for what? When it's all said and done, you're worth more than the number listed next to your bank account, or the brand of your jeans, or the zip code that you live in.

Here's a little personal anecdote. As a guitarist I have often enjoyed and admired the work of Duane Allman. I remember reading that Duane skipped school to stay in the shed out back and practice guitar. Granted, Duane Allman was possessed of a certain level of talent to be sure. But in lieu of a diploma, he emerged from his school years with an amazing ability to play music.



How many great talents go undeveloped because of a subservience to the educational pathway of conformity and submission to authority? We rest on the laurels of our so called accomplishments and achievements to glorify civilization. But we don't even know the potential of our people.

Furthermore, the worldview of the modern human, generally speaking, differs from that of our predecessors in key ways. The Indigenous peoples and First Nations of North America subscribed to animistic beliefs. This meant that they had an inherent regard for the natural world that was at odds with the views of the European invaders. While they did not conceptualize things the way a modern environmentalist or ecologist might, animism served to keep people in check with regard to their consumption of natural resources. Industrialized capitalist civilization takes no such precautions. It logically follows that living in a society remotely close to that of our nature-based ancestors would require both effort and intent in order to bring about a transformation of consciousness and lifestyle.

Paul Shepard, in one of his earlier works, discusses an infantile quality to the desire to restore the past. Shepard qualifies this infantile impulse by explaining that we are indeed infantilized through alienation from proper development in nature.

When discussing these issues, there is something to be said for not romanticizing Indigenous people or perpetuating myths about their lives. I came across an article recently about decolonization. This piece was written from an Indigenous perspective and directed towards white allies. One of the key takeaways, for me as a person of no Indigenous heritage, was a point made about environmental causes. Specifically with regard to their focus on avoiding an environmental catastrophe and a resulting dystopian world. From the vantage point of the Indigenous ancestry, our current situation already constitutes a dystopian world of environmental catastrophe. I think that reality could hold true for all of us, not just Indigenous peoples. Though there certainly are issues that Indigenous peoples and First Nations face that are unique to their situation of marginalization and oppression. Again, when discussing these issues, it is important to stay in touch with the realities of Indigenous culture as well as the realities of what Native Americans faced under European conquest. Their plight continues to this day as Native communities fight for everything from rights to their ancestral lands to simple access to clean water.

Finally, we've heard the claims that anti-civ proponents are pushing for a genocide. On the contrary, the change we are talking about would likely occur over generations, in a timeframe that would allow for adjustment. But we start today. We start by trying to

change ourselves and inspire change in others. And, not for nothing, but the current path set by the status quo actually threatens to lead to much death if left to its own devices. A recent analysis published by Melbourne think tank Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration forewarns that our current trajectory will lead to at least 3 degrees Celsius of global heating, which would have devastating effects on the biosphere. This is considered a "high-end risk", but it is not out of the question. And, invariably, the first to suffer will be those who are already most disadvantaged and dispossessed.

The Vegan Question

In defense of vegan ideology in connection with liberation politics, I feel that it is important not to discredit the oppression of animals as a legitimate form of oppression and domination. Personally, I adhere to a vegan regimen when it comes to my food choices as well as other consumer choices. This presents a tension with certain primal touchstones. The 'primitivist diet' relies heavily on meat.

Consider an article in Scientific American that quotes William Leonard of Northwestern University as saying that "Our species was not designed to subsist on a single, optimal diet." If you take this into consideration, along with the fact that there are multiple different diets consumed by modern hunter-gatherers, it becomes difficult to clarify a perfectly delineated primitive diet. To the extent of my knowledge, and I am admittedly a layperson, we also lack knowledge of a primal hunter-gatherers' gut micro-biome as compared to that of a modern human's. Nora Gedgudas, an expert on what has become known as the Paleo Diet, makes many points regarding health and lifestyle choices. What seems to be missing from the conversation, however, is the inherent cruelty and oppression that exists in the industrialized food industry of the 21st century. Interrupting the cogs of the Leviathan, of course, could help mitigate that problem.

Certain voices should not go without being heard, regardless of species. And that still leaves us with the hunter part of hunter-gatherer. Personally, I would like to advocate for a vegan future to the fullest extent possible.

Furthermore, consider the killing of prey for the sake of the predator's survival. This is an instance of violence through hunting that occurs throughout the animal kingdom. Now, consider how the modern human habit of hunting for sport is an entirely different kind of violence. The decision, or maybe even addiction, to kill should be critiqued in the strictest of terms. For a long time now humans have had a refined hunting skill. This gives them, in some situations, an advantage over the prey they hunt. With the addition of modern

technology, this makes for a particularly devastating brand of slaughter. The practice of using modern technology to take another being's life for the pure satisfaction of killing is a cowardly indulgence. It is a cruel and rigged game.

Suffice it to say that there are practices of enormous cruelty being carried out by the arms of the modern Leviathan. The steak enjoyed at a fancy steakhouse and the quarter pounder purchased at a McDonald's are, for all their differences, seasoned equally with the tears of suffering beings. Practices of extracting animal secretions also entail necessary cruelty and violence against imprisoned animals. For instance, the condition of dairy of cows is one of abysmal suffering. Forced to be kept in a state of constant lactation, they are victims of violence-against-female by way of commodifying a living being's reproductive capacities. Not only are they subjected to this direct physical abuse, they also endure the emotional torment of having offspring taken from them to either become dairy cows themselves or to be slaughtered for veal.

I've heard people mount the counterargument that products like eggs or honey, being naturally occurring secretions of an animal, can be harvested without cruelty. The problem with that is that, in many cases, an operation may not be limited to nor focused on harvesting secretions in a minimally invasive way. The operation may also include other aspects that are cruel and exploitative.

Even in the case of a farmer/homesteader or beekeeper who can extract eggs or honey while allowing the animals to live a full life, such an operation would doubtless be very small and probably unable to supply large-sized communities with enough eggs and honey to satisfy current demand. Therefore, the existence of such an operation does not solve the overall societal problem at large, though it might represent a less cruel and possibly more symbiotic relationship. Finally, in a situation like that, the animals are still kept domesticated and commodified by an external force. The answer still appears to lie in unraveling the tapestry rather than altering a single patch.

Yin and Yang

One of the only women to have her words recorded from the American colonial period was Ann Hutchinson. Her words are known to us in the modern world by way of court notes from the trial that led to her banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. This arguably extrajudicial decision by Governor Winthrop was based not in law, but by the burning desire of the ruling patriarchal class to vanquish her brand of outspoken critique at all costs. That is what it took for a woman's voice to break the barrier of time

and echo throughout the ages among the plethora of male voices that inform our understanding of his-story.

As mentioned above, non-human females are still exploited greatly in the animal cruelty industries. The oppression and exploitation of non-human animals has always been much more overtly cruel due to the speciesist notions that pervade civilized society. See Rene Descartes and his public vivisection of dogs. Or, for a more contemporary flair, see any of the scientists who have experimented on animals kept in unnatural and isolated environments. Needless to say, I reject these speciesist notions and strive to rid my psyche of their influence.

The idea of yin and yang, as many people are aware, comes from the Taoist idea that there are coexisting yin and yang energies that together make up a greater force of energy. I named this section after the yin and yang to highlight the need to examine how our society values 'energies' such as aggression and competition above cooperation and compassion. Such an imbalance affects the biosphere as a whole, not just female and female-identified persons. Have men not also been harmed by patriarchal attitudes as they have been forced to labor to uphold the system, and to forfeit emotional wholeness to uphold the standard of stoic masculinity? That doesn't even touch upon individuals and groups with marginalized identities falling under the LGBTQIA umbrella. Kevin Tucker discusses gender and sexual orientation among limited contact populations in the Winter 2019 edition of *Wild Resistance*. And, of course, it goes without saying that the non-human world is also greatly affected by the ravages of industrialized society, but I'll say it again anyway.

The Techno-Sphere

Technology, as some would argue, is on the path towards dominating its human 'masters'. It could also be argued that this has already occurred in some ways, at least for segments of the human population that are heavily dependent on technology to function in their work or personal lives.

Laura Drake, a self-identified geek and former programmer turned techno-critic, names the following four deadly sins that lead to over-reliance on technology: pleasure, comfort, harmony, and convenience. In retrospect, I'm interpreting her inclusion of harmony not to be a condemnation of harmony in general. Rather it is a condemnation of buying into technology as a means to avoid 'rocking the boat'. Though I would be interested in hearing her elaborate on that point.

Bill Joy, a former tech industry insider, published an essay several years ago outlining his concerns over the

direction that our society is moving with regard to technology. Jaron Lanier, another industry insider, has been outspoken on the detrimental effect that social media is having on society.

Perhaps connected to our obsession with technology is the rise of what I call observer culture. What I mean by observer culture is the way society operates on a basis of performers and observers. Music and dance have been natural parts of human society for a long time. To my lay understanding, these were participatory activities that mostly everyone could take part in. Now, we still have that to some extent, but we can see that music and dance have turned into professional and highly-skilled endeavors. Not everyone who picks up an instrument will achieve a professional level of musicianship, but some will. Some individuals will draw a significant amount of attention and maybe even financial remuneration for their musicianship. We look at those people and say they have a gift for rhythm or a knack for melodies. The masses are able to passively watch performers on TV and stream performances on YouTube. The profit motive of companies offering these services is also clearly part of the situation here.

And, finally, I do acknowledge that it's possible to be a hobbyist and still enjoy your craft. However, I do maintain that there is an element of connectedness that is lost in technological society.

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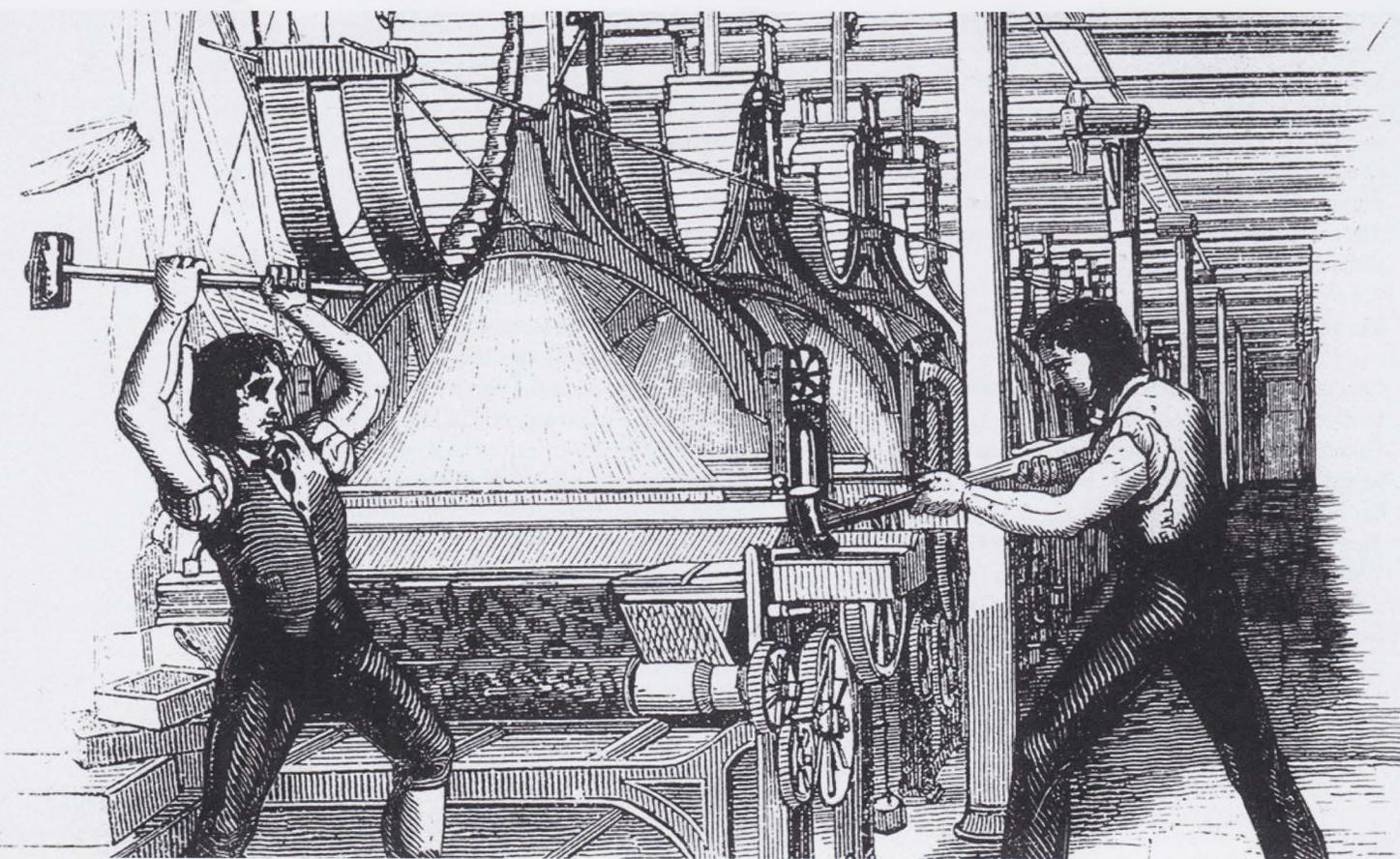
Revolution Now?

It is evident that there are certain conditions that lead to uprisings of groups against State power. Many people I've encountered like to brush off the idea of an uprising as unrealistic. It's probably true that many people in

the so-called United States would not be moved to join in some kind of radical uprising. But any kind of community that can exist outside of the system, in some way, can serve as an example for a better future. Such a community could also be a stepping stone towards further change and development. Even rewilding could be pursued in a grassroots manner. Sure, rewilding camps offer the expertise and guidance of experts. And as a matter of full disclosure I'll admit that I've never been to one of those camps. But I don't see why knowledgeable people, or those pursuing knowledge, cannot help each other out in finding ways to exist outside the boundaries of civilization and hierarchal dominance.

In Conclusion

I want to try and end with a visionary statement of sorts. So often I find myself taking a stance against some facet of our society and railing against the system. As I develop my thought and praxis, it is important to me to try and be constructive and not just critical. It's all about the 'we'. Solidarity is a must. This is not a time for radical and brazen individualism. Acting in adherence with principles such as mutual aid and voluntary association, we need to form communities of truly free human beings. One thing to always keep in mind is that things will inevitably change over time regardless of what we do. Human civilizations are like cheap furniture; they aren't built to last forever. We can submit to apathy or we can try and have a stake in a better future. Take what I say in stride, think for yourself, and find ways to act on your beliefs. Don't be pushed around by anyone's dogma, including mine. I only hope that this has given you the impetus to keep asking the right questions and seeking out solutions.



REJECTING THE MACHINE, EMBRACING REAL REALITY: A CONVERSATION ON TECHNOLOGY WITH WEST NORTHWEST

Oak Journal: Could you just describe what led you to the studying of technology? What kind of let that off?

West Northwest: Well, I would say it's been developing for a period of more than 15 years, really going back to the beginning of the 21st century when we started to see e-mail take over people's communications and I started to notice that something wasn't right. Basically, that the machine was separating people. It's a very low-resolution form of communication. I started to notice -- basically, that there's this technological barrier starting to be formed between people.

And then, it kind of sped up, especially around 2007 when the smartphones and social media came out, right up against the Great Recession -- then I knew for sure. I saw it accelerating.

So, back in, say, 2002, I made a vow to myself. I said, I will never, ever allow myself to become a captive to this technology. So, as a consequence of that realization I was able to distance myself from it and watch it unfold but standing outside of it. From a distance I was able to watch as basically technology replaced things like friendship, dating -- work became mostly about tending to the technology.

And I started to see people basically doing free labor for these technology companies as they started to grow into this gargantuan enterprise. And then the surveillance aspect came. And in 2013 it merged with the surveillance state, as we saw from Edward Snowden's revelations.

So, all of this I'm watching unfold and then, I guess around 2017, I noticed that people were starting to notice and there was starting to be a little bit of a backlash. If I had tried to talk about this before people would have looked at me like I was against the future or something. But now I feel like I'm able to talk about it because other people can see.

Now, that doesn't mean they can escape the captivity easily, but at least they can finally see what it's doing to them. That it's actually dissipating their very humanity on behalf of the system. The system is cannibalizing the members of this civilization.

So that's how I got involved with that, that's how I became interested. Actually, from my own experiences and my background as a political scientist, that obviously allowed me to see the power aspects of how the oligarchy is using the technology to put a barrier

between itself and the population that the system rules over.

Oak Journal: Is your PhD in political science?

West Northwest: Yep, it sure is.

Oak Journal: You make this pretty insightful point on resistance in the paper and I'll just read belief if that's okay..

West Northwest: Sure, go ahead. By the way, the paper is called "Frictionless Technologies: The Innovation of Human Obsolescence."

Oak Journal: So, you write: "Because frictional power systems that make use of outwardly coercive force bring the human being to feel conscious discomfort, and because there is literal evidence of them, they are legible; hence resistance becomes possible. Frictionless power systems do not show themselves in this manner. Because their mechanisms are more abstract, they are more effective. More efficient power feels both more immovable and more indifferent precisely because it is smoother and more frictionless. It is as invisible as it is ubiquitous, much like the laws of nature, but added as layers on top of them."

So, I wondered if you could just expand on that because that seems to be at the crux -- and maybe we can go back to frictionless technologies before you hit on that -- but that seemed to really get at why there is this sort of generalized realization that, oh, these things are not good for us anymore. (Laughter) But there's really nobody doing anything about it.

West Northwest: They really never were. They were not made for us.

But let me answer your question about the immovability and the invisibility. Back probably -- when you think about years, decades past -- say a colonial country under a colonial system; the power of a colonial system over, say, a territory on the other side of the world, people can see it. You've got occupation forces. For example, take Palestine, you've got occupation forces. Any foreign country that has a colonial regime -- South Africa. My point is that you usually have an occupation army. You have, maybe a leadership -- even in a dictatorship that is obvious.

You've got a despotic center that you can see, here. It's here. It's obvious. It's in our face, we can see it every

day. So, because it's legible to everybody, they can channel their energies into resisting it. But here what you have is what Steve Talbott called a tyranny without a despotic center. Which means that it's invisible, it's everywhere, it's distributed. So, when you think about trying to channel energy into fighting against it or resisting its power, you can't find it. People could even argue that it doesn't really exist. And they can't see it and if they can't see it then it's not part of their lives because most people are very literal thinkers.

And so, they don't feel overt discomfort that they can trace place to a despotic source they are not going to see themselves as being tyrannized in any way. But yet, this population is being tyrannized more than any other population in history, over time, because of the complexity of this system as it's grown up, this engine of civilization has turned on its people -- that originally was there to grow the civilization is now destroying the people in it. It's become an engine of destruction that is bent on the survival and the empowerment of itself, as opposed to humanity -- or look at what it's done to nature, for example.

But it's the fact that it's invisible. You can't point to somebody. You can't point to one specific corporate head or one specific political leader and say, this is the guy who is doing this to us. That doesn't exist. That's what I mean, if it's ubiquitous then it's sort of woven throughout your life in a very invisible fashion and it feels good. People get a dopamine hit from using this technology, so they think it's something good. And they don't see the kind of elite, the tech oligarchy in Silicon Valley, that's really trying to shape their minds and thoughts. To surveil their movements and eventually shape their movements into their own interests. They can't see it and it's too many layers, too many levels removed from their day-to-day experience for them to be able to see it as it truly is.

Oak Journal: I hear you may be getting at that there is somewhat of a center, in that there is this elite sort of game planning of these sort of technologies and, in fact, the point of your paper with frictionless technologies seems to be that there's this aim and there's this goal -- maybe it's uncontrollable -- but there is this aim and goal from specific people. Is the center invisible I guess is what I'm talking about...

West Northwest: No, it's not even like a typical massive center because, if you think about it, it's tied in with the military industrial complex, it's tied in with the financial interests. It's all tied in but it's distributed. I guess what I mean is, it's not like 10 generals sitting in a smoke-filled room plotting how to take charge of a society.

You can't say that if we get rid of -- like in the third-world countries sometimes you say, if we get rid of

Hosni Mubarak, we can free ourselves or whatever. There's a guy that we can put a face on, there's people -- there's maybe a cabinet or a top leadership that's is corrupt and then if you just get rid of them and you can bring in something that is more in your interest then you won't have -- so you can change the character of the system because you can see the system.

But here the system is distributed. So, you can't even say -- people who say, oh yeah, the top one percent. Well there's people who are leaders who are companies, maybe in the top one percent, that they don't really control anything by themselves. The CEO of one of the biggest companies, I think it was one of the energy companies, said, you know what it's like to be a CEO of this company? It's like riding a brontosaurus and seeing where it's going to take us.

(Laughter)

Oak Journal: It's like a black-box resistance dilemma.

West Northwest: Exactly. The system -- I just like to call it the system at this point -- it has a life of its own and these political leaders are simply faces that are stage-acting. But they don't necessarily even have that much power. So, where does the power lie? Does the power lie in the chain reaction that we created a long time ago that's now taken on a life of its own? If AI develops to the point that it can then you will have that thing having a life of its own, but because it's not a person people won't say, okay this is the thing in the system that is harming us. So, I guess there isn't a -- like conspiratorial planning.

We have so many conspiracy theories around because people want that simple explanation. But it's their own actions that are feeding the system and they don't take any of the responsibility onto themselves. They're feeding it, they're giving it their own energy. And this is the problem. and they do that in return for convenience and comfort and harmony and pleasure. And until those four items can go from number 1, 2, 3, 4 on a person's priority list down to, say, 750, 780 -- we will continue to have this problem until people are willing to not put those things -- I'm not saying don't have them at all, I'm saying that they can't be prioritized over everything else. This is why we have, I believe, the system that we have -- at least a large part of it. They give the people what they want.

Oak Journal: Do you feel as those -- you spoke briefly about AI and it's kind of interesting the way you formulated that you immediately brought to mind like Matrix Trilogy -- like how that had to develop from this sort of like nebulous evil development in the story to be the third one you have a personified core of the AI that is the evil (laughter)...

West Northwest: The Mr. Smiths, right?

Oak Journal: Yeah, you have this very accountable character that is basically -- you're pointing out that's just a fantasy...

West Northwest: Well, actually, even in that situation, Mr. Smith, there are a lot of Mr. Smiths, right?

So, there's not one that has power. It's a representative. It's like a single representative of a massive process. The Mr. Smith itself doesn't have the power by itself and it doesn't run the system.

Oak Journal: Right, and then at the end they bring out this architect or whatever...

West Northwest: Right, there's an architect. Here we've got a number of architects. A number of architects that don't coordinate with each other but, in their own interest, lead them into creating more of these system mechanisms that are harming people.

I'm a great fan of John Baudrillard who basically inspired The Matrix. He's the philosopher that inspired that. He talked about how our whole life is turning into a simulacrum, which is a fake artificial layer that is instead of real reality. So, I'm all about real reality. And that's how I get to this point. That's why I can see through all this stuff and that's why I could from the beginning.

Oak Journal: Could you speak about that, maybe? Could you define what you mean by real reality?

West Northwest: Well, what I mean by real reality is base reality, which is nature, human beings and relations between human beings. That doesn't involve artificial projections on screens of people that are not really people, that are out of time and out of space. So, right now you and I are having a synchronous communication. Which means we are sitting here on a real-time channel, talking to each other in real time. Whereas if you see like a Facebook avatar or something -- I don't use Facebook, I don't have a smartphone, I have not adopted any of these 21st century technologies basically at all -- but let's say you have a person on a Facebook screen, that's not the real person, that is a simulation of a person. And, so, basically when a person sends out that avatar and posts pictures or stuff, whatever they post on there, they're basically planting a representation of themselves that's not themselves. And what's happened is people have poured their identities into these artificial representations of themselves, thereby all of the care and concern and tending goes to that simulacrum. And they're neglecting their real self and their real world activities and their real world

relationships and the walk through the nature and whatever it is that's part of real life has been channeled onto this representation of themselves.

So now they're a layer -- the more of their identity that they put into that screen self or whatever that is the more that they lose their actual self to it. So that's the difference, real reality is: I'm building relationships as me, I don't need a representative to post my -- you know, some simulated, idealized version. I live here, I'm grounded in the real world, not on a screen and that's the difference. It's: where are you grounded? Where is your identity grounded and where is your life grounded? Where is the stuff of your life, is it done through tech company apps or is it done through yourself and other people and nature?

That's real reality.

Oak Journal: That's important to, I think, just lay out explicitly because there actually confusion about real reality (laughter)...

West Northwest: Really? Tell me about that, tell me what you mean by that, what kind of confusion?

Oak Journal: I think that people are generally -- let's see how to put this -- they are confused as to what exists in material. They believe that their actions on the internet, their life that they're leading there can be authentic. Basically, that they parse out what would inauthentic or unreal people -- so those would be like your trolls or your shitposters or whatever...

West Northwest: I think those people are just as real as anyone else.

(Laughter)

Really, they are just channeling whatever energy they have onto the screen...

Oak Journal: Yeah, but it adds comfort, I think is my point, there's a comfort to think that you can get to an authentic internet experience or an authentic screen experience or an authentic home security experience (laughter). You know that you could be on the right side, essentially.

West Northwest: Well I'll tell you; the oligarchs don't put their children on those screens. Right now, they're pouring billions and billions of dollars into life-extension technologies for themselves and my suspicion is that everybody else, except the topmost elite, will be confined to virtual existence. Because they want to go that way and they will end up in little virtual cages where they won't claim a lot of resources and they won't bother the elites. The elites will be able

to feed whatever into their -- shape their activities as they have already been doing. I mean, these are not authentic experiences, these are mediated by these big-tech oligarchs. It's not even the open web anymore that people are on. The greatest minds in this country right now are going into, how can I make people stay on my site and click more things and stay longer -- and how do I shape their emotions so that they'll continue to do what I want them to do.

And that's what they're in. And they don't understand that they're in that and there is no authenticity because they're not in control of it. If, at least, we were talking about the open web, where you didn't have all these apps. Where you just had -- you know, somebody has a website and I go look at it and I participate in a BBS forum -- I'm a Gen X so I basically lived two parts of my life: with internet, without internet. And the first internet that we had was like these BBS type of forums, posting sites. We didn't even have pictures on the original internet in the mid and early '90s, it was just text-based.

And you posted messages to each other and you had e-mail. But you still weren't dealing with people who had an interest in shaping your mind, you were still even in control of that. You connect two computers together, there's not anybody controlling that, which is an experiment I did in the early '90s. I'm actually, ironic as it may be, I'm a technology geek, which means I was a phone phreak. I am very good with technology, I can fix computers, hardware and software. So, it's a little bit ironic, but maybe it isn't because it means that I don't see it as magic. I understand how it works and, so, the allure is not there. I get it. I can see it for what it is.

And, by itself, it's not evil. What's evil is when people go and create, they take the opportunity. They see the opportunity there to shape the minds and emotions of other people. It's like having these people running in their computer boxes sitting on their desk. And there's no authenticity in that at all. And I can see eventually

that people would be -- it's like The Matrix except that it's not the body that's being used as a battery, it's the mind. The mind is what this thing is feeding off of, it's the human mind -- the energy produced by human minds.

And that's why when people go on these sites they feel lonelier and more depressed and suicidal, because they're not in real reality, they're not owners of their own lives anymore, they're serving as digital serfs in a digital serfdom that is, basically, simply extracting their life's energy and their sole.

Oak Journal: Can you maybe explain how this destruction of lived reality or real reality, that you just explained, how does this relate to this goal of frictionless technology?

West Northwest: Well frictionless technology is actually not the goal. Frictionless technology is the method.

Frictionless technology, the idea is that you -- if people's top priorities are convenience, comfort, harmony and pleasure then what you need to do as a tech company is make technologies that give people all those things and that take away



everything else. And so, frictionlessness is about seamlessness. It's about automating your life. Automating your actual life and therefore guiding it.

So, frictionless means that instead of having to remember to -- well, this is a good example: instead of having to find my way through a city or a town, I can have a GPS device that will do that for me and eliminate the need to think. If I can have a piece of technology that will remember my schedule and my calendar and remind me when I need to go to a meeting -- instead of me writing those things down on my calendar and looking at it every morning to see what I've got -- which is what I do, by the way, I do that. But people think that's a friction, to have to do that.

It's a friction to have to do the things in your life for

yourself and to think for yourself. So you might have a piece of technology that sets up a meal schedule for you for a week and cooks your food for you and does everything, and all you have to do is sit on your couch and stare at a screen. And you don't have to live your own life anymore. And you don't have to make decisions anymore. That's frictionless because it happens by itself.

Frictionlessness is about happening by itself and it's also about -- so there's frictions in human relationships. So, if you take the real live people away and you put them on an asynchronous written communication forum like one of these social media sites, you're making relationships frictionless. But because they're frictionless they're not real, because real relationships have ups and downs, they have different personalities with different wills trying to sort of negotiate their way through -- but that's where all the human touches come from. But then you have awkwardness, you have problems, you have all these other things. So, what they do is they say, we'll take away all the awkwardness and all those things and we will simply make your relationships frictionless. Well, guess what? Once you do that you don't have relationships anymore, those are not relationships. Those are simulations of relationships and what happens then is you have a generation being born that can no longer actually -- that is so awkward in real life trying to communicate with real people in real time. So, in other words, it has weakened them tremendously. This is their power being taken away because they can't function without the machines anymore, because they can't stand a moment of awkwardness -- woooo -- you know? (Laughter).

So, it softens and weakens -- their native capabilities end up being taken away and extracted from them and replaced. So, they end up becoming these slaves of technology and that is what's called technological slavery. They lose their own power, their own power to think for themselves and to deal with real world situations which don't have to be convenient, are not always harmonious, not always comfortable. Those four priorities are what they use to -- that is what frictionlessness is aimed, at maximizing those four things. You get those four things, but they take everything else that you have.

And eventually you lose your native thinking capability, you lose your ability to focus and concentrate, which numerous scholars have written about -- that the ability to focus for more than two seconds at a time because they've been sped up to machine time, well humans aren't meant to run on machine time. So, they lose their native capability for focus and concentration and deep thought. And enough time on dating apps and they lose their capacity for love and real bonding with real people -- and being able to make commitments to other people

and really sharing life together with other humans, which, we are social, we evolved to be social. So what they're doing is cutting up the bonds, these social bonds, and putting everybody in their own little virtual cocoon, their own little virtual cage where they're separated from everyone else and they're too soft to get out and be able to think for themselves and do for themselves. And that's where frictionless technology leads to.

Oak Journal: One thing that occurred to me as you were saying that is -- it's frictionless technology but it seems like there's a lot of internal human friction in this, right? Because there's this sort of ultimate denial of the person and that's leading to this dysfunction that we see all over. So, I wonder what do you think about that?

West Northwest: That's only when you take one of these people that's been molded in this way and you try and throw them out into the real world and they can't function properly, then, sure, you've got friction. But frictionless technology is meant to get everybody out of real life and make it, so they don't have to deal with those things anymore.

It's like *Brave New World*, there was that drug called Soma which put everybody to sleep. And so, if they ever had a moment of displeasure, they could just take that and they could feel pleasure again and they could be in this state of eternal pleasured bliss and that's the end of their life. It's like the heroin addict who's sitting there gorked out on the street but he's feeling pleasure. But if you look at him you see what his life is. It's the same thing.

Oak Journal: Do you see this use of technology as analogous to a chemical addiction?

West Northwest: Yes, and in fact, I don't just say that, I've got in my paper there proof of that, that research coming out of China and South Korea has actually seen similar patterns in the human brain as the result of drug addiction versus technology addiction. And, in fact, they found destroyed brain tissue in young people, gray matter loss, white matter atrophy, atrophy of brain tissue that should not happen to an 18 or 20-year-old but they see it. And they see brain atrophy in young people that is mimicking what happens in a heroin or drug situation.

Neuroimaging studies back that up and I've got that in the paper too.

Oak Journal: How do you feel that this builds to -- like what are going to be, and it's something you talk about in the paper a little bit, but if you could explain what you feel like the political ramifications of this are going to be?

West Northwest: Well I think we're already seeing them in the sense that what used to be considered sort of a proportional sort of relationship between the people and system -- at least the people had some space to maneuver in, you know what I'm saying? They still had a lot of space to maneuver in that wasn't filled up by the system. And what's happened is that the system -- the more ground the people give up the more the system moves in to occupy that ground, to the point where people are bringing surveillance cameras into their own houses now, because of this.

So, politically, what happens is that the people no longer have -- well, let me put it this way, what I see happening is that the corporate tech-oligarchy is becoming more powerful even than the government. I see them as fused together right now, you've got the governmental and the technology, all of it fused together into one. It's sort of become merged in a way and fused together but if you have a hybrid entity which one is more powerful? Which one is the king? Which one is continuing to build power? Well, the governmental systems are obviously decaying. Look, the state governments have no money, they can't even fix the roads. The federal government -- look at the bureaucracies in the federal government, look at federal education.

All of these things are decaying and instead the tech companies are becoming more powerful in the average person's life than the government by far. So, if that's a hybrid entity, those are going to win. Because those are the direct things that are shaping people's freedom and cutting their freedom out and shaping their actual lives. And so, I think that eventually you will just simply have -- you might have this little strawman, a hollow shell of government that does perform certain very limited functions: collect taxes, have fire departments, military. Okay, but they're still limited functions, they're not all-encompassing functions in people's lives. So, the tech-oligarchy will come to mimic the totalitarian state, but it won't have responsibilities even of a totalitarian state. Even a totalitarian state has responsibilities. But these have no responsibilities. They just get to be totalitarian without any responsibilities whatsoever toward the people. So, people will be left to themselves but left under a very despotic type of thing that wants to shape every little -- you know, surveil and predict and guide every facet of a person's life. Every detail of data about you, they want it so they can shape where all the people go together.

And I suspect, like I said, that eventually that will push people into -- most people -- basically a second-level existence, which is a simulated one, so that they won't need as many resources, they won't take up resources in the real world.

Oak Journal: Right, you're always -- I think you had a

line in here about being in the world and lived reality -- as long as you're alive you are a being in the world doing something with some consequence and...

West Northwest: Well, as long as you're not under control, as long as you're not under control by algorithms.

Oak Journal: Right, but you still take energy, you still require energy at a basic unit if you're connected to a technological system.

West Northwest: Right, you need food and that's basically it. You maybe need a little shelter.

Oak Journal: Right.

West Northwest: How about a little pod? A little virtual pod that someone can lie down in...

Oak Journal: A pod! Yeah.

West Northwest: ... and be jacked in and they don't take anything other than food. The energy that they use on the technology is not really energy they're using. They're contributing more energy than they're using when it comes to that.

Oak Journal: I think it's interesting that the sort of high-tech life has collided with a political -- coming out of the left, there's the Green New Deal, there's this political sci-fi world where exactly what you're saying is the solution. One sci-fi writer, I don't know why they left this person on a podcast at one point, I don't know what sci-fi writing says about your qualifications to discuss these things, not that I'm that concerned with that...

West Northwest: Means maybe you have a good imagination.

Oak Journal: Exactly.

West Northwest: You've thought about these things (laughter).

Oak Journal: But they described it as "up and through" -- the only way to defeat the ecological crisis is to go up and through, which to him meant making cities larger, getting people in very, very small -- resource-efficient, might be the way it would be framed -- living situations.

West Northwest: No, we need to simplify, we need to get rid of all the complexity.

Oak Journal: Exactly.

West Northwest: The complexity is the entropy. More complexity generates more entropy and there's nowhere

for the entropy to be externalized so it's internalized. And that's where the internal rot comes in and that's where society rots from the inside out and the only way to stop it is to minimize the complexity, back down to a place where it can't be -- where the entropy is not going to be so large but go so fast. It's running faster and faster. The engine of destruction is running faster and faster. This is the same engine used to build people up because it was able to externalize its entropy. And now it can't anymore. So, now it's cannibalizing the members of its own society.

And that's why people feel that this civilization, or the system if you will, has sort of turned on them, which you can see in the political world. You know, being political ultimately, I learned to focus on power. I understand things in terms of power balances basically. And I see the power balance between the system and the people is way skewed now and that's because people have given up too much ground, they've done it to themselves. They've given up too much ground and if they give up more and more ground in the real world then, guess what? The system is going to come in and occupy that space. If they give up independence of mind the system will come in and occupy their mind and that's exactly what's happened with so many people now.

And so, they have to reclaim their mind, they have to cut that cord with Silicon Valley, basically, and reclaim their own life in the real world. And then they're a player in the real world again and then they're in a place where they can reclaim their power. They have to reclaim their relationships with one another, friction, discomfort and all -- and then they can build power. It doesn't come easy, power doesn't come by itself, you have to build it. You have to be willing to go through some tribulations if you care about it. But that's what it means to be alive, really alive, and not dead inside.

Oak Journal: I wonder if you've read, and I might be confusing two different researchers, but I think it's Tim Garrett and he talks about climate change and this idea of entropy -- he's a physicist out of Utah ...

West Northwest: No, I haven't read that.

Oak Journal: He makes this fundamental point that we can't have growth -- we can't use growth to stop the heating of the planet, it makes no sense.

West Northwest: Of course not, no.

Oak Journal: But it's a fantasy that's still quite popular because it gets to what you said earlier, it says everything we want to hear.

West Northwest: You're right, it makes it sound easy.

With entropy the house always wins so you have to not give it so much and not so fast. And you have to be willing to take away the complexity. The complexity is greater than can be sustained either by nature or by humanity now, because the machine, the algorithm -- if you're being given orders by algorithm those algorithms are going to get stronger and the people are going to get weaker.

Not because the algorithms are conscious, they're not, and they probably will never be conscious. But that's not the point, they're systems that -- just like water flows downhill, like Steve Omohundro said, that they will find a way to get most efficient. And efficiency, if that's a priority, that's a priority of the system but that is not a priority for humanity or for nature -- efficiency in terms of survival. If machines and algorithms are more efficient then they will destroy both. And so, we have to stop putting a premium on efficiency and start valuing things that matter to our life.

Oak Journal: I wonder if you've thought about how all of this might collide with instability politically, ecologically, that seems to be increasing. I mean, maybe it's not but it seems to be increasing. And if that looks like blackouts and lack of access to technological systems have you thought about -- I mean this is just a curiosity -- have you thought about how people would respond to something like that?

West Northwest: Well, I mean, I don't see political instability here at all. I see -- I mean, just because people are making a lot of statements on TV, on the internet is not -- people are not gathering together and doing collective things together in the real world so I think this is the stability of the kind of Soma like existence. You can just channel everybody's emotions onto the social media and you don't have to ever worry about them, they're taken care of, they're on the shelf and they're forgotten. You've got to keep it down to a minimum, I mean you don't want it to go crazy or anything but no, I don't see political instability at all. I do see ecological instability, obviously for the reasons that I talked about earlier, which is that the greater the complexity the greater the entropy. And that's externalized in large part onto the environment and when you start building more and more of these super-computing machines eventually the computing machines are going to take up more of nature, they're going to use nature up even faster than man did in the industrial revolution.

So, you're going to create -- but, see, the algorithms don't care about that, and neither do the people right now. I mean, some people do though, at least. But what I'm trying to say is that these technologies will eventually consumer nature at a much faster rate than man can do by himself -- so there's your ecological

instability. Political instability, no, because political resistance of any kind depends on power and if people have no power, if they have no access to each other in real-world settings then there won't be any kind of power at all. It will all be the system and they'll be asleep in their little virtual realities. And there won't be any kind of -- they won't even be in the game. The political game will simply be about oligarchs fighting other oligarchs the people will be outside of that because they'll be confined to their virtual existences and they'll be irrelevant.

[Brief break]

West Northwest: Facebook ran emotional experiments on people, they said, if we feed them -- if we put on their newsfeed, and the term feed is accurate, it's like an IV directly into your brain that you don't control. So if you fill that up with sad, anger, negative stuff -- if you fill that up with sad stuff can you make people be sad and if you fill it up with happy stuff can you make people be happy and post happy things. And they did that, and it worked. And it made a big scandal, but it worked. And this is the kind of manipulation and emotional experiments being done on people. And mostly the algorithms they actually calculate these numbers, obviously. So really the humans that are still in the loop, and they won't be forever, are just really spitting out what the algorithms are calculating. So, most of the work is being obviously done by the algorithms to perfect what it is that's happening.

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Oak Journal: Where do you see the state of artificial intelligence right now and -- yeah, how do you see that?

West Northwest: I think that the most scary part of it to me is that people are starting to treat these -- the minimal artificial intelligence that we have which is basically performing at an infant level, it's still in its youth if you will -- people are treating these things like human beings. People are naming their Roombas. They want machine companions, there's even a market for robot animals, robot dogs and cats. There's a market coming up that's already started for sex robots and sex robots are basically dolls that speak and pretend to make relationships with you.

So, what's scariest to me is that people are treating those as if they're human and actually they're treating them like they're better than human and they're actually developing, in their own mind of course, in their own imagination, relationships with these things. And the talk is that eventually everybody will have a robot companion in their house just so they won't be alone for psychological well-being because they won't have each other anymore.

Oak Journal: For psychological well-being (laughter)...

West Northwest: Right! That's going to be your replacement and they're going to make them look human. Look at the sex bots and even Sophia, Sophia is the biggest most famous AI right now, it was granted citizenship in Saudi Arabia. So, Saudi Arabia is part of it, their new future is going to be technology instead of oil -- those Gulf countries.

But my point is that you're making AIs that look and act human and that is like Baudrillard said, once something is duplicated in that manner it will fade away, it will disappear because its replacement will take over its functions. And there you go, that is the scariest part of it is that humans are being duplicated in this manner. That human functions are being carried out -- human emotional functions. So now we go from Facebook to the companion in your home. There are people who have Alexas who say that that's like their romantic partner now, that's like their wife or something.

Oak Journal: Yeah.

West Northwest: That's crazy!

Oak Journal: That's -- I mean, that's insane.

West Northwest: That's AI. So, AI is being made to replace humans, human relationships and humanity. And if this keeps going people won't have any access to each other because they'll be represented -- each person will have an AI to represent them instead of a Facebook avatar and people will not be able to talk to each other anymore. And that's why it's imperative, as we close out this interview here, that people get together in the real world to talk about this and figure out what they want to do while they still can, because eventually they won't be able to anymore. There'll be so many barriers that it just won't be acceptable to do that anymore and therefore no one will do it; they'll all be deterred. Baudrillard said that a lot of technology is about deterrence -- deterrence of real relationships.

So, if people who care about these things can get together in the real world and make commitments to each other and to nature and to humanity -- to everything -- to do things together, to figure out a strategy of how to preserve real-world things and real life and real people and real reality, basically. This is the only time because after this time there won't be any more chances. This is an open window that will not remain open -- probably for one generation and that's it. And that would be right now and we're already in the middle of that. So, this is the time to do that. This is the time to bring people together to talk about it and not just talk about it as to what it is intellectually but in terms of practicality, what do we do to salvage something while we still can.



**hallucination
ren hlao**

**i am skinning
three rabbits—**

**pure
discipline,**

poor apostates.

**their hides
get sewn together
and slapped
upon the rocks.**

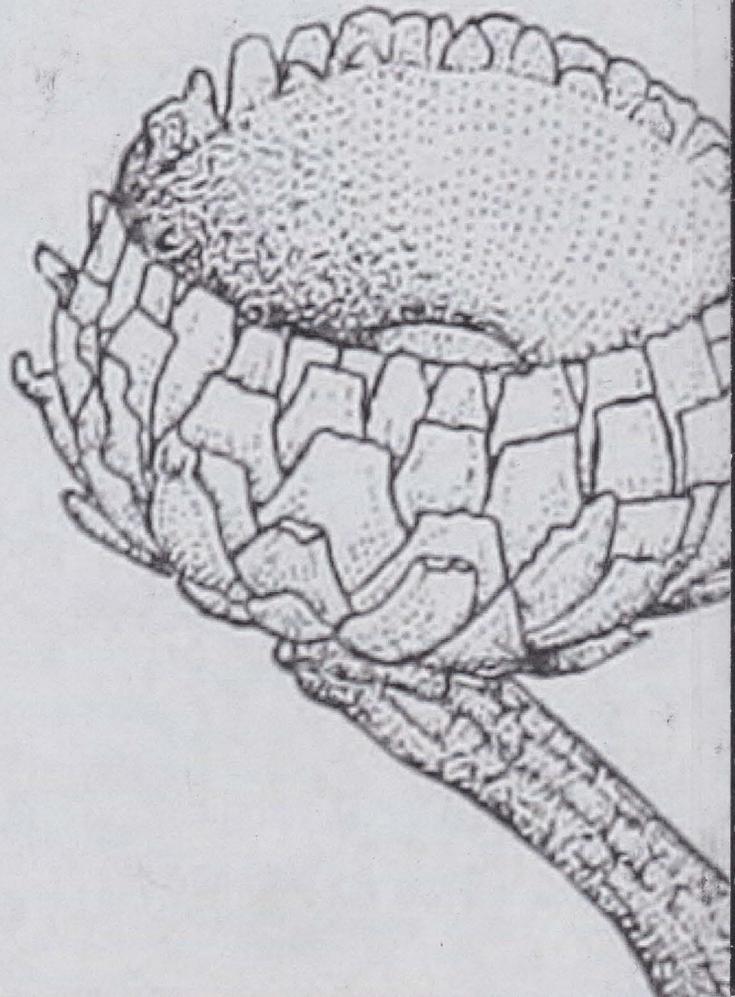
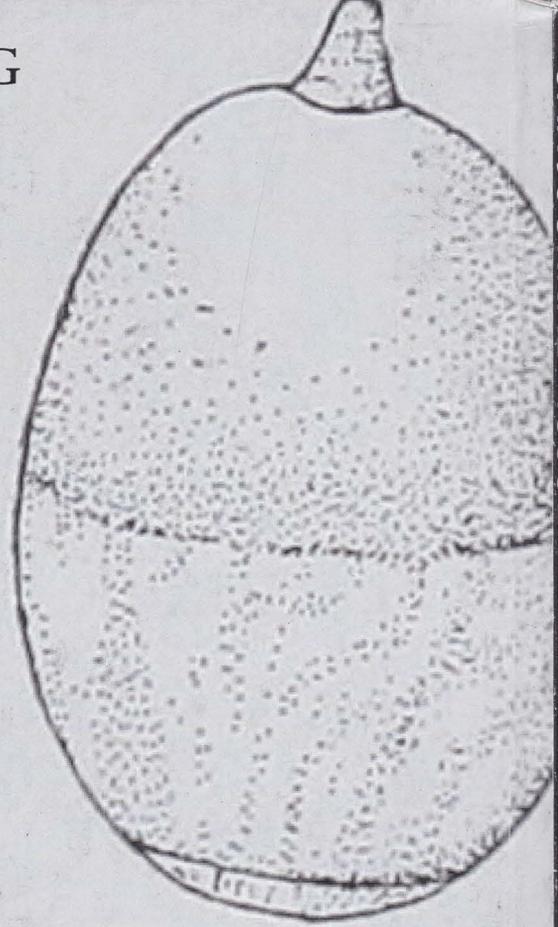
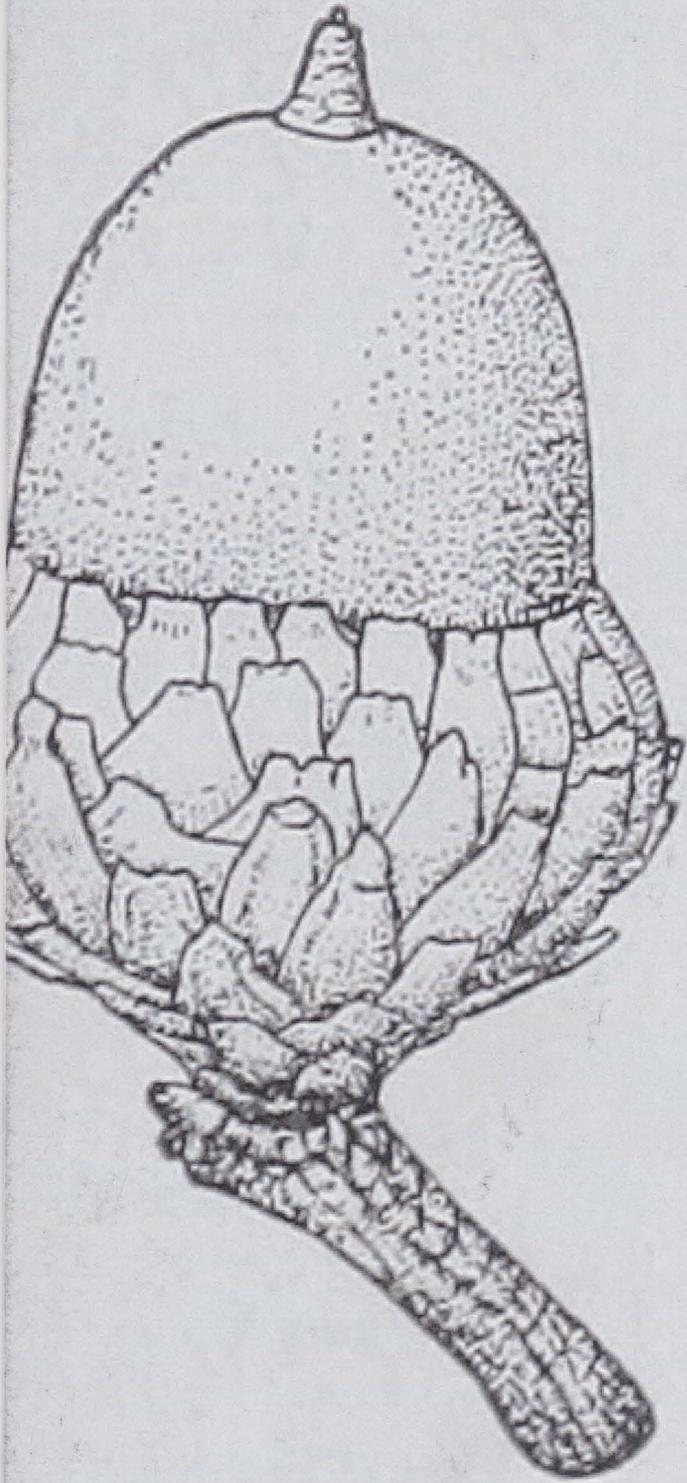
**i search the entrails—
delicately placed pile
of prayers in the grass—
for any sign**

**that their bodies are
industrialized like
ours.**

**the hills are all
pink/green/white
and white
sunlight. i set
my palms,
horribly,
into an ocean
of oil—in a desert, the first few
seconds of water
through the pipe
are always hot.**

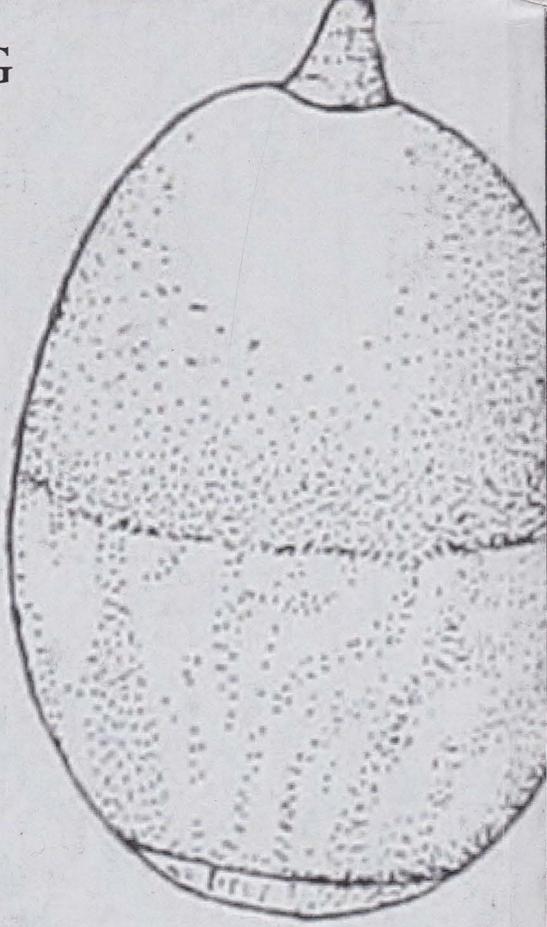


MAY THE ROTTING
FLESH OF KINGS
FEED THE EARTH



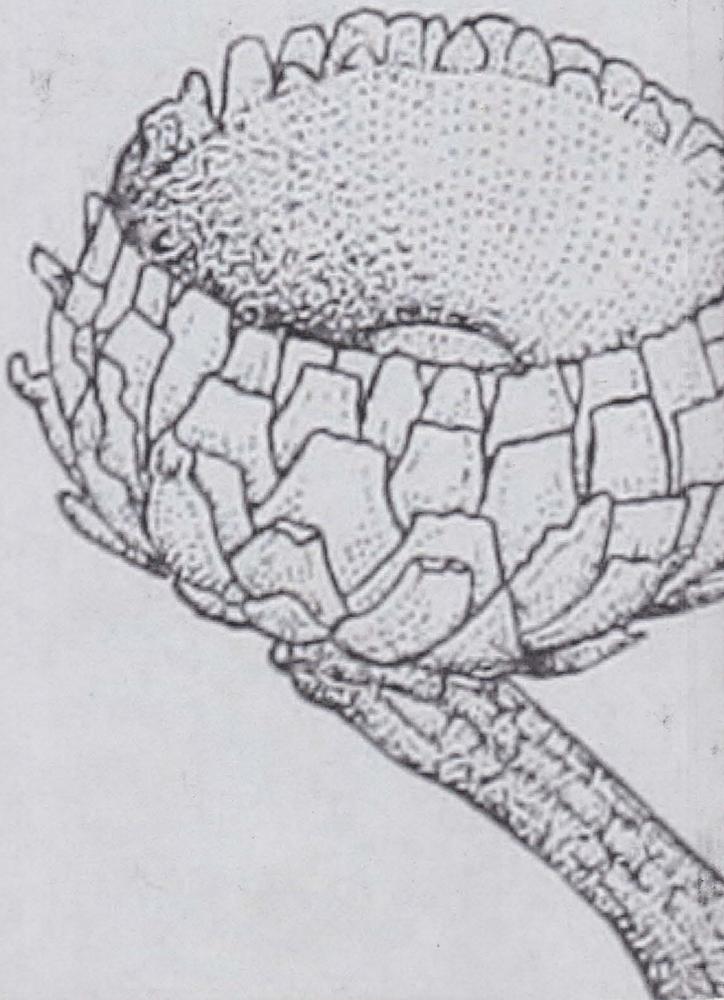
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