Recommended Books:

Ishmael and *My Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn
A Green History of the World by Clive Ponting
A Language Older Than Words by Derrick Jensen
Victims of Progress by John Bodley

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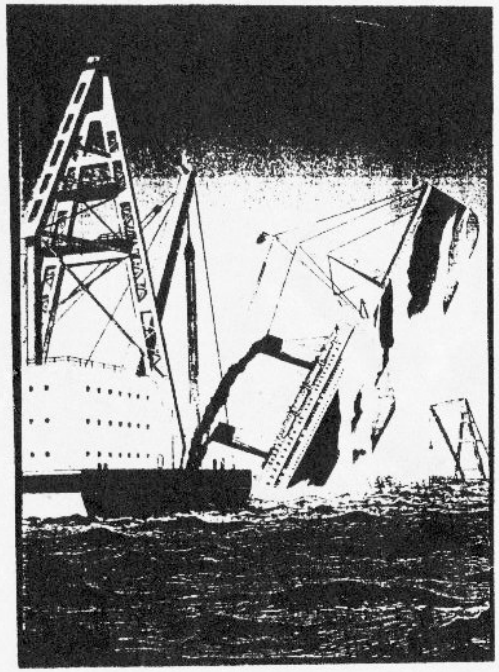
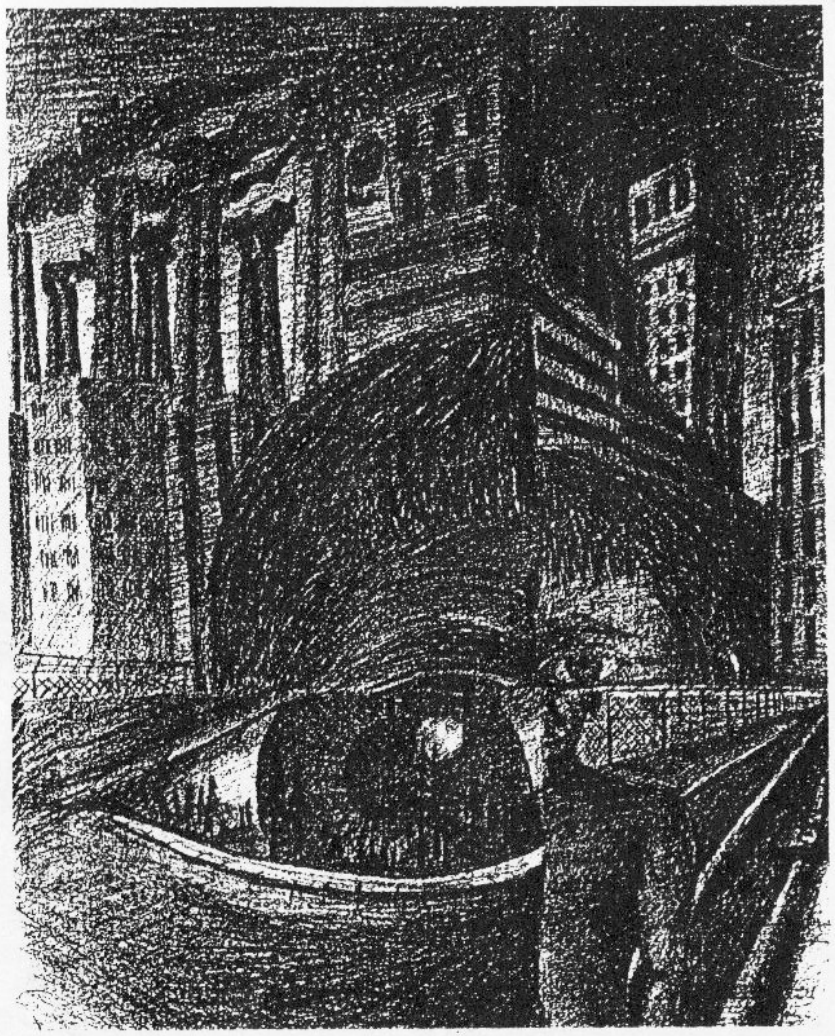
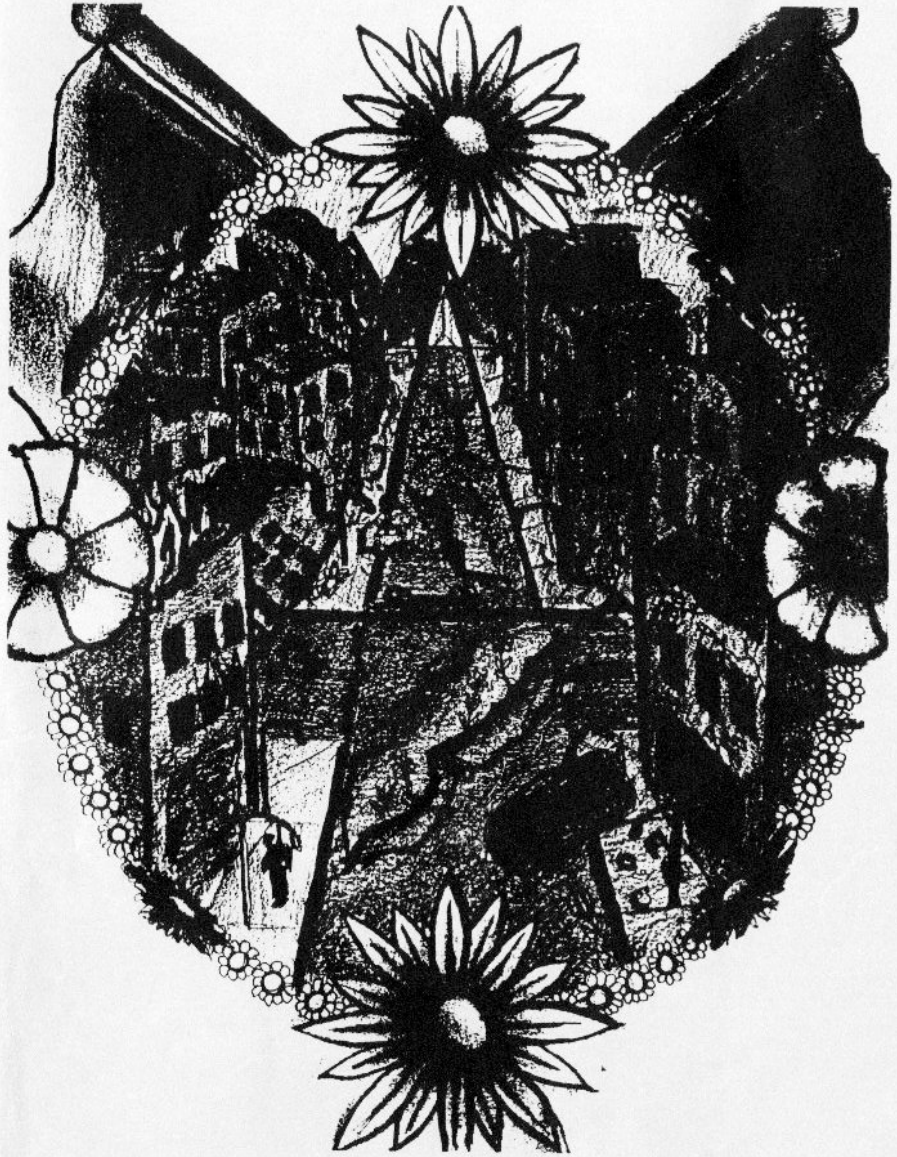
Check out the excellent zine *Green Anarchy* available *for $2 from the same address C/O GA.*



Our Enemy, Civilization



An Anthology Against Modernity



Measuring Life: Biometrics

Identification is a key technology of control used to keep immigrants out and supposed "criminals" locked in. Computerized biometrics are now the most effective technologies of identification. Finger printing is an older form of biometrics. The Human Genome Project is trying to map out the genes of every citizen of Iceland and put this information into a database. This leads us towards a world in which, according to the system, the most valuable thing about the human body is the digital data which it provides.

Biometrics are being used to restrict access to anything from a building to the nation-state. It is useful to know what specific technologies they are using against us. For example, Iris scanning is a very accurate technology of identification but luckily it has its limitations. It is less effective when used on people with very dark brown eyes. This is a very fortunate coincidence in countries like the US and Britain with racist cops! Retina scanning, on the other hand is said to be infallible. "Counterfeit resistant" Laser ID cards are used by the US INS for Green Cards and for the Department of State's Border Crossing Card. The EU is considering using this technology as well. Their spread to Europe would be tragic news for illegal immigrants. Data (biological and other wise) which is written onto the Laser Card's optical memory cannot be altered, therefore it is nearly impossible to forge this technology. This technology is obviously a vast improvement over the passports given to Apaches in the late 1700s, those passports were easy to forge. However, it is fitting that the Apaches resisted this technology not by forging it but by ignoring it and traveling beyond the areas controlled by Spanish. Unfortunately there are now fewer deserts to roam where such things can be ignored, but such places do still exist. The combined use of these technologies and increased surveillance (such as the millions of dollars budgeted for wiretapping in the 2000 Federal Budget) are of great benefit to the budding prison industrial complex.

These technologies give those in power more effective means to keep people in their designated place in the world of sanity: the measured, disciplined, educated, treated, productive world that functions according to the logics of capital and the state. There are always those who escape, defy or resist these logics, this is precisely why the state goes to such lengths to contain us. They are used in tracking systems that give governments and companies the means to find people and put them where they are 'useful' to the powerful, such as within the prison industrial complex, or to exclude people from access to privileged domains (gated communities, company buildings, rich countries etc.). While restrictions on human movement are increasing, restrictions on the movement of capital are diminishing. However, the free movement of individuals has always been a threat to productivity; these new technologies are merely a more efficient means to achieve the same repressive goal. They are used to prevent us from acting on our desires unless our desires have become perverted and trapped within the cycle of production and consumption. *Reducciones*, missions, "Peace Establishments" and confinement were and are all forms of rationalization: they fix and contain human bodies.

The free movement of individuals has always been a threat to productivity, the willfully idle vagabond uses mobility to escape the grind of work and the wandering worker can use mobility as an advantage over his boss. The free movement through space is a threat to the state because it threatens any control over space. Complete free movement through space would not only threaten the nation-state but all private property. Mobility is our power.

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"Killing King Abacus" is available for $3 from Venomous Butterfly Publications, 41 Sutter St, Suite 1661, San Francisco, CA 94104

Our Enemy, Civilization

Our current mode of existence, noted for mass production and consumption, class stratification, urbanization, forced labor, scientific discovery, high culture and art, coercive government, and exponential expansion, is unrepresentative of humanity's extensive history. For over 99% of our 3 million year existence, small autonomous communities of people would subsist by means of hunting, fishing, and gathering, and much later, through gardening and herding. This was not a life of toil, by any means, but largely one of leisure, rarely requiring more than 2-4 hours daily to be spent engaged in subsistence activities. Small-scale societies not only tend to enjoy qualitatively more pleasant work and less of it, but also benefit from non-hierarchical face-to-face relationships, gender equality, individual autonomy, an open and living landscape, superior health and dental quality, and long-term ecological sustainability. This is not to say that conflict was non-existent either within or between communities – however, self-sufficiency combined with limited organizational scope allows small-scale societies to avoid the disaster of *civilization*, and the nightmarish realities that complement it, such as mass starvation and disease, enslavement of both humans and other species, mass imprisonment, and deadly large-scale wars.

Civilization prohibits people from surviving through a direct relationship with the land. The rulers and armies of early cities evicted and destroyed the native inhabitants of the surrounding land, mandating that it be devoted to mass agricultural production for the purpose of feeding citizens and slaves. Landlords, corporations and states control the land today, and regularly charge a rent or mortgage to its residents. To earn the right to occupy a space in the world, one must accept an income-generating position in an office, factory, industrial farm, mine, etc. Unlike hunting and fishing, such positions typically aren't enjoyable or leisurely, but stressful, monotonous, exhausting, and injurious, while in the meantime subjecting one to the exploitative authority of overseers and bosses. Without the time, energy or land required to live self-sufficiently, people must pay for needed items and food through even greater toil, while contributing to industry's replacement of vibrant living landscapes with homogenous agricultural plantations, unsightly cancer-causing industrial wastelands, and socially destructive urban sprawl. The surplus of goods and services created by conscription and employment also fuels an economy of rulers and specialists who take a vested interest in intensifying the exploitation of all life.

Civilization demands that living beings purchase their existence through a payment of lifelong servitude and obedience, while denying it to those who can't meet this demand. To cope with the physical and mental hardships imposed by civilization, people first turned to religion, and now to legal and illegal drugs, impersonal sex, gambling, and mind-numbing entertainment. In absence of an intrinsically enjoyable life, many live indirectly through others, sitting passively in front of television sets, movie screens, and video games. Yet in spite of such fleeting distractions, disaffection with life still manifests itself through high rates of suicide, mental illness, and abusive personal relationships. Retreating from the cities is no longer a means of escape, as there is no remaining location on the planet that the current imperialist order doesn't either adversely impact or seek to control. There is only one appropriate response to a fundamentally coercive system of virtually unlimited scope: forceful revolt. However, any attempt to create change that reproduces or reforms the expansionist and hierarchical structure of civilization will cause the fundamental problems described to continue. Only when civilization is destroyed will life (human or non-human) flourish freely for the sake of its own needs, desires, and aims. A genuine resistance must display qualities reflecting a free society, such as mutual affinity, personal autonomy, free association and a small organizational scale. This struggle is not guaranteed or even likely to soon succeed. However, resistance is an acknowledgement that civilization is the enemy, and the very act embodies the reclamation of one's life for oneself.

From: *"My Name is Chellis & I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization", By Chellis Glendinning (1994)*

Cultures, past and present, that maintain beliefs and practices based on a respectful relationship with the natural world share more than a set of common cosmological qualities; they share a set of common social practices. These practices are of special interest to us because they model the very social forms we long for, struggle to reproduce--yet rarely seem to attain. What occurs when human beings live in intimacy with the Earth? The kind of society we formulate is likely to be participatory, democratic, egalitarian, leisurely, ecological, and sustainable. Like the elliptical wholeness of the natural world, such social practices shape and are shaped by the psychic state of the people, springing from healthy psyches and simultaneously guarding against the emergence of psychological aberrations like addiction and abuse.

Making Glass on the Solomon Islands

Full participation in the life and survival of the group is one of these social practices. In nature-based cultures, nearly everyone is an expert, or at least competent, in nearly every activity the people engage in. By contrast, few of us are competent, much less expert, at more than a few minor activities that contribute to the functioning of our society. To make things worse, as our technologies become more complex and our society increasingly fragmented, we become less competent. An astoundingly small percentage of us knows how to record a television program on a VCR, repair an electronic device, or decipher a Publishers Clearinghouse prize notification. *[...]* Meanwhile, the only activities we seem to share are shopping, driving, and watching television. Such a predicament is not how humans evolved.

According to anthropologist Stanley Diamond, the average man of the hunter-gatherer-pastoral African Nama people is "an expert hunter, a keen observer of nature, a craftsman who can make a kit bag of tools and weapons, a herder who knows the habits and needs of cattle, a direct participant in a variety of tribal rituals and ceremonies, and he is likely to be well-versed in the legends, tales, and proverbs of his people." Diamond goes on to say, "The average primitive . . . is more accomplished, in the literal sense of that term, than are most civilized individuals. He participates more fully and directly in the cultural possibilities open to him, not as a consumer and not vicariously but as an actively engaged, complete person."(1)

Frances Harwood learned about such participation during her field work in the Solomon Islands in the early 1960s.(2) One day, she relates, an assemblage of villagers paid a visit to her hut. They sat down on grass mats on the floor and said to her, "Ever since you came here, you have been asking us a lot of questions. Now we would like to ask you a question." Harwood perked up in attention. "Please . . ." pleaded one tribesman as he picked up the glass she had brought with her. "How do you make this?" "Oh yes, well . . ." she sputtered, trying to bring together the right native words to communicate the process. "It's quite simple. You take sand and you heat it up with fire, and then you mould the glass." "Ah-ha!" the islanders responded, enthusiastically nodding their heads and passing the glass around the circle. "Then we'll meet you down at the beach tomorrow at dawn--and you'll show us how to make a glass."

interesting difference between these settlements and Missions is that these settlements were a financial loss to the crown, they did not manage to exploit residents except when males were forced to serve militarily. That is, in this case control was more important to them than exploitation. They resorted to this method because Apaches simply would not submit to settling in missions. Residents of these settlements were forbidden from traveling beyond 30 miles from settlements unless authorized and were required to carry passports in those cases. (Griffin 1988: 99) But this law was often ignored and Apaches continued to travel where they wished. Apaches were encouraged to use guns instead of bows and arrows so that they would be dependent on the market for the acquisition of gun-powder, and they were encouraged to use liquor for the same reason. These measures were moderately successful for 25 years. But when rations started to dwindle raiding increased and when the Mexicans ran out of rations in 1833, the situation returned to that of 1770 with as many Apaches roaming and raiding as before the "Peace Establishments" were built. (Worcester) In short, these measures failed, the nomadic Apache continued to elude the Spanish. These Apaches fiercely resisted domestication and refused to settle down permanently. Only later, Mexico and the US finally forced to settle or exterminated them but this achieved only after a long struggle.

Reducciones, Missions and 'Peace Establishments" all put residents where they were locatable so that they would be more easily exploitable. The vagabonds of Europe were as much a threat to the powerful as the nomads and semi-nomads of Latin America, they were therefore also submitted to regimes of domestication. While the residents of Missions were converted to Christianity while they were taught the discipline of daily labor, European vagabonds were forced out of idleness while enclosed within four walls.

Confinement and European Domestication

During the early 1600s the first "houses of confinement" were built in Europe, to still the wandering and to put the idle to work.

In 1607 an ordinance called the archers to the gates of Paris to shoot at any vagabonds or beggars who dared try to enter the city. In 1656 the Hospital General was created, this was more a prison than a hospital and it was used to confine the idle, the vagabonds, beggars, sick and insane. Its openly claimed aim was to prevent idleness. The edict of 1657 was a vagrancy law that was enforced by archers who herded people into the Hospital. This is an interesting mutation of the 1607 policy and an example of an increasing reliance on confinement. These changes in punishment corresponded with an increasing social instability due to a growth in unemployment and a decrease in wages. This instability created an increased mobility of classes. In response to these changes there were three large uprisings in Paris in the early 1600s and guilds were formed in many trades. Obviously this new emphasis on confinement did not disappear with the end of this particular economic crisis. Confinement continued to be used as a source of cheap manpower after the crisis. In subsequent periods of unemployment it was again used as a weapon against social agitation and uprisings.

It is noteworthy that the first houses of confinement in England, France and Germany were built in the most industrialized cities of those countries. In England houses of confinement were opened in 1610 to occupy the pensioners of certain mills and weaving and carding shops. This was done during a recession, in other words, in a time where there was a high risk of rebellion. Industrialization had a great impact on class structure, it created new classes and thus allowed for individuals to change class. It also created new particularly appalling working conditions. As I have mentioned these drastic changes were, not surprisingly, met with resistance and revolt. Confinement was either a response to revolt or a means to prevent violent resistance to industrialization and its results. The history of confinement and other institutions or technologies of control is not a one-way linear process of increasing repression but a series of jumps, a conflict ridden complex of resistances and the state's responses to resistance.

Fixed Abodes

From *Killing King Abacus*

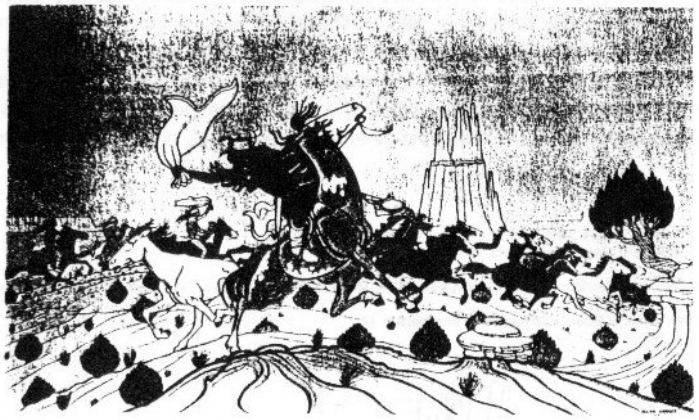
Domestication and sedentization are not processes that were only imposed on "primitive" peoples; these processes occurred in Europe as well. Latin American nomads and European vagabonds experienced similar repression but by different means. Missions and prisons served similar functions: they settled the roamers and put them to work. Now, there are many all too familiar ways to regulate or fix movement. Here in the US, incarceration rates are skyrocketing. The computerization of biometrics is a new weapon in the State's arsenal that greatly increases the accuracy with which they can identify human beings: this facilitates incarceration and immigration control. The above technologies and institutions of control share a common aim: to regulate movement and direct human action into the repetitive rotation of production and consumption.

Domestication in Latin America

Throughout Latin America during the colonial period Spanish style towns and cities were built with a central plaza, church and municipal building. American settlement patterns had been generally much more dispersed than Spanish towns. The Colonial administration forcibly concentrated dispersed settlements into such towns (*reducciones*). Once in towns it was much easier for individuals to be reduced to subjects of the crown and coerced into giving tribute.

The Missions settled, converted and hispanicized previously nomadic or semi-nomadic groups. They also eliminated hunting and gathering in order to enforce the production of a substantial agricultural surplus. (Hu de Hart 1981: 36) This system destroyed the economic autonomy that was based in hunting and gathering and attempted to instill the discipline of daily work, so that residents would produce with less resistance. One crucial aspect of this was the imposition of the time of the mission bell and the Christian work week. Obviously profit cannot be maximized if workers are left to work on their own time. The logic of productivity needs to organize time as well as space.

Apache warfare and raiding were very successful and managed to repel Spaniards from a 250 mile area, near the present day Mexico-US border. The Colonial administration had still not gained control of this area in 1821, at the time of independence. The Spaniards simply could not dominate the Apache militarily. Apaches were familiar with the area and traveled on horseback, they often raided Spanish settlements and disappeared without a trace. Colonial policies with regards to nomadic and semi-nomadic people always made sedentization a priority for this very reason. How could they control or exploit people that they can't even find?



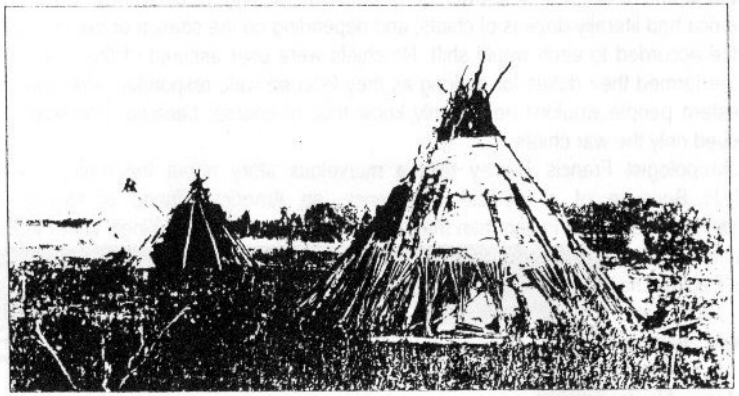
After all else had failed, the Spanish administration lured some Apaches into "Peace Establishments" (settlements near presidios) in 1786 by simply promising them weekly rations. One

Harwood was stunned. Already struggling to communicate in a language she had barely mastered, she now flailed as she attempted to describe such labyrinthian phenomena as industrial process, factory manufacturing, and division of labour. Her guests grasped none of what she said. They did, however, grasp her refusal to meet them on the beach. Thereafter, they let it be known among the villagers that Harwood's real purpose in coming to the islands had been revealed: she had been sent because she was an incompetent, incapable of doing the simplest things in her own culture.

Turning through the Air

Democracy is a second practice shared by nature-based cultures. In a democratic system every single member of the group has the opportunity to participate in decision-making. You and I clearly value and long for this opportunity. The cries for democracy that rang across the world in 1989 from Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China, and the psychic reverberations these cries caused among millions of others, have constituted one of the most passionate statements of the twentieth century. Yet truly satisfying participatory democracy seems always to evade our reach, even for those of us who inhabit one or another of the great "democracies" that emerged with the Enlightenment.

The crux of the matter is a little-appreciated factor: scale. Democracy is automatically abrogated when any gathering of people becomes too numerous for the continuous involvement of each member. As Austrian political philosopher Leopold Kohr puts it, "When something is wrong, something is too big."(3) In a more humorous comment about the unwieldy hierarchies and bureaucracies that accrue in even the most well-intentioned democratic nations, social critic Kirkpatrick Sale writes, "If a mouse were to be as big as an elephant, it would have to become an elephant--that is, it would have to develop those features, such as heavy stubby legs, that would allow it to support its extraordinary weight."(4)



Small, face-to-face groups are a universal characteristic of nature-based cultures; in fact, this quality is what defines them. According to anthropologist Joseph Birdsell, five hundred people is the model size of nature-based groups in aboriginal Australia, with fifteen to fifty inhabiting each local band within that larger grouping.(5) At the time of Columbus's arrival in North America, it is estimated that fifty-six people inhabited every fifty square miles along the California coast. In the Southwest the number of people for every fifty square miles was fourteen, while east of the Mississippi it was nine.(6) The average number of people per square mile among all documented hunter-gatherer groups is one.(7)

Democratic decision-making is likewise a common characteristic among nature-based peoples. Because of ongoing face-to-face contact, as well as councils for decision-making in some communities, every member has the opportunity to talk things out, make suggestions, have them heard, and participate in guiding the group. Among the BaMbuti (Pygmy) of the African Congo,

interpersonal conflict and offensive acts are settled without any apparent formal mechanism at all. Anyone can discuss any issue that is of concern to the community, and anyone can join in creating solutions. Each dispute is settled as it arises, according to its particular nature, and responsibility for righting the balance is always considered communal.(8) In many nature- based groups, because each person over the age often or twelve is capable of surviving in the wilds alone or joining another band, she can leave if she dislikes a decision. A sense of freedom we can hardly fathom reigns: each person can follow his inner guidance or stand up for what he believes, and because of this sense of freedom and responsibility, there is little acting out, rebellion, or addiction to the power games that define politics in mass society.

[...] The idea that democracy is practiced at its best by nature-based people flies in the face of our perception of these "primitive" cultures. In particular, it flies in the face of our projections of the chieftains and medicine men we think run them; in nature-based communities chiefs are rarely the coercive, authoritarian rulers we assume them to be. Hierarchy is not particularly developed, crystallized, or needed. In fact, in some groups, like the BaMbuti, there are no chiefs and no formal councils at all, no juries and no courts. As nature writer Dolores LaChapelle puts it, "Just as in a flight of birds turning through the air, no one is the leader and none are the followers, yet all are together."(10)

In communities that do have designated leaders, they are chosen for the purpose of embodying clan, family, or tribal heritage. To honour them is not a sign of giving over power; it is an act of communal self-respect. Leadership may also be situational, with chiefs chosen for their skills as facilitators and teachers or for their knowledge of medicine, fishing, or ceremony. The Plains Indians of North America had literally dozens of chiefs, and depending on the season or the event, the degree of prominence accorded to each would shift. No chiefs were ever assured of their role for a lifetime either; they performed their duties for as long as they listened well, responded well, and retained full support. Western people wouldn't necessarily know this, of course, because historically we sought after and valued only the war chiefs.

The anthropologist Francis Huxley tells a marvelous story about the native relationship to leadership.(11) Because of a medical emergency, an American friend of Huxley's, also an anthropologist, transported an Indian man from the sweltering wilds of the Xingu Valley in Brazil to the bustling "wilds" of the city of Sao Paulo. The year was 1955, and what followed was an archetypal moment: Natural Man Meets Modernity. As the two men made their way through the streets among towering buildings, sooty traffic jams, and electric crowds, they passed by a massive bank. Standing erectly at the entrance were two stern security guards, each wearing an elaborate military uniform with black, Gestapo-like boots and carrying a loaded machine gun. The native man was puzzled by this spectacle, never having seen anything like it, and he asked what it might be. Taken aback by the challenge of describing a nation state's economic system to a hunter-gatherer, the American flailed about, stuttered, and scratched his head just as Harwood had. Finally he explained that this place was a "house" where "the chief" kept

they can return the favour in some way, give tit for tat. We must resist this sense of having to exchange favours. Instead, we need to be and act in ways that affirm our own desires and inclinations. This does not mean being lazy or slothful (although at times we may need to be so), but rather calls for self-discipline. Free work actually demands a great deal of self-discipline, as there is no external force making us work, but only our own internal desire to partake in an activity that motivates our participation.

While we move towards a freer world by consciously affirming free work outside the marketplace, we can also make a difference during those hours when we are paid to work. Being conscious of the fact that when we are selling our labour we are actually selling ourselves gives us self-awareness. Such self-awareness is empowering, as the first step to changing one's condition is understanding the true nature of that condition. Through this understanding, we can develop strategies for challenging the slave wage system. For instance, every time we ignore the boss and do what we want we create a mini-revolution in the workplace. Every time we sneak a moment of pleasure at work we damage the system of wage slavery. Every time we undermine the hierarchical structure of decision-making in the workplace we gain a taste of our own self-worth. These challenges can come from below or from above: those of us who achieve a measure of power in the workplace can institute structural changes that empower those below, drawing from principles like consensus decision-making and decentralization. For instance, as teachers we can introduce students to the idea of consensus by using such a method to make major class room decisions. Those of us who head up committees or task forces can advocate institutional structures, policies and constitutions that decentralize power. Of course, the wage system is inherently corrupt and unreformable; however, we can make it more bearable while at the same time trying to destroy it.

And destroy it we must. If one's identity is based on work, and work is based on the employment contract, and the employment contract is a falsehood, then our very identities have at their foundation a lie. In addition, the labour market is moving towards an ever-increasing exploitative form of work: it is predicted that by the year 2000, fifty percent of the labour force will be engaged in temp work -- work which is even less self-directed than permanent full-time jobs. Bob Black has it right when he proclaims that "no one should ever work."*(6)* Who knows what kinds of creative activity would be unleashed if only we were free to do what we desired? What sorts of social organizations would we fashion if we were not stifled day in and day out by drudgery? For example, what would a woman's day look like if we abolished the wage system and replaced it with free and voluntary activity? Bob Black argues that "by abolishing wage-labor and achieving full unemployment we undermine the sexual division of labor,"*(7)* which is the linchpin of modern sexism. What would a world look like that encouraged people to be creative and self-directed, that celebrated enjoyment and fulfillment? What would be the consequences of living in a world where, if you met someone new and were asked what you did, you could joyfully reply "this, that and the other thing" instead of "nothing?" Such is the world we deserve.

Footnotes

1 Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 150-151.
2 Alexander Berkman, *ABC of Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 1977), p. 20.
3 Berkman, p. 19.
4 Robert Graham, *The Role of Contract in Anarchist Ideology*, in *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice*, edited by David Goodway (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 168.
5 Bob Black, *The Abolition of Work and Other Essays* (Port Townsend: Loompanics), p. 17.
6 Black, p. 33.
7 Black, p. 29-30.

should count in the years of study and practice the surgeon needed to make him capable of performing the operation, how are you going to decide what "an hour of operating" is worth? The carpenter and mason also had to be trained before they could do their work properly, but you don't figure in those years of apprenticeship when you contract for some work with them. Besides, there is also to be considered the particular ability and aptitude that every worker, writer, artist or physician must exercise in his labours. That is a purely individual personal factor. How are you going to estimate its value?

That is why value cannot be determined. The same thing may be worth a lot to one person while it is worth nothing or very little to another. It may be worth much or little even to the same person, at different times. A diamond, a painting, a book may be worth a great deal to one man and very little to another. A loaf of bread will be worth a great deal to you when you are hungry, and much less when you are not. Therefore the real value of a thing cannot be ascertained if it is an unknown quantity.(3)

In a barter system, for an exchange to be fair, the value of the exchanged goods and services must be equal. However, value is unknowable, therefore barter falls apart on practical grounds.

Increasing the amount of free work in our lives requires that we be conscious of the corrupting effects of money and barter. Thus, baby-sit your friend's children not for money, but because you want to do so. Teach someone how to speak a second language, or edit someone's essay, or coach a running team for the simple pleasure of taking part in the activity itself. Celebrate giving and helping as play, without expecting anything in return. Do these things because you want to, not because you have to.

This is not to say that we should do away with obligations, but only that such obligations should be self-assumed. We must take on free work in a responsible matter, or else our dream of a better world will degenerate into chaos. Robert Graham outlines the characteristics of self-assumed obligations:
Self-assumed obligations are not 'binding' in the same sense that laws or commands are. A law or command is binding in the sense that failure to comply with it will normally attract the application of some sort of coercive sanction by authority promulgating the law or making the command. The binding character of law is not internal to the concept of law itself but dependent on external factors, such as the legitimacy of the authority implementing and enforcing it. A promise, unlike a law, is not enforced by the person making it. The content of the obligation is defined by the person assuming it, not by an external authority.(4)

To promise, then, is to oblige oneself to see through an activity, but the fulfillment of the obligation is up to the person who made the promise in the first place, and nonfulfillment carries no external sanction besides, perhaps, disappointment (and the risk that others will avoid interacting with someone who habitually breaks her or his promises). Free work, therefore, is a combination of voluntary play and self-assumed obligations, of doing what you desire to do and co-operating with others. It is forsaking the almighty dollar for the sheer enjoyment of creation and recreation. Bob Black lyrically calls for the abolition of work, which "doesn't mean that we have to stop doing things. It does mean creating a new way of life based on play... By 'play' I mean also festivity, creativity, conviviality, commensuality, and maybe even art. There is more to play than child's play, as worthy as that as. I call for a collective adventure in generalized joy and freely interdependent exuberance."*(5)*
We must increase the amount of free work in our lives by doing what we want, alone and with others, whether high art or mundane maintenance. We need to tear ourselves away from drinking in strict exchange terms: I will do this for you if you will do that for me. Even outside our formal work hours, the philosophy of contract and exchange permeates our ways of interacting with others. This is evident when we do a favour for someone -- more often than not, people feel uncomfortable unless his "riches." The Indian became even more perplexed. He stuttered, scratched his head, and then declared, "Well then, if he needs this much guarding, he cannot be a very good chief."

Dine' Necklace

A third practice common to nature-based cultures is equality of the sexes. This is clearly a topic charged with emotion and controversy for us, and many of the addictions we are plagued with--co-dependence, sexaholism, romance addiction, violence against women--revolve around problematic relations between the sexes. For centuries, probably since the beginning of these painful aberrations of the human experience, women have been addressing their diminished standing in society, calling for greater valuing of their contributions, greater freedom to express themselves, and greater safety in which to lead their lives. It has taken men longer to awaken to the restrictions of the current definitions of manhood, probably because the outward status they are accorded has blinded their insight into the pain and limitations they have been accepting. In the 1970s, though, men have begun realizing and attempting to address, with rage and grief their need for full humanity.

We might ask if there isn't a deep and universal propensity operating here. If a need for equal opportunity, participation, and rewards were not ingrained in our primal matrix, we might simply accept any definition placed upon us or role assigned to us, no matter how limiting or oppressive. But the raw eruption of discontent in our times tells us that at heart, women and men consist of more than what current social constructs dictate.

Evidence from nature-based cultures reinforces this conclusion. Just as Larry Emerson's turquoise necklace shares different but equal strands for male and female, so the sexes in most nature-based cultures focus on different tasks and modes of expression--while sharing equal opportunity for participation and comparable social status. One detail is worth our notice: perceived differences between women and men may not be as fixed as they have been for us, restrictions not as confining. Women are both nurturing and assertive. They are physically strong, travel the territory with freedom, and have contact with other peoples. Men are intimate with their inner psychic terrains just as they are with the land upon which they hunt, and they participate openly in caring for the children of the band. Probably because of women's biological involvement in childbirth and early child rearing. the main difference in roles is a well-defined division regarding the provision of food--with women gathering plant foods and men hunting animals.

[...] Apart from the grace that Earth-based people emanate through their sexual natures, there is also tremendous freedom in relationship between the sexes. Most relationships in nature-based cultures are entered into by choice and dissolved by choice, rather than rigidly held in place by contracts, conventions, and social pressures. "Commitments are personal, not formal, institutionalized, or rule governed," reports anthropologist Peter Wilson. "Relationships are activated and animated through proximity, and proximity is determined by affection and friendliness ."(13) Likewise, ties between spouses are not formal or absolute. To begin, the responsibility for child rearing does not fall

heavily onto each isolated nuclear family but is more a communal task. And responsibility for each child does not last twenty years; rather, it lasts no more than six or seven. The upshot is that pressure for women and men to stay locked together in rigid contracts of matrimony does not exist. If they stay together, they do so because they choose to.

Indolent Savages

A fourth social practice common in nature-based cultures concerns leisure time. Put another way, there exists in nature-based community a decided absence of workaholism. It seems no coincidence that our modern bodies rebel against the harried work schedules we keep with heart attacks, back problems, cancers, and influenzas that appear so often they are considered "normal." According to a poll taken by Louis Harris and Associates, the average work week in the United States in the 1980s was forty-seven hours, up from forty hours a decade earlier. The U.S. Department of Labour reports that nearly 6 million working men and 1 million working women punch in more than sixty hours a week.(14) (Neither of these statistics includes the extra hours many women, and some men, put in to run their homes and raise their children.)

Journalist Kent MacDougall cuts to the heart of this predicament in a Los Angeles Times series entitled "The Harried Society." "Back in 1609 when the Algonquin Indians discovered Henry Hudson sailing up their river," he writes:

> They were living off the fat of the land. They lived so well yet worked so little that the industrious Dutch considered them indolent savages and soon replaced their good life with feudalism. Today, along the Hudson River in New York, supposedly free citizens of the wealthiest society in the history of the world work longer and harder than any Algonquin Indian ever did, race around like rats in a maze, dodging cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, and each other, and dance to a frantic tempo destined to lead many to early deaths from stress and strain.(15)

According to a study conducted by researchers Frederick McCarthy and Margaret McArthur, the average workday for men in aboriginal communities in Western Arnhem Land, Australia, including all time spent on economic activities such as hunting and tool repair, adds up to three hours and forty-five minutes; for women, for their plant collecting and food preparation, the average workday is three hours and fifty minutes.(16) Anthropologist Richard Lee reports that in Africa, the average Dobe Bushman's workweek is fifteen hours, or two hours and nine minutes a day--with only 65 percent of the population working at all. "A woman gathers in one day enough food to feed her family for three days," explains Lee:

> and spends the rest of her time resting in camp, doing embroidery, visiting other camps, or entertaining visitors from other camps. During each day at home, kitchen routines, such as coolung, nut cracking, collecting firewood, and fetching water, occupy one to three hours of her time. This rhythm of steady work and steady leisure is maintained throughout the year. The male hunters tend to work more frequently than the women, but their schedule is uneven. It is not unusual for a man to hunt avidly for a week and then do no hunting at all for two or three weeks. During these periods, visiting, entertaining, and especially dancing are the primary activities of men.(17)

So Many Mongongo Nuts

Another benefit of the nature-based way of life is good nutrition. Neurophysiological studies tell us that the chemical imbalances resulting from poor nutritional intake often lay the foundation for, or exacerbate, the psychological imbalances that manifest themselves as substance and behavioural

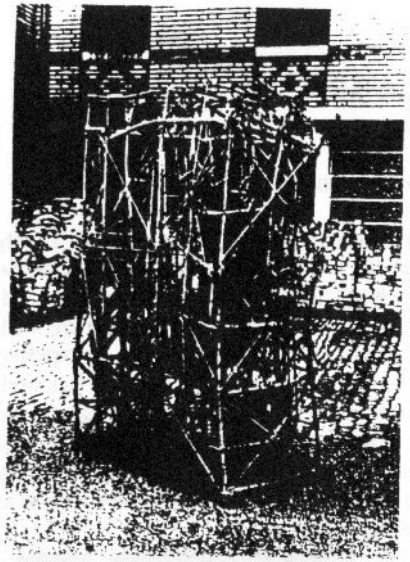
No matter what kind of job a worker does, whether manual or mental, well paid or poorly paid, the nature of the employment contract is that the worker must, in the end, obey the employer. The employer is always right. The worker is told how to work, where to work, when to work, and what to work on. This applies to university professors and machinists, to lawyers and carpet cleaners: when you are an employee, you lose your right to self-determination. This loss of freedom is felt keenly, which is why many workers dream of starting their own businesses, being their own bosses, being self-employed. Most will never realize their dreams, however, and instead are condemned to sell their souls for money. The dream doesn't disappear, however, and the uneasiness, unhappiness, and meaninglessness of their jobs gnaws away at them even as they defend the system under which they exploitedly toil.

It doesn't have to be this way. There is nothing sacred about the employment contract that protects it from being challenged, that entrenches it eternally as a form of economic organization. We can understand our own unhappiness as workers not as a psychological problem that demands Prozac, but rather as a human response to domination. We can envision a better way of working, and we can do so now, today, in our own lives. By doing so we can chisel away at the wage slavery system; we can undermine it and replace it with freer ways of working.

What would a better way of work look like? It would more closely resemble what we call play than work. That is not to say that it would be easy, as play can be difficult and challenging, like we often see in the spores we do for fun. It would be self-directed, self-desired, and freely chosen. This means that it would have to be disentangled from the wage system, for as soon as one is paid one becomes subservient to whoever is doing the paying. As Alexander Berkman noted: "labour and its products must be exchanged without price, without profit, freely according to necessity,"*(2)* Work would be done because it was desired, not because it was forced. Sound impossible? Not at all. This kind of work is done now, already, by most of us on a daily basis. It is the sort of activity we choose to do after our eight or ten hours of slaving for someone else in the paid workplace. It is experienced every time we do something worthwhile for no pay, every time we change a diaper, umpire a kid's baseball game, run a race, give blood, volunteer to sit on a committee, counsel a friend, write a newsletter, bake a meal, or do a favour. We take part in this underground free economy when we coach, tutor, teach, build, dance, baby-sit, write a poem, or program a computer without getting paid. We must endeavor to enlarge these areas of free work to encompass more and more of our time, while simultaneously trying to change the structures of domination in the paid work-place as much as we possibly can.

Barter, while superficially appearing as a challenge to the wage system, is still bound by the same relationships of domination. To say that I will paint your whole house if you will cook my meals for a month places each of us into a situation of relinquishing our own self-determination for the duration of the exchange. For I must paint your house to your satisfaction and you must make my meals to my satisfaction, thereby destroying for each of us the self-directed, creative spontaneity necessary for the free expression of will: Barter also conjures up the problem of figuring out how much of my time is worth how much of your time, that is, what the value of our work is, in order that the exchange is Fair and equal. Alexander Berkman posed this problem as the question, "why not give each according to the value of his work?", to which he answers,

> *Because there is no way by which value can be measured... Value is what a thing is worth... What a thing is worth no one can really tell. Political economists generally claim that the value of a commodity is the amount of labour required to produce it, of "socially necessary labour," as Marx says. But evidently it is not a just standard of measurement. Suppose the carpenter worked three hours to make a kitchen chair, while the surgeon took only half an hour to perform an operation that saved your life. If the amount of labour used determines value, then the chair is worth more than your life. Obvious nonsense, of course. Even if you*



dancer has to be totally present in order to dance, just like a machinist must be totally present in order to work; neither can just send their discrete skills to do the work for them. Whether machinist, dancer, teacher, secretary, or pharmacist, it is not only one's skills that are being sold to an employer, it is also one's very being. When employees contract out their labour power as property in the person to employers, what is really happening is that employees are selling their own self determination, their own wills, their own freedom. In short, they are, during their hours of employment, slaves.

What is a slave? A slave is commonly regarded as a person who is the legal property of another and is bound to absolute obedience. The legal lie that is created when we speak of a worker's capacity to sell property in the person without alienating her or his will allows us to maintain the false distinction between a worker and a slave. A worker must work according to the will of another. A worker must obey the boss, or ultimately lose the job. The control the employer has over the employee at work is absolute. There is in the end no negotiation -- you do it the boss' way or you hit the highway. It is ludicrous to believe that it is possible to separate out and sell "property in the person" while maintaining human integrity. To sell one's labour power on the market is to enter into a relationship of subordination with one's employer -- it is to become a slave to the employer/master. The only major differences between a slave and a worker is that a worker is only a slave at work while a slave is a slave twenty-four hours a day, and slaves know that they are slaves, while most workers do not think of themselves in such terms.

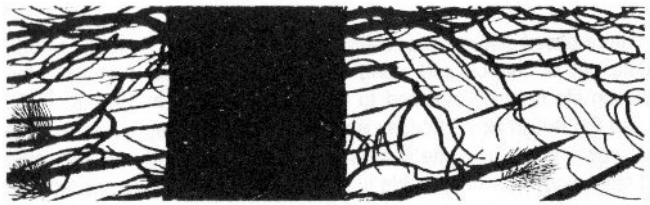
Carole Pateman points out the implications of the employment contract in her book *The Sexual Contract*:

> *Capacities or labour power cannot be used without the worker using his will, his understanding and experience, to put them into effect. The use of labour power requires the presence of its "owner," and it remains as mere potential until he acts in the manner necessary to put it into use, or agrees or is compelled so to act; that is, the worker must labour. To contract for the use of labour power is a waste of resources unless it can be used in the way in which the new owner requires. The fiction "labour power" cannot be used; what is required is that the worker labours as demanded. The employment contract must, therefore, create a relationship of command and obedience between employer and worker.... In short, the contract in which the worker allegedly sells his labour power is a contract in which, since he cannot be separated from his capacities, he sells command over the use of his body and himself. To obtain the right to the use of another is to be a (civil) master.(1)*

Terms like "master" and "slave" are not often used when describing the employment contract within capitalist market relations; however, this does not mean that such terms don't apply. By avoiding such terms and instead insisting that the employment contract is fair, equitable and based on the worker's freedom to sell his or her labour power, the system itself appears fair, equitable and free. One problem with misidentifying the true nature of the employee/employer relationship is that workers experience work as slavery at the same time that they buy into it ideologically.

addictions, while over-consumption of foods like sugar and caffeine only adds to this downward spiral. Yet in technological society, we tend to believe that we are magically blessed with endless pyramids of Princess grapefruit, cornucopias of fried chicken, and instant-coffee-under-glass--while Earth-based people exist in a constant state of malnutrition, if not starvation, and a tooth-and-claw struggle for food.

The truth of the matter is that we westerners have lost our ancestral knowledge of how to survive on the Earth. A subterranean fear of not having enough food lies at the base of our civilized psyches, expressed obliquely in personal and cultural messages whose deeper meanings we would rather overlook. Clean your plate! Think of the starving children in China! Cut down the cholesterol! Avoid Alar! Cook from the four food groups! Fast food! I scream for ice cream! In the 1950s, the grand prize of a national contest was three minutes to careen through a supermarket with an empty shopping cart and grab as much food as possible, and the image on our television screens of housewives frantically stuffing turkeys into their wire carts made us all feel exhilarated--and nervous. Anxiety about food is also expressed in epidemic eating disorders like anorexia, bulimia, overeating, and overdieting.



Since Columbus arrived in North America, a full 75 percent of the wildwood ecosystem has been wiped out. Originally, 95 percent of western and central Europe was covered with lush forest land, from the Black Forest to the Italian Alps; that amount is now 20 percent. Ten thousand years ago, China was 70 percent forest; today it is 5 percent.(18) The age-old sense that nature provides has rightfully been lost, and we are rightfully scared to death about our next meal. As Marshall Sahlins reports in his book Stone Age Economics, "One-third to one-half of humanity are said to go hungry every night. Some twenty million [are] in the U.S. alone. . . . This is the era of unprecedented hunger. Now, in the time of greatest technical power, is starvation an institution."(19) Indeed, in the wake of the technology-fueled Green Revolution of the 1970s, we have witnessed increasing famine, starvation, the dependence of hundreds of thousands of people on airlifts and feeding camps, a decline in the nutritional quality of all food, and an overall loss of momentum in world food production.

By contrast, true nature-based people rely on a diversity of food sources, and simultaneous failure of all resources is highly unlikely. Anxiety about food is rare, and when it appears, it is usually seasonal. In his book Health and the Rise of Civilization, Mark Nathan Cohen reports that food supplies among nature-based people are usually abundant and reliable, while starvation may occur but is rare.(20) Surely there have been times of hardship and uncertainty, but nature-based people who have lived unhampered by the encroachment of civilization tend to hold the attitude that since food is available in abundance, storing it is unnecessary; nature itself stores food for people, who merely need to know how to find it. Pau d'arco. Salmonberry. Wild turkey. Mugwort. Yucca flower. Jamaica ginger. Perhaps the famed statement by an African.Dobe Bushman says it all: "Why should we plant when there are so many mongongo nuts in the world?"(21)

Then there is the issue of quality. Anthropologist Peter Farm writes that truly nature-based peoples are "among the best fed people on Earth and also among the healthiest:'(22) It goes without saying that those who live in the wilds eat organic food, uncontaminated by chemical preservatives, pesticides, and other additives. Descriptions of the diets of nature-based peoples throughout the world reveal that they uniformly match the standards of the National Research Council of America for consumption of vitamins, minerals, and protein,(23) while erosion of the quality of the nature-based

diet consistently occurs when outsiders invade, bring in technological agriculture, cattle, or mining, and set up trade networks and outposts of civilization.

Also, because of their healthy diets, relaxed life-styles, and clean environs, nature-based people do not fall prey to such modern diseases as cancer, coronary heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. High cholesterol is unknown. Studies of isolated peoples in South America reveal that infectious diseases like influenza, mumps, polio, and smallpox occur but cannot be transmitted in epidemic proportion by small, self-contained groups. Blood pressure is commonly low; and such intestinal disorders as appendicitis, diverticulosis, and bowel cancers are rare--until such groups are introduced to civilized diets.(24) According to the nineteenth-century German physician Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathic medicine, the basic "miasms" or energetic patterns of weakness that underlie and prepare the way for modern diseases did not even exist in human history until the transition out of nature-based culture.(25)

Contraceptive on Your Hip

A sixth practice common to nature-based cultures is a relatively stable population. In today's world the human population is spinning out of control, and along with this explosion of humanity, the capacity of our biosphere to sustain life is being stressed to the breaking point. In 1992 the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the British Royal Society issued their first joint report, warning: "If current predictions of population growth prove accurate and patterns of human activity on the planet remain unchanged, science and technology may not be able to prevent either irreversible degradation of the environment or continued poverty for much of the world."(26)

As the current global population approaches 6 billion, people everywhere around the world are starving--in "undeveloped" areas like Bangladesh and Nicaragua, in "developing" nations like India and China, in industrial countries like the republics of the former Soviet Union, and on the streets of overdeveloped cities like New York and Los Angeles. Projections from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities estimate that the total human population will grow, before levelling off, to an unfathomable 16 billion.(27)

According to physicist Vandana Shiva of India, rapid population growth is typical not of secure, sustainable societies but of "displacement, dispossession, alienation of people from their survival base, and inequality of women."(28) [T]he transition from nomadic foraging to agricultural civilizations constitutes the original "displacement, dispossession, alienation of people from their survival base, and inequality of women." Some ten thousand years ago, when all human societies on the Earth were nature-based, global population was stabilized at 5 million people.(29) According to archaeologist Fekri Hassan, yearly population growth in those times ranged from .01 to .005 percent,(30) while today's world population is exploding with an additional 95 million each year.(31)

The ability to maintain numerical stability exists in human history only in nature-based cultures. Methods of family planning built into hunter-gatherer life worked successfully for a million years, allowing the human population to grow gradually but not to overrun its capacity to live sustainably. This success is attributable to fertility-control factors that evolved when people lived as nomadic hunter-gatherers--and that disintegrated when civilization emerged, or for many people around the world, was introduced by force.

One of these factors is long-term breast-feeding.(32) As I have mentioned, foraging women carry their children on gathering treks, into rivers, through forests, sitting around the fire, and they feed them on demand for the first three or four years of their young lives. This practice offers yet another facet of the elliptical whole of the natural world: it not only provides the nurturance necessary for the child's physical and psychological development, but can trigger the secretion of a pituitary hormone that suppresses the mother's menstrual cycle. As Lee puts it, the child's frequent stimulation of the breast is "rather like carrying your contraceptive on your hip."(33)

Other contributing factors to low birthrates among nature-based women include a noticeably late onset of menstruation, as well as extended periods when the blood cycle simply disappears.(34)

Does Work Really Work?

L. Susan Brown
Taken from *Kick It Over* 35
PO Box 5811, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1P2

One of the first questions people often ask when they are introduced to one another in our society is "what do you do?" This is more than just polite small talk -- it is an indication of the immense importance work has for us. Work gives us a place in the world, it is our identity, it defines us, and, ultimately, it confines us. Witness the psychic dislocation when we lose our jobs, when we are fired, laid off, forced to retire, or when we fail to get the job we applied for in the first place. An unemployed person is defined not in positive but in negative terms: to be unemployed is to lack work. To lack work is to be socially and economically marginalized. To answer "nothing" to the question "what do you do?" is emotionally difficult and socially unacceptable. Most unemployed people would rather answer such a question with vague replies like "I'm between contracts" or "I have a few resumes out and the prospects look promising" than admit outright that they do not work. For to not work in our society is to lack social significance -- it is to be a nothing, because nothing is what you do.

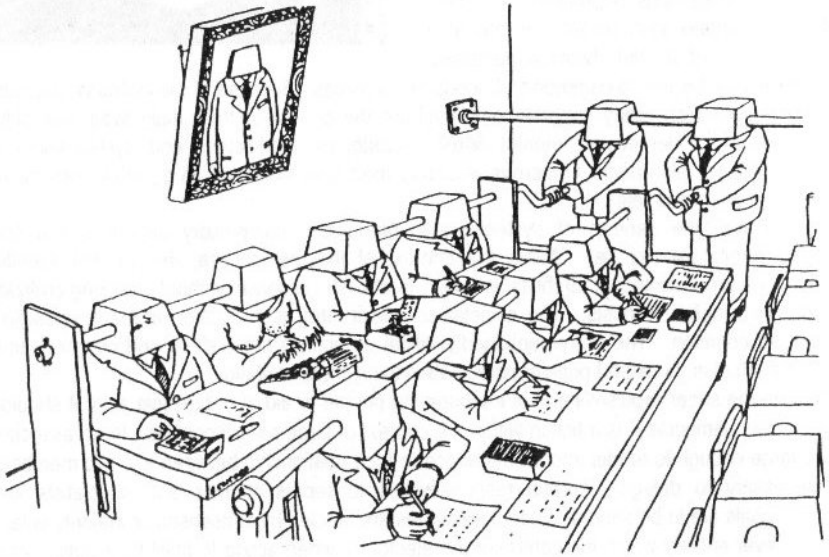
Those who *do* work (and they are becoming less numerous as our economies slowly disintegrate) are something - they are teachers, nurses, doctors, factory workers, machinists, dental assistants, coaches, librarians, secretaries, bus drivers and so on. They have identities defined by what they do. They are considered normal productive members of our society. Legally their work is considered to be subject to an employment contract, which if not explicitly laid out at the beginning of employment is implicitly understood to be part of the relationship between employee and employer. The employment contract is based on the idea that it is possible for a fair exchange to occur between an employee who trades her/his skills and labour for wages supplied by the employer. Such an idea presupposes that a person's skills and labour are not inseparable from them, but are rather separate attributes that can be treated like property to be bought and sold. The employment contract assumes that a machinist or an exotic dancer, for instance, have the capacity to separate out from themselves the particular elements that are required by the employer and are then able to enter into an agreement with the employer to exchange only those attributes for money. The machinist is able to sell technical skills while the exotic dancer is able to sell sexual appeal, and, according to the employment contract, they both do so without selling themselves as people. Political scientists and economists refer to such attributes as "property in the person," and speak about a person's ability to contract out labour power in the form of property in the person.

In our society, then, work is defined as the act by which an employee contracts out her or his labour power as property in the person to an employer for fair monetary compensation. This way of describing work, of understanding it as a fair exchange between two equals, hides the real relationship between employer and employee: that of domination and subordination. For if the truth behind the employment contract were widely known, workers in our society would refuse to work, because they would see that it is impossible for human individuals to truly separate out labour power from themselves. "property in the person" doesn't really exist as something that an individual can simply sell as a separate thing. Machinists cannot just detach from themselves the specific skills needed by an employer; those skills are part of an organic whole that cannot be disengaged from the entire person, similarly, sex appeal is an intrinsic part of exotic dancers, and it is incomprehensible how such a constitutive, intangible characteristic could be severed from the dancers themselves. A

stratified division of labor where no given individual can focus upon or even view the actions of the rest. Additionally, elected delegates receive more time and resources to prepare and present their views and arguments than the average person, hence providing them with a greater advantage of being able to get their way by means of propagandistic manipulation and deception. Even if the group at large determines all policies and procedures (which is itself impossible when specialized knowledge is required), and delegates are only assigned the duties of enforcing them, they will still act on their own accord when they disagree with the rules and are confident that they can escape punishment for ignoring them. Democracy is necessarily representative, not direct, when practiced on a large scale, and hence will never be significantly different from the current order.

Because mass organizations require increased production to maintain their existence, let alone allow for further growth, they are necessarily imperialistic in their scope, destroying or enslaving all life that lies in their path. If cities aren't self-sufficient in their own food production, they will seize the surrounding area for agricultural and industrial use, rendering it inhospitable to both non-human ecosystems and self-sufficient human communities. This area will expand in relation to any increase in population or specialization of labor that the city experiences. One could argue that industrial production could be maintained and yet scaled down considerably, hence leaving ecosystems and non-industrial peoples *some* room to co-exist. Firstly, this proposal invites the question of why industrial civilization should be prioritized over other modes of existence. Why should civilization be allotted the privilege of dictating to non-participants exactly how much room they are entitled to? Secondly, there are no historical examples of production economies that do not expand, mainly because they *must* expand after depleting the resources available to them at any given time.

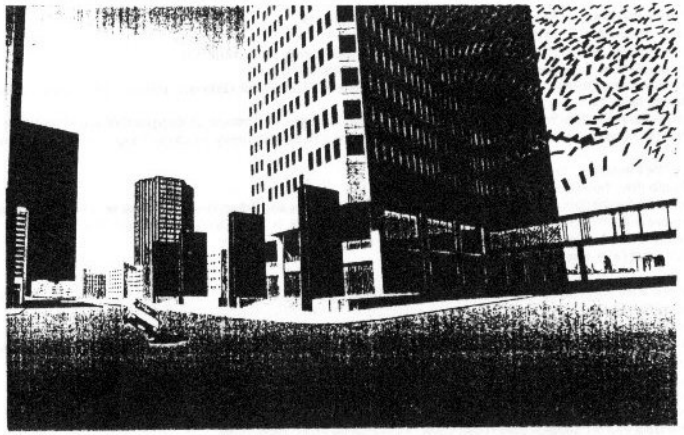
The structural complexity and hierarchy of civilization must be refused, along with the political and ecological imperialism that it propagates across the globe. Managerial institutions of social control are required for the administration of mass production and exchange, as are geographical expansion and universal conscription of labor. Life will only free itself from this imposition either by awaiting civilization's ultimate collapse or by forcefully toppling it. Only communities of self-sufficient individuals that make no request of the remaining planet to provide the resources for the monumental projects of rulers and specialists can coexist with other beings, human or not, without extending their authority upon them.



Contemporary researchers attribute these physiological conditions, in part, to the high-protein diets and lean bodies of hunter-gatherer women and, in part, to the strenuous demands of walking long distances while carrying equipment, mounds of plant food, and children--physical conditions that are reproduced among today's female athletes who also report fewer periods and irregular cycles. The upshot of all these factors is that family size is small, the pressures we typically associate with child rearing are more relaxed, and population remains low--because for every woman of reproductive age, a new child arrives but every five, six, or seven years.

Most of the Trees

A last social quality typical of nature-based life is ecological sustainability. This is a quality we want desperately to attain and yet, for all our Earth Days, eco-conferences, recycling programs, and environmental regulations, it remains elusive. As we know all too well, the situation is dire. The kinds of technologies that are needed to maintain our ever-expanding mass civilization, from nuclear and chemical to mining and electromagnetic, virtually encase the planet. Addiction to consumerism, military buildup, and industrial expansion is so rampant as to be considered normal by many people and certainly by those who identify with these developments. Yet, at the same time, scientists studying global disasters such as climate change, ozone depletion, and toxic contamination estimate that we have until the year 2000, or maybe 2010, to turn around the unecological practices that are causing global destruction.



During the 1980s when I was working to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, I had a disturbing conversation with a corporate CEO. While we were dining one summer evening in a Hakka restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown, he told me that from a business standpoint, nuclear war would not occur until multinational corporations had succeeded in commercializing China. After that accomplishment, he said, there would be no more room on Earth to expand the market economy (which must always, of course, be in a state of expansion), and so there would be no more viable reason for human beings to stay alive. His opinion reflects the going ethos of both an expansionist technological system and an addicted psyche: use up what resources are here now; when you run out, do whatever you must to get more--with no regard for the consequences.

By contrast, nature-based people neither force the Earth to produce at maximum levels nor impose wholesale realignments of nature's rhythms and physical layout. A commitment to ecological sustainability was the ground upon which our humanity came into existence, and the sustainable life is inseparably intertwined with full participation in social life, democratic decision-making, self-esteem for both women and men, a relaxed approach to daily life, good food, and a stable population. The key seems to be that we humans can successfully survive on this planet only so long as our presence

contributes to and meshes with the life of the Earth. According to Marshall Sahlins, within nature-based cultures this objective is accomplished by a gestalt of factors that are its hallmarks: "labour power is underused, technological means are not fully engaged, natural resources are left untapped . . . production is low relative to existing possibilities. The work day is short. The number of days off exceeds the number of work days. Dancing, fishing, games, sleep, and ritual seem to occupy the greater portion of one's time."(35)

Plus, nature-based people move on when existing sources reach their limit, and this limit is never the outer maximum limit of the terrain as we have come to define it. Rather than clear-cut the entire forest, kill every deer, pocket every chestnut, pull up every wild yam, and catch every salmon, nature-based people understand that to let most of the trees stand, most of the animals run free, most of the fruit drop to the ground, most of the vegetables complete their cycle, and most of the fish swim away is to honour nature's sacred wholeness. As with a Keres word that "doesn't break down into anything," to live this way is to participate in the great round of the natural world; it is to enhance the Earth's abundance and, at the same time, to ensure the sustainability, survivability, and sanity of the human community.

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civilization's inception in the "Fertile Crescent" of the near East. However, humans are still forced to live as the servants of their culture's institutions of production as a prerequisite of continued existence, and non-human life is still sacrificed and eliminated for the sake of human purposes (and at a faster rate than ever). Survival through direct means is prohibited – to occupy land, one must continuously pay rent or a mortgage, which requires the devotion of oneself to an income-earning position in society, leaving insufficient time left over for hunting or gardening (much less leisure to accompany it). Public education ensures that few people will ever even *learn* how to survive independently of the economy.

Capitalism is civilization's current dominant manifestation. The economy under capitalism is largely governed by state-chartered organizations called corporations, which enjoy the same legal status as individuals, hence shielding and limiting the liability of its participants. Corporations exist for the purpose of profiting shareholders – those employed by corporations are legally required to pursue profit above all other possible concerns (e.g., ecological sustainability, worker safety, community health, etc.), and can be fired, sued, or prosecuted if they do otherwise. Capitalism leaves very little space for non-human life to flourish in a non-servile fashion (that is, in wild ecosystems, rather than stock yards, battery cages or tree farms), and almost no place for humans who do not wish to waste their lives toiling for the needless and endless production of commodities. Most people spend the majority of each conscious day engaged in meaningless, monotonous, regimented, and often physically and mentally injurious labor to pay their bills, either because of absolute financial necessity, social pressure, or addiction to commodified goods and services. Because of the dullness, alienation, and disempowerment so many experience throughout the course of their daily lives, our culture exhibits high rates of depression, mental illness, suicide, drug addiction, and dysfunctional and abusive relationships, along with numerous vicarious modes of existence (e.g., television, movies, pornography, video games, etc).

Civilization was the genesis of systemic authoritarianism, compulsory servitude and social isolation, not capitalism per se. Within the context of this perspective, the various socialists, communists, and pro-industrial "anarchists" who aim to abolish capitalism without attacking civilization as a whole are simply reformists. The societal complexity that is civilization is made possible by institutionalized coercion. The aforementioned political groups do not wish to end coercion, but to democratize it – that is, to extend popular participation to its implementation.

Aside from the sheer repulsiveness of encouraging people to aid in oppressive acts, it should be noted that "direct democracy" is a fiction within the context of large-scale societies. In an association of a scope large enough to render impossible a face-to-face relationship between any two members, it will be necessary to delegate certain responsibilities to representatives and specialists if the association's goals are to be served. Even if delegates are elected by consensus or majority vote, the elected are never entirely within the control of the electorate when acting to fulfill their duties, unless the organization is sufficiently small. Delegated leaders or specialists cannot be held accountable to mandates, nor be recalled for irresponsible or coercive behavior, unless held subject to constant supervision by a broad cross-section of the group – an impossibility in a society based upon a highly

Against Mass Society

by chrswlsn@yahoo.com

Many people desire an existence free of coercive authority, where all are at liberty to shape their own lives as they choose for the sake of their own personal needs, values, and desires. For such freedom to be possible, no individual person can extend their sphere of control upon the lives of others without their choosing. Many who challenge the status quo for being oppressive – including progressives, socialists, communists, and many who call themselves "anarchists" – strive toward their conception of a free society by attempting to merely reform the most powerful and coercive institutions of today, or to replace them with "directly democratic" governments, community controlled municipalities, worker-owned industrial federations, and so forth. Those who wish to live freely on their own accord have reason to feel threatened by all large-scale organizations, for they are necessarily imperialistic and hierarchical, even if designed to be or described as "democratic" (as if the subordination of the individual to the majority were desirable in the first place).

Humans are naturally sociable – few wish to live alone as hermits (although the freedom to live as such should not be denied). Yet humans are also *selectively* sociable – they do not get along with everybody, and it is an oppression to expect them to. Naturally, people form relationships with others they identify with for companionship and mutual support. Such has been the case throughout human history. Only in recent history have people entered into mass organizations composed of members who don't necessarily know or like each other. Such organizations have not formed because of their necessity for survival. For over 99% of human history, people enjoyed face-to-face associations within extended family arrangements, and some cultures continue to do so. Those unable relate well to their band or tribe are free to seek company elsewhere or to live alone. This manner of association works well – the members of small-scale self-sufficient societies typically spend 2-4 hours a day engaged in subsistence activities. Although they occasionally go hungry, they typically eat in abundance, and enjoy superior health and far more extensive leisure time compared to those who live in large-scale societies. The small-scale indigenous cultures that are still intact today generally prefer their traditional way of life, and many are currently engaging in impressive political resistance against corporations and governments who wish to forcibly assimilate them so that their land and labor may be exploited. People rarely enter mass organizations without being coerced, as they rob people of their autonomy and independence.

The rise of civilization was based upon compulsory mass production. When certain societies began to value agricultural productivity above all else, they forcibly subjected all forms of life within reach of their cities to that purpose. Communities of people who wished to hunt, fish, forage, or garden, on the land for subsistence purposes would be mercilessly slaughtered or enslaved, and the ecosystems they inhabited would be converted to farmland to feed the cities. Only those engaged in the full-time facilitation of crop and animal production would be allowed to live in the nearby countryside. The cities would be inhabited by specialists – public officials, merchants, engineers, military personnel, slaves, etc – and by prisoners. The project of feeding large numbers of people not directly engaged in food production intensifies the duties of those who are, while creating the need for more land, both for agriculture and newer industries. Societal organization has become more complex, technologically advanced, and broader in its scope throughout the centuries since

The following article is an editorial reprinted from the eco-punk zine *Slug and Lettuce*, available from POB 26632, Richmond, VA 23261-6632.

Sometimes it's really fucking hard to be an anarchist, much less an anarchist punk. After those first few years of youthful naiveté wear off and one starts pushing their 20s, then their 30s, reality starts setting in like so many layers of sediment through an old riverbed.

Back in the late 1980s, my crew and I though we were gonna take on the whole world. We thought that a few SUBHUMANS songs and a marginal subculture on the fat rolls of Northern society were going to usher in global revolution. But when that failed to happen, we retreated from our desire for full victory to single issues that were somewhat more possible than a global revolution. We went from struggling against all oppression to protesting circuses and in the name of political prisoners or ill-fated social movements in the third world. And as those causes panned out little more than a few misdemeanor charges, we retreated further into the protective arms of specific single issues like neighborhood zoning commissions, defending specific national forests or publishing manifestos against genetically modified organisms. From this narrow focus, it wasn't hard to see ourselves burning out in the next few years and assuming the same existence's as the old school Earth Firstlers or anti-nuke people or Latin American solidarity movement folks: ideologically retired with nothing but visions of what could have been and fabricated memories from the days that never were to keep us company. After all, anyone would get tired of being wrong and defeated so often.

Last winter, as I looked across the Cascade Crest at the doomed contours of Pelican Butte (soon to be $60 million ski area for the rich), my heart hung heavy as yet another layer of defeat settled across my once glorious politics. As anarchists, we have nothing to offer the world in terms of sustainable alternatives to the current global holocaust. We have no concrete plan to institute any of our supposed ideals (provided we could even come to consensus as to what those are) and no substantial historical examples that illustrate our politics to be anything but rhetoric. We have no political ties whatsoever with the masses of the world, even in our own neighborhoods and nowhere near enough power to be even a tertiary threat to global power. We are just another group of privileged honkeys spouting off at the hip with feel good words and ideological speculation.

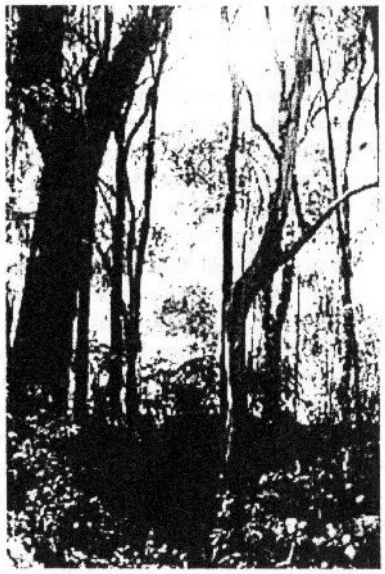
With a benign sense of resignation and a heartsick gut, I fled the snows of the Cascadian winter and headed of to warmer climates. I had no idea I was to experience things that would highlight the validity of my politics like so many thousands of flaming churches.

A heavy pre-dawn mist waited in from the Andes, swirling its way through the stagnant air, pausing only slightly as it clung desperately to the overgrown jungle along the banks of the Rio Napo. A pair of bats the size of pit bulls bickered back and forth overhead as our canoe slid silently through the muddy brown water. After too many days dodging buses and riot cops in Quito, it was quite a *descanso* to sit idly by with my partner Mamy watching kilometer after kilometer of wild jungle pass as we plummeted downhill with the river on its tireless journey Eastward. Within a matter of days, the Rio Napo would gouge its way through the artificial boundaries of Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil before conjugating with the glorious Amazon and washing into the saline bliss of the Atlantic ocean. But for now, the river was gracefully carrying us to a small Quiche Indian village 30 miles downstream like a giant liquid freight train.

Mamy and I, both being tree-hugging eco-nerds, were super excited about seeing the virgin rainforest on the Southern side of the Equator. However, unlike the pale skinned tourists with towering backpacks and fancy shoes, things for us weren't as simple as plopping down $200 for a week long jungle adventure. In fact, after pooling the entire contents of our pockets together, we had $3 between us, not anywhere near enough to get us one of the jungle retreat yoga yuppie lodges. In fact, we didn't even have enough between us to guarantee passage out of the dreary little town. However, the best experiences traveling always come about through unexpected twists and good old-fashioned improvisation. Luckily, the *duena* ouf our dingy *pension* happened to have a brother, Chuato, who knew some native guide just downstream and who just happened to drive a canoe. A small child was

sent to wake Chuato out of his drunken slumber in a hammock nearby and after a few minutes of haggling in broken Spanish, a "tour" was arranged.

After 45 minutes of dodging rapids and keeping a watchful eye out for schools of piranha that could supposedly devour a whole cow in less than 30 seconds, we spun a sharp turn around a rock riffle and up a small tributary. The tributary narrowed and we abandoned the boat for a brief trek through knee-deep mud. But we hadn't come 4000 miles to be denied a chance to see jungle just because we were short a bit of cash.



Luck was with us and without incident we passed through a dense stand of twisted *metapalo* trees and into a small clearing lined with thatch huts. Chuato vanished for half an hour to track down our guide, leaving Mamy and I to make small talk with a group of men lounging outside the largest of the huts. No sooner had I struck a conversation with a half naked, unemployed logger when our canoista slogged through the muddy trail, a stout man of maybe 5'2" following a few yards behind, Chuato went to bum a cigarette from one of the lounging men as the stout man stepped forward. His bare torso rippled with muscles and his dark oaken skin was speckled with slivers of plants and dirt. A machete dangled flirtingly around his hip. I bet none of those yuppies' tour guides had got done cutting banana stalks at the start of the tour. "You wanna see some jungle?" he asked politely in broken Spanish.

We nodded. "My name is Franklin and I live in a village just North of here. The timber companies cut most of the huge trees and my people moved out here from where Puerto Misahualli now is 70 years ago, so if it's virgin forest you want to see, I can't really help you. But what we have is still very much alive and keeps us alive".

The gold plated smile stretching across his weathered face was reassuring enough for us to follow him through an orchard of cocoa trees and into *selva amazonica*. Although the area had been heavily logged in the 1970's and 1980's, the forest had reclaimed every lost foot. As soon as the cultivated rows of cacao and platano faded to our rear, the forest engulfed us in a snarled canopy of trees, vines and epiphytes so dense that they seemed to grow later by several hours. Our borrowed rubber boots groaned agonizingly with every step through 6" deep mud, while Franklin identified the plants and animals that had sustained his people over the past five millennia. "If you crush this leaf over here and drop it in water, the fish fall asleep and float to the surface... Or this type of termite. If you stick your hand in their nest and crush the bodies against your skin, it keeps the bugs away... Or when a woman is having difficulty bleeding from illness or unwanted pregnancy, she sends her husband out to harvest this plant which makes her bleed... Or these ants here are good to eat of you're tired or sore (the 1/2" long ants tasted like sweet lemons and crawled around in my mouth for a good 15 minutes)... Or these fronds here are good for building houses or cooking... Or these roots are a special dessert... Or this spider over here keeps us from dying of fever... Or these over here...".

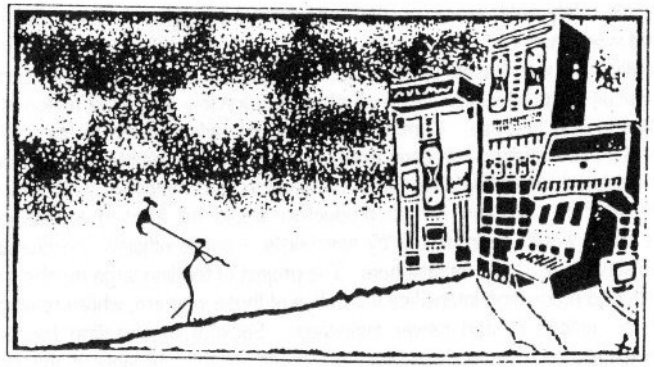
Franklin literally knew the name, the uses and the stories behind every single plant we passed. When I asked him how he knew so much about so many plants, he turned to me and said, "I should know these plants. They are my neighbors, my family. Without them, neither my people nor I would be here. I know *hermana* spider as well as I know my own children".

We passed through stands of massive *ceibas*, trees with snarled trunks the size of whole suburban tract homes. Past ant colonies three stories high, filled with busy little ants' who could kill a grown man with one bite. Past mobile strangler figs and small streams full of brilliant silver fish. Under

unpredictability of the materials they act upon – atomic and sub-atomic particles, light waves, genes and chromosomes, etc. – to guarantee that no single human being can actually understand completely how they work. This adds a technological aspect to the already existing economic precariousness that most of us suffer from. However, this threat of technological disaster beyond any one's control also serves power in controlling the exploited – the fear of more Chernobyls, genetically engineered monsters or escaped laboratory-made diseases and the like move people to accept the rule of so-called experts who have proven their own limits over and over again. Furthermore, the state – that is responsible for every one of these technological developments through its military – is able to present itself as a check against rampant corporate "abuse" of this technology. So this monstrous, lumbering, uncontrollable juggernaut serves the exploiters very well in maintaining their control over the rest of the population. And what need have they to worry about the possible disasters when their wealth and power has most certainly provided them with contingency plans for their own protection?

Thus, the new technology and the new conditions of exclusion and precariousness it imposes on the exploited undermine the old dream of expropriation of the means of production. This technology – controlling and out of control – cannot serve any truly human purpose and has no place in the development of a world of individuals free to create their lives as they desire. So the illusory utopias of the syndicalists and marxists are of no use to us now. But were they ever? The new technological developments specifically center around control, but all industrial development has taken the necessity of controlling the exploited into account. The factory was created in order to bring producers under one roof to better regulate their activities; the production line mechanized this regulation; every new technological advance in the workings of the factory brought the time and motions of the worker further under control. Thus, the idea that workers could liberate themselves by taking over the means of production has always been a delusion. It was an understandable delusion when technological processes had the manufacture of goods as their primary aim. Now that their primary aim is so clearly social control, the nature of our real struggle should be clear: the destruction of all systems of social control – thus of the state, capital *and their technological system*, the end of our proletarianized condition and the creation of ourselves as free individuals capable of determining how we will live ourselves. Against this technology our best weapon is that which the exploited have always used since the beginning of the industrial era: sabotage.

"Willful Disobedience" is available for $2 from Venomous Butterfly Publications, 41 Sutter St, Suite 1661, San Francisco, CA 94104.



Technology and Class Struggle

From *Willful Disobedience*

The developments in technology over the past sixty years – the nuclear industry, cybernetics and related information techniques, biotechnology and genetic engineering – have produced fundamental changes in the social terrain. The methods of exploitation and domination have changed, and for this reason old ideas about the nature of class and class struggle are not adequate for understanding the present situation. The workerism of the marxists and syndicalists can no longer even be imagined to offer anything useful in developing a revolutionary practice. But simply rejecting the concept of class is not a useful response to this situation either, because in so doing one loses an essential tool for understanding the present reality and how to attack it.

Exploitation not only continues, but has intensified sharply in the wake of the new technology. Cybernetics has permitted the decentralization of production, spreading small units of production across the social terrain. Automation has drastically reduced the number of production workers necessary for any particular manufacturing process. Cybernetics further creates methods for making money without producing anything real, thus allowing capital to expand itself without the expense of labor.

Furthermore, the new technology demands a specialized knowledge that is not available for most people. This knowledge has come to be the real wealth of the ruling class in the present era. Under the old industrial system, one could look at class struggle as the struggle between workers and owners over the means of production. This no longer makes sense. As the new technology advances, the exploited find themselves driven into increasingly precarious positions. The old life-long skilled factory position has been replaced by day labor, service sector jobs, temporary work, unemployment, the black market, illegality, homelessness and prison. This precariousness guarantees that the wall created by the new technology between the exploiters and the exploited remains unbreachable.

But the nature of the technology itself places it beyond the reach of the exploited. Earlier industrial development had as its primary focus the invention of techniques for the mass manufacturing of standardized goods at low cost for high profit. These new technological developments are not so much aimed at the manufacturing of goods as at the development of means for increasingly thorough and widespread social control and for freeing profit from production. The nuclear industry requires not only specialized knowledge, but also high levels of security that place its development squarely under the control of the state and lead into to a military structuring in keeping with its extreme usefulness to the military. Cybernetic technology's ability to process, record, gather and send information nearly instantaneously serves the needs of the state to document and monitor its subjects as wells as its need to reduce the real knowledge of those it rules to bits of information – data – hoping, thus, to reduce the real capabilities for understanding of the exploited. Biotechnology gives the state and capital control over the most fundamental processes of life itself – allowing them to decide what sort of plants, animals and – in time – even human beings can exist.

Because these technologies require specialized knowledge and are developed for the purpose of increasing the control of the masters over the rest of humanity even in our daily lives, the exploited class can now best be understood as those *excluded* from this specialized knowledge and thus from *real* participation in the functioning of power. The master class is, thus, made up of those *included* in participation in the function of power and the real use of the specialized technological knowledge. Of course these are processes in course, and the borderlines between the included and excluded can, in some cases, be elusive as increasing numbers of people are proletarianized – losing whatever decision-making power over their own conditions of existence they may have had.

It is important to point out that although these new technologies are intended to give the masters control over the excluded and over the material wealth of the earth, they are themselves beyond any human being's control. Their vastness and the specialization they require combine with the whole

ecosystems who survive without ever touching the ground, supported by the tireless generosity of their woody stemmed neighbors. Past natural plots of yucca and stunning flowers that make Mapplethorpe shit himself. Past plants bearing sweet fruits and powerful medicine and lethal poisons. It was Eden's grocery store, pharmacy and armory all wrapped up in one giant respiring body.

But one thing struck me as odd. As much as Franklin had told us about the plants and animals of the forest, he hadn't mentioned a thing about himself or his village. We paused for a moment while Mamy struggled to dislodge her estranged rubber boot from a puddle of quicksand. "So Franklin, all these plants and things are cool, but how is life for you, for your people?".

He gave me a funny look. "You're the first white person that has ever asked me that. Usually all people want to see are the trees and plants. It's like they want roads bring in people who destroy our land and hurt our people. When the roads come, we must move or die. Eventually we will have to leave here and head further East. But for now, things are good. We have our small fields of banana, cacao, yucca, and a little bit of corn. And then we have the jungle. These provide all of our food except for our rice which we buy", he smiled. "With the money we make taking gringos on nature tours".

The winter of 2000 was a hard one for most of Ecuador. Everywhere one ventured, the people wore frowns of anxiety. The neo-liberal model, coupled with a corrupt bureaucracy and years of industrial exploitation had taken their toll on the *Ecuatorianos* . The economy was in shambles and for the landless masses, every meal might very well may be their last. It was the exact same conditions which had inspired so many dozens of revolutions in the region over the years. Perhaps this would be one of those years. I asked Franklin what he thought of the dolarization process by which the Ecuatorian *sucre* was being discarded in lieu of the omnipotent U.S. dollar. He laughed, "It doesn't matter what the money looks like. As long as we have the ants and fish and jungle and a little bit of cacao, we can survive anything. The people in the cities fear the future greatly, but for us, it isn't a big deal... As long as they leave us alone".

"You must have to work a lot to live off the land like this". I queried.

"Oh yea", he said with a sincere look. Some days we have to work FOUR hours a day. But usually we work two or three".

My jaw dropped and I shook my head in disbelief. He shot my question back at me with a laugh. "How much do you work?".

"Ten or twelve hours a day".

He chuckled a deep belly laugh. "For what? What do you gringos need that makes you work so much of your life away?".

I tried to explain taxes and mortgages and the temporal costs of living in the most prosperous nation in the world, but he kept shaking his head and muttering *locos* under his breath.

Subconsciously trying to defend my ridiculous work habits, I asked him another question. "Well if you only work three hours a day, what do you do with the rest of your time?".

A look of seriousness entered his eyes. "We rest. And talk with our neighbors. And teach our children". He looked around to make sure Mamy wasn't listening and grinned a huge grin. "And we make love a lot".

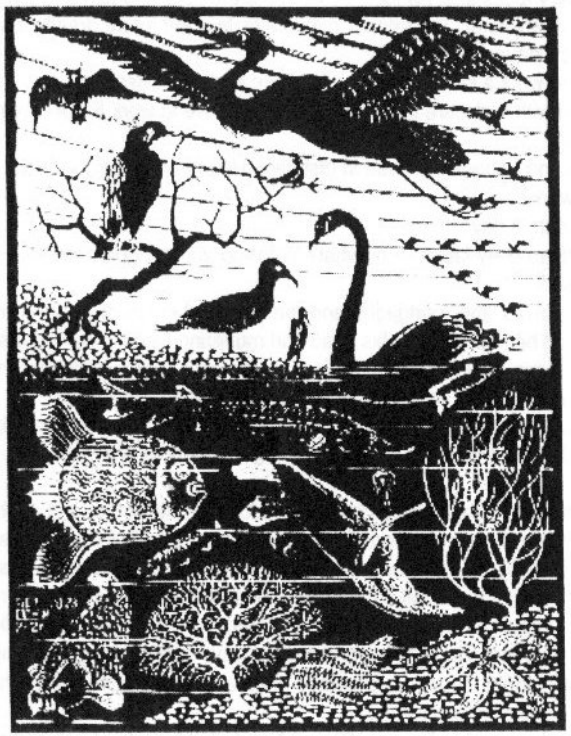
As the sun plummeted behind the protective shadows of the Andes and we headed back upriver with a hung-over Chuato, my mind raced. We had just taken a walk through an anarchist wet-dream. A self sufficient and rabidly independent culture that had survived outside the capitalist paradigm for thousands of years. A culture without cops or militaries that was apparently more or less egalitarian (at least as much as any anarchist scene I've ever seen). A culture that exemplified mutual aid and a symbiotic respect for Nature. The first living footnote I have ever seen of the things John Zerzan and Claude Levi Strauss wrote about. A paradise that at once inspired the shit out of me while simultaneously making me jealous as hell.

Fuck the Steelworkers and tedious coalitions of asshole Marxists. Fuck getting old and giving up. Fuck the upper class liberal ass kissers in the Direct Action Network. What I experienced in the

jungles of the Amazon was a living case that we ARE right and that we are right without selling the soul of our convictions to whatever group is in style at the moment. Living self sufficiently without armies and pigs telling us what to do and killing our friends isn't some ideological pipedream, but a day to day reality for thousands of people who live outside the capitalist model of urban oppression. There are places on Earth where anarchist ideals are practiced everyday that can and should stand as gleaming examples of what is possible in our own country, in our own lives.

It is up to us here, in the most privileged (and therefore possible) nations on Earth, to get to work against progress and get back to the roots of anarchism; self-reliance, autonomy and independence. It is up to us to derail the plans of global capital not by hoping to subvert the system through impotent street demos and bad three word chants, but by reclaiming the land and resources requisite for freedom. It is up to us to exchange our rhetoric for real tools and get to work and get to work reclaiming our freedom and the integrity of Nature. We are right and with the right amount of organization and perseverance there is nothing we can't accomplish. !**Hasta la final!**

--mike antipathy
PO box 11703, Eugene, Oregon 97440
antipathy@altavista.com



So the state of Alaska kept sending the papers reminding us what to do [to incorporate] but we just ignored it. After a while they quit sending them and told us [the corporation] had been dissolved.

CW: *The decision about the Arctic Refuge rests with Congress. Have you lobbied Congress?*

SJ: Yes many times we've gone to Washington DC and talk to various Congressional people to educate them about why we're saying no to this. It's human rights vs. oil. We've been in the Arctic, we're going to stay and we're not going away. And we are the people, we are caribou people, and nobody has that right to take that away from us.

Frank Murkowski, the Senator for Alaska, came to Arctic Village and said, 'I see you guys are poor here. I see you guys need jobs. If you guys agree to go with oil development, we're going to make sure that you are the manager of the caribou.' At that time we let the elders talk, and leaders and young people and we fixed some traditional food -- caribou -- but he said he didn't have time (to eat) -- he was very disrespectful of our hospitality. When he said that we needed jobs, we said, **'We already have a job, we have always taken care of this part of the world and that's our job. We always took care of the caribou and in return they took care of us, so we are the manager of the caribou already and that's not a new responsibility.'**

'We're not poor, we know where we came from and we still have clean water, clean air we still live a healthy life and the land is still healthy. There's no price for what we have. So we're not poor, we're richer in our hearts for who we are. That's being rich in a different form.'

CW: *Do you think you'll be successful in keeping the oil companies out of the Arctic Refuge?*

SJ: We've been successful [so far] because of people's power. We believe we can win. We're not going to compromise because this is the right thing to do. We want small-scale development [outside of the Refuge] for our future generations instead. That way everybody benefits.

From: *http://www.corpwatch.org/*

their young. It's also a fish spawn for Arctic Ocean and a nesting ground for birds and ducks that fly up there from all over the world so it's really a special place for many form of life and the plants that grow there -- it's a healthy tundra -- it's a place for nursing.

CW: *Do you think they will abandon the area if there's drilling?*

SJ: What we say is any technology is not safe for a birthplace. It's the time for the mother and child while they're nursing. It's a special timing for these animals to be safe and comfortable.

CW: *What is the connection between opening up the Arctic Refuge to drilling and climate change? A local struggle in a remote village, what does that have to do with climate change?*

SJ: In our area, global warming is real and climate change is real. We see that, we feel that, and we know it because we are so close to the earth because we survive by subsistence living. We know we're not the ones that produce and cause this global warming, we know it's from industrial areas in other parts of the world. We're telling the [people of the] world that if they don't slow down, if they don't change their way of thinking, if they don't change way of doing things, it's going to get to them.

CW: *Is the tundra actually beginning to melt?*

SJ: Yes. Tundra is wetland. The permanent frost is thawing out, for example, in a strip of land between two bodies of water one lake runs into another, and the lake runs into the river and on and on. That's how we're losing a lot of lakes. We're losing a lot of fish habitats, their spawning grounds and many other animal habitats.

CW: *The presence of oil companies in 1988 forced the Gwich'in Nation to organize. You're part of the Gwich'in Steering Committee -- can you talk about your fight against the oil companies?*

SJ: The Gwich'in Steering Committee was formed back in 1988 by the whole Gwich'in Nation. They chose four members from Canada and four from U.S., and they formed Gwich'in Steering Committee to protect the caribou and Gwich'in way of life. We formed a nonprofit organization to campaign and educate the world about why we say no to development. We operate on a very small budget and we struggle to get the message out.

CW: *I recently heard a public radio discussion that said the majority of people in Alaska, including some Native Alaskans, support opening up the Arctic Refuge to oil exploration because of the economic benefits and the Gwich'in are among the minority that oppose it. Is that true?*

SJ: No. Alaska's got 200 (Native) villages and each and every village is like Arctic Village. They subsist from hunting, fishing, gathering, trapping food, and they respect the traditional way of life and traditional food.

Back in 1970 when the Alaska Land Claim Settlement Act passed, they put Native Alaskans into 12 different incorporated entities. They made Alaskan Natives stockholders of those corporations -- they don't have direct land ownership. That took them away from who they are, how they related to the land, and how they use it. They were put into a Western business-type entity.

They had to make profits to stay incorporated in the State of Alaska. Some of these corporations are doing very well and there are some short-term benefits. They've made some profit, so they want more. And they've made agreements with oil companies. It's not really these traditional people who make decisions in those villages – it's the corporation's board of directors. They work very hard with the oil companies and have learned their ways of speaking and the ways of the corporations. They work hard to convince the traditional people to be for development.

CW: *The Gwich'in are not incorporated?*

SJ: There are only two Gwich'in villages that are not incorporated, Venetie and Arctic Village. The rest are under the Alaska Native Land Claim Settlement Act. In Arctic Village we didn't go with the Land Claim Settlement Act because we had another choice, Indian Reorganization Act. When Land Claim Settlement Act passed, the village was put into a corporation. Each village got $100,000 so they could incorporate. We refused to take that $100,000. Instead we took it to our people and we had a landslide vote to stay with IRA because we got that land under the Indian Reorganization Act in 1938. So the state of Alaska kept sending the papers reminding us what to do [to incorporate] but we just ignored it. After a while they quit sending them and told us [the corporation] had been dissolved.

Freedom and Civilization: A Comparative Analysis

By benaxiom@yahoo.com

Beyond narratives and histories of resistance to civilization, a brief juxtaposition and contextualization of the history and nature of civilization, as compared to pre-existing and still persisting non-civilized modes of human organization, will be the focus of this piece. Following a definition of civilization, I will give a temporal and spatial history of the nature and distribution of human societies since our dawn three million years. Next will be a discussion of the various states of sociopolitical complexity human societies have organized throughout time, moving then to an overview of the nature and critique of civilization.

While an ecological analysis is of a no less importance to a critique of civilization, and will in many cases be inextricable from the data and analysis, the intent of this piece is to contextualize the social, political, and economic egalitarianism and harmony of non-civilized societies. While many would rightly find the ecological threat of civilization sufficient justification to destroy it (with no concern for how human life was before, or within) most are more compelled to be against civilization by the striking comparative analysis of the nature and quality of primitive societies. This piece is intended more to appeal to our informed or intuitive sense of the unlivability of this system as compared to the undeniable data on the time-tested livability of primitive societies.

Humans have been on this planet for three million years – out of the trees to the grasslands of East Africa, the human species began a path of evolution that would, after many gradations of adaptation result, 100,000 years ago, in anatomically modern *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*: us. While there have been many adaptations over time including numerous hominids within the genus *australopithicene*, and several within the genus *homo* predating our arrival, taxonomically we have been the same species. We are and have been since our dawn, upright walking primates that have for 99 percent of our existence universally lived within the same ecological niche (Ponting 1991: 18). a cognitive foraging niche that has proven successful in every terrestrial ecosystem on the planet (Ponting 1991: 32). Like all other wild animals, hominids subsisted upon the food sources freely available within the environment, through foraging. Hominids gathered and hunted in a nomadic pattern. On the highest trophic level as omnivorous secondary consumers in the food chain, and without the biological and anatomical tools our primate progenitors were equipped with such agility, tails, etc., we have adapted to life in the wild with upright walking, culture, consciousness, and technology. Contrary to the popular myth interpreted from the works of such archaic social thinkers as Hobbes, life in the wild is not, "nasty, brutish, and short". Had hominids not been such a successful organism, we surely would not have survived for three million years and have been able to adapt to diverse environments with only cultural, rather than biological evolution. The success of our species as facilitated by our cognitive niche is exemplified by the manufacture of stone tools; the most

archeologically well preserved indication of technological innovation. The first stone tools appear along with human bones in the fossil record 2.4 million years ago with the *Homo Habilis*. Since then, stone tool use and innovation has been to the human race what nests are to birds: an environmental modification essential to survival. This simple technological tradition underwent many significant changes in design and elaboration but never to an extent that necessitated a technological system. Tools could be made for a day's use to be left behind and made again the next day in a new location. In addition to tools, many other implements were made, but none that could not be carried on the backs of these nomadic hominids, or made at an impermanent location to be left behind. It was this nomadic, Paleolithic way of life that continued for close to 3 million years. With minimal elaboration, this system of foraging, nomadism, and tool use proved effective for colonizing, diverse and distant environments throughout the planet by 30,000 BC (Ponting 1991: 19). This, as also mentioned, was the universal history of humanity for 99 percent of our existence. Before discussing the events within the most recent one percent, more data on the social, economic, and political nature of band societies should be outlined.

All wildlife exists and has evolved because of the availability of vast resources that can sustain diverse ecological systems and populations of flora and fauna. Human organisms, like all others, are only on the planet because it freely provides plentiful wild means of sustenance that can be extracted without complex artificial technological systems. Unlike the Christian myth of human genesis from the sky, we have evolved from the earth. We did not find ourselves in a condition of scarcity that caused constant throat-cutting warfare in the wild – rather the wild provided freely all the means of subsistence. Foraging did not continue for 3 million years because it was unstable or unpredictable; it persisted, and in some places persists today, because it is the most effective, least labor intensive, most stable, and most healthful mode of existence. Every other attempted mode has proven to destroy either or both the environment and the egalitarian anarchy of the foraging mode. Through foraging in a world of such vast free resources, humans have lived in harmony with the environment and with each other. As no resource was scarce, no resource was controlled, no property was owned, and every produced item was fully communal.

The Kung San of the Kalarhari desert spend only a few hours per day engaged in subsistence activities (Feder 2000: 306). They share everything, and have no interest in material accumulation, power, or domination; both men and women hold spiritual power, gender equality is expressedly valued (Bonvillain 1998: 21), diseases are few, leaders are non-existent, both men and women equally partake in the consensus process, all food is shared, peaceful cooperation is constant, and selfishness is highly discouraged. This society is one of the last foraging societies on the planet. Their way of life tells the story of humanity since our dawn. This is the story of egalitarian, wild, free, stateless ecological harmony. Harris states that, "the few remaining foraging societies are the closest analogues we have to the "natural" state of humanity (Harris 1989: 205-209)."

Lee and Devore contextualize the foraging mode in stating, "of the estimated 80,000,000,000...who have ever lived on earth, over 90 percent were hunter/gatherers; about 6 percent have lived by agriculture and the remaining few percent have lived in industrial societies (Lee and Devore 1968: 3). Most foragers have been assimilated, conquered, or driven into marginal

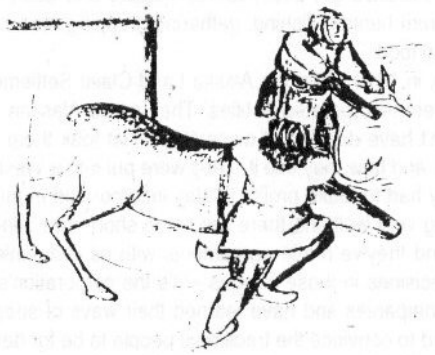
Industry Vs. Autonomy:
The Impact of Mass Production On Subsistence Cultures
The situation of the Gwich'in Dene people of the Alaskan Arctic

Sarah James, a powerful Gwich'in woman, has been a voice for indigenous rights, human rights, and environmental issues for over 10 years. Since 1988, she has been a leader in the fight to prevent oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Ms. James is a Board Member of the Gwich'in Steering Committee and the International Indian Treaty Council. While in town for the CorpWatch Climate Justice Tour, Sarah spoke with us about the impact oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge would have on her community.

CW: *What is life like in the Arctic village?*
SJ: Arctic Village is located 110 miles northeast of the Arctic Circle. It's one of the most isolated places in the United States and we're the most Northern Indian village in the U.S. We solely depend on subsistence living -- we hunt, fish and gather food and maybe 75% of our diet is wild meat. Most of it is porcupine caribou meat, moose, birds and ducks, fish from the river and the lakes, and some other small animals. And this is how we make our living day-to-day.

In Arctic Village we speak Gwich'in language and English is our second language. There is no running water and there's no road to Arctic Village. So the only to get to there is by air. By dog team it would take a long time to get to the nearest village. The Gwich'in live in 15 different villages in Northwestern Territory, Mackenzie Delta, north of Yukon Territory (in Canada) and Northeast Alaska We're spread out pretty far and wide. It's considered the Arctic desert.

CW: *If the government opens up the Arctic Refuge to drilling how will that impact the village?*
SJ: We are caribou people -- we have a spiritual connection to caribou. They are everything to us -- the food on our table, they were shelter for us before. It's our story, it's in our songs. We do a caribou skin hunt dance. We used to be nomadic people, we'd follow the food, wherever we could gather the food, we used to live a very basic life, simple life based on needs not on greed.



Without caribou our people wouldn't have survived after Western culture came to us with disease that wiped out a lot of our people. There used to be 100,000 of us now there are less than 7,000. Our people used to die only of old age, but today after the change that has come to our country, our people are dying of cancer, heart disease, drug and alcohol-related death. That's what development put upon us, if there is more development it will get worse.

CW: *How would drilling in the Arctic impact the caribou that you depend on and have this deep connection with?*
SJ: Caribou have one special place to have their calves -- it's a birthplace. Starting in April, each and every caribou goes back up to the coastal plain. Within one or two or three weeks the cows drop their calves, and it's time for nursing. It's a nursing ground not only for the caribou, but the polar bears also raise their young along the coastline, and the musk ox was reintroduced to that area and they're raising their young along the coastal plain, and up in the foothills wolves and wolverines are raising

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environments. The global system of industrial resource extraction has affected every culture. Because of this, hunter/gatherers can't be simply defined today by subsistence strategy, as many are now forced to partake in market economies to some extent. Lee and Devore provide the following: hunter-gatherers have few possessions, live in small groups, do not hold rights to communal resources, do not have food surplus, do not control resource areas on the landscape, and live in flexible populations where all can freely move with other bands (Lee and Devore 1968: 12).

12,000 years ago, the foraging population of the planet did not exceed 4 million (Ponting 1991: 24). These four million anatomically modern *homo sapiens sapiens* lived as nomadic Paleolithic foragers in every terrestrial environment on the planet. At this time, a few of the highly dispersed human foraging bands experienced what is theorized to be either environmental change concurrent with the end of the Pleistocene or self-induced population pressure that forced a radical and historically unprecedented shift in subsistence strategy. These few of the previously all true foraging bands would begin to dredge the path to plant and animal domestication, or the enslavement of flora and fauna for sole use as an artificial (as opposed to natural) subsistence base. Feder notes, "Beginning about 12,000 years ago, some human groups began not just foraging for food, but actually producing it. Various groups began tending plants and taming animals, allowing only those with characteristics desirable from a human subsistence standpoint to survive and propagate. This shift to food production occurred independently in several places in the New and Old Worlds. Each 'agricultural revolution' involved manipulation of local wild plants and/or animals. The vast majority of the foods we rely on today were domesticated by ancient people many millennia ago (Feder 2000: 300)."

Theories about exactly why certain societies experiencing natural or artificially induced scarcity made this shift are many, but the only certainty is that it is not a universal human mechanism – it is not inevitable nor part of any Marxian unilineal progression of cultural evolution. Feder states this well, "if there was a single, universal cause for the origins of plant and animal domestication, then nearly all foragers would have developed a subsistence system based on agriculture or animal husbandry when faced with the same or similar climatic or demographic conditions. That this universal adaptation did not occur is a clear indication that different cultural groups can and did respond differently to changes in the environment or in their population (Feder 2000: 307)."

Whatever the cause of the genesis of the enslavement of the wild, it occurred in two contexts. The "primary" context is that of a culturally independent process whereby the original foraging mode is gradually replaced by agriculture or pastoralism. In the "secondary" context, domestication is an external force instituted by other cultures, as was the case for Neolithic Europe and the American southwest (Feder 2000: 306). In the primary context, domestication occurred over the span of a few thousand years, independently in three main areas of the world, south-west Asia, China, and Mesoamerica (Ponting 1991: 37). In all cases, the transition from foraging to intensive agriculture was not, as it is mythically described in popular discourse, a universal "Neolithic revolution." This myth implies intent and consciousness of the process, when in fact, "no one generation could have been conscious of making any dramatic changes. Generally people seem to have accepted the process as a natural way of obtaining the resources humans needed (Ponting 1991: 74)."

Beyond a shift from wild to artificial food sources, Neolithic societies shifted from a mobile to a sedentary way of life (the problems with which will be discussed below). Another important shift that will also be addressed is the beginning of population explosions that could never before have been possible with a plentiful, though limited, natural food resource base.

Before moving on to the social, political, and economic problems caused by domestication and their exacerbation under civilization, a few important elements of this shift must be noted. For one, domestication is a break from an ecological dynamic of equilibrium that most complex organisms live within. Just as a non-human predators may overhunt prey, cause a decline in prey population and then experience proportional food source scarcity and population decline of their own while the prey population recovers, foraging band societies also live within this context. Resource depletion was offset by band societies utilizing the strategies of minimal population, usually no more than 50 people in a band (Harris: 1989: 205-209), and frequent changes of location so as to not over-tax a local environment's resources. Settled societies by contrast, cannot pack up and move every day or week – they are stationary and thus population dispersal cannot occur, nor a mitigated impact on a local environment. Whatever scarcity occurs and whatever internal problems arise, they can only expand; they cannot move away completely.

Secondly, domestication yields surplus, the kind that can never exist in a foraging society. The artificial production of food energy through either fields or animals creates a storable surplus that can, as never before, be generated to feed an increasing population that could never have been sustained by wild food sources. While more food can be produced, that is no indication it is either consistent or sustainable. Drought, soil erosion and salinization, forest clearing, and decline in biodiversity all compromise the long term yields of agriculture. Feder cites Diamond's *Agriculture: the Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race*, to explain that while, "clearly, agriculture can provide more food than most foraging systems...(Feder 2000: 343)", it is by no means a comparison to the quality of forager caloric intake. This incites the final consideration.

As the dietary diversity represented in the foraging mode declines with the intensification of monoculture crop production, so declines the health of the population. Cohen and Armelagos in their study of paleopathology associated with Neolithic societies in North, Central, and South America, the eastern Mediterranean, western Europe, the Middle East, southern Asia, and Nubia found sharp declines in nutritional health as indicated by skeletal analysis. Their data proved that pre-existing hunter/gatherers had higher health and nutrition. Furthermore, infectious disease increased as a result of the subsistence shift. Feder notes, "agriculture itself doesn't cause disease; it merely establishes the conditions conducive for disease to spread: large, dense, sedentary populations (Feder 2000: 344)."

Cohen and Armelagos also found that malnutrition was higher among Neolithic societies, that hunter gatherers lived longer than later agriculturalists in the same region, and that, "taken as a whole, these indicators fairly clearly suggest an overall decline in the quality-and probably in the length-of human life," in agricultural societies (Feder 2000: 344).

Finally, the archeological record of the Pleistocene yields only rare evidence for interpersonal violence, as would be indicated in skeletal remains by intentionally inflicted wounds. However, in the assemblages of Neolithic skeletons, such wounds seem to be common – and not of simply one person killing another, but of whole sets of skeletons, thus indicating group warfare. In Feder's analysis, "Perhaps the problems inherent in an agricultural way of life and the always present potential for a collapse of the subsistence base are at the heart of this phenomenon (Feder 2000: 344-345)."

The pan-continental emergence of domestication in the form of pastoralism and agriculture, though beginning 12,000 years ago, was not a sweeping universal process, at least not at first. Harris notes that, "it has been only in the last two thousand years that the majority of the people in the world have not lived in hunting and gathering societies (Harris 1989: 205-209)." Neolithic farming societies alone could not have conquered the planet without the creation of another ecocidal artificial institution, civilization. While not all Neolithic societies became agricultural states, many did, building empires,

While this discussion has only been an overview of both the nature of the foraging mode and that of civilization, the literature is immense. A critique of civilization and the message implicit in the knowledge of the true harmony of band level existence is now text book anthropology. The myths of primitive savagery and the progress of civilization are no longer protected by ethnocentric insularity nor a hegemonic theology. It should no longer be believed that humans are by nature destructive – it must be known that humans are by nature cooperative, egalitarian, anarchic, and ecological. Further, it must be elucidated that the trajectory of civilization does not represent a natural inevitable progression, nor the universal path of humanity. This can be illustrated in this manner: ten to twelve thousand years ago, all but a few of the 4 million humans were foragers; today the poles have shifted to where now most of the *6 billion* humans are dependent on artificial environments for subsistence. If one's unit of analysis from which to draw conclusions about the nature of human society is the modern state of our species, it would seem logical that a natural progression must have occurred to bring virtually everyone into the enslavement of domesticated existence. Though if one's unit of analysis is the full time scale of our species, the modern situation should appear quite unrepresentative of the nature of human society. What exists today is the last chapter of the story of at least one culture, namely western civilization, the most spatially expansive virulent incarnation of civilization, it is by no means the history of humanity, nor the inevitable future of primitive society.

The intent of this piece is to contextualize the nature of human society and the social, political, and economic modes of organization it has taken. What should be clear is that this one percent of history, and the destruction of the last 10,000 years, is not the history of humanity. It is the history of one failed mode of existence, and most recently, one collapsing culture. Though it has decimated much of the wild in its path, there still exists wild nature and peoples who cannot be implicated in the history of domestication and civilization. At this moment what truly represents humanity is not the cancer that has artificially conquered the planet, but the last foragers and indigenous cultures whose myths, stories, and cosmologies are their own.

To Feder, civilization is not an inevitable sequence of change, not an exorable "march of progress" from ancient hominids to Western society; "our society represents merely one point along one of many possible pathways...not better or more 'evolved' than any others, and in no way an inevitable outcome of cultural evolution (Feder 2000: 503)."

In conclusion, the wisdom of Harris: "I believe it is essential that we understand our past...once we are clear about the roots of human nature...we can refute, once and for all, the notion that it is a biological imperative for our kind to form hierarchical groups. An observer viewing life shortly after cultural takeoff would easily have concluded that our species was destined to be irredeemably egalitarian...that someday the world would be divided into aristocrats and commoners, masters and slaves, billionaires and homeless beggars would have seemed wholly contrary to human nature as evidenced in the affairs of every human society then on Earth (Harris 1989: 205-209)."

originated from cattle, the common cold came from the horse, leprosy from water buffalo. We now share 65 diseases with dogs, 50 with cattle, 46 with sheep and goats, and 42 with pigs. He further notes that with the non-existence of many domesticated animals in the New World, there had been no history of disease within the human populations to make them resistant to all those that were brought by Europeans (Ponting 1991: 226). Beyond domesticated animals, the conditions of settled societies as mentioned above allowed infectious disease to flourish. Even beyond the walls of the city, on the battlefield in all wars predating the 20th century, more soldiers died of disease than to casualties to the enemy (Ponting 1991: 232).

With the modernization of civilization of the last two hundred years, the susceptibility to plague and massive outbreaks has been off-set, at least in the first world, only to be replaced by lifestyle pathologies caused by diet and carcinogen consumption. Cancer and cardiovascular disease cause 2/3 of the mortality in industrialized nations. Heart disease was virtually unknown a hundred years ago outside of rich populations – now it kills 40 percent of men and 20 percent of women in industrialized nations. Cancer is contracted by one in three Americans, with one in four a fatality. Cavities, virtually unknown in the prehistoric fossil record, are now proportional with the rise in industrialized sugar consumption (Ponting 1991: 236-239).

While pathologies have exponentially increased first with domestication, then cities, and now industrialization, the war against communal culture has had notable effects. Atomization and alienation from community has been increased as modern technology has given us more incentive to cyberize our sensory input, to consume, to be individualistic, etc.

Beyond the devastating effects on the health, gender equality, economic equality, and individual autonomy of civilized people, the tentacles of civilization have devastated all the integrated international communities, economies, and environments from which they have extracted resources. Only 30 percent of the world lives within industrial society, all the rest are subject to extraction-induced scarcity, left in remnant colonies established to sustain civilization and industrialization. Indigenous people have for 500 years been decimated and enslaved by civilization. Only recently has "independence" been granted, but it is of illusory empowerment. Just as the freed American slave was no longer coerced by force to work in the fields, economics kept the dynamic of servitude in full effect. While a colonizing empire may no longer directly control third world economies, the conditions of world market dependence, maintains the role of "management" corporations, often the same that were operating before "independence (Ponting 1991: 217)." It has only been by way of western industrial societies' conquest and integration of global resources that it has managed to expand beyond the bioregional constraints of all predating civilizations.

expanding, enslaving, and conquering. As the focus of this piece is to contextualize the nature of civilization, I will make only brief mention of the mitigated forms of domestication that form the bridge between foraging societies and civilized empires.

As stated above, all societies on the planet prior to 12,000 years ago were foraging societies. Since then those that chose to continue foraging have either been exiled to high mountains or deserts, decimated, or assimilated. However, intensive agriculture and foraging are not the only modes of subsistence. And not all modes of domesticated existence are destined to increase in complexity to the point of plow-agriculture or civilization. Many forms of less destructive domestication, though not much less recent than intensive agriculture, have been tried and seem to be far more sustainable than the more intensive means of domestication. Namely horticulture, or shifting gardening, is a form of domestication that while still being somewhat artificial, tends to take place within natural systems and cycles as opposed to outright replacement of existing ecosystems.

To conclude this brief mention of the continuum between foraging and civilization, I will quickly outline the known scale of modes of socio-political complexity and subsistence. The first level of complexity is the band, next the lineage, the tribe, the big man, the chiefdom, and the agricultural state. Bands are egalitarian and almost universally foraging; lineage systems occurred in insipient agricultural societies where consolidation of surplus and property made descent a factor in differentiated wealth. Tribes trace their lineage to a single ancestor, are usually 100 people or more, and are almost invariably horticultural, pastoral, or agricultural. Big man societies, unlike tribes that have no institutionalized leaders, have some of the first notable status differentiation with a male provisioner at the top of a minimal scale of stratification. Chiefdoms can be thought to be a more intensified state of the big man – more power is consolidated, military power exists, an ideology of supremacy of the political and religious elite is imposed, and the populace's food production goes first to the chief for distribution to the community. In all the above mentioned systems save the foraging band, property, surplus, stratification, and differential wealth exist. Furthermore, almost universally, the status of women declines drastically in all but the foraging band. As men begin to control the productive base and marginalize women to the domestic sphere, patriarchy begins.

Brettell and Sargent state in their discussion of Engel's The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State, "In Engel's scheme...gender relations were linked to changes in material conditions because the ownership of productive property (initially domesticated animals) was concentrated in the hands of men (Brettell and Sargent 2001: 295)."

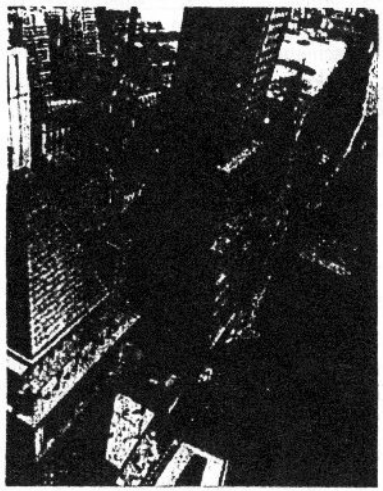
In Bonvillain's discussion of materialism in Women and Men: Cultural Constructs of Gender, it is stated that, "the organization of production in each type of culture has an impact on political, economic, and social activities," and that, " classifying cultures according to their predominant mode of production is a useful analytic approach in investigating the ways that gender concepts and behaviors are organized (Bonvillain 1998: 2)."

Civilization takes agriculture, domestication, stratification, patriarchy, ecocide, warfare, famine, disease, slavery, conquest and expansion to the highest level. The term civilization is derived from the root "civis," meaning *city*. Beyond this simple definition of civilization as a human environment, it should be thought also to inextricably entail urban human settlements wherein social stratification, monumental architecture, state political structure, large and dense populations, intensive agriculture

and food surplus used to feed non-producing elites exist. The first civilizations began in west Asia in 7,000 BC, in Egypt in 4000 BC, in Sudan in 1500 BC, in Southern Mexico in 2,000BC, in South Asia in 5500 BC, in China in 3000 BC, in Crete in 3000BC, in Highland Mexico in 500 BC, in South American in 250 AD, and in Khmer in AD 500 (Feder 2000: 384). As is commonly known, all ancient civilizations have collapsed with the remnants left either to decay or for a new trajectory to be moved towards by the survivors. Cowgill notes that almost all "collapsed" civilizations continue, if an attenuated form, and often begin the empire building process again only to endure another "collapse". To replace the misleading notion of collapse, he uses "political fragmentation" to explain the end of all the early state societies (Feder 2000: 490).

As with domestication, many theories have been put forth to explain the emergence of civilization. Rather than addressing all of these, suffice it to note, almost all ancient civilizations were surrounded by walls, fortified from attack indicating that civilization was just the next logical step in the intensification of protecting elite power and control over property; the stolen resources of people and nature (Ponting 1991: 327). Again, it is men who are the elite, the managers, and the dominators. It would necessitate infinite space to fully address the structure and history of civilizations; for the purposes of this piece, I will focus on the more universal nature of civilization, what it invariably entails, and some of the more telling evidence for its destructive effects on all within and beyond its "walls".

All civilizations are what could be thought of as complex anthropogenic structures on the landscape that represent the appropriation and transformation of energy forms into a hierarchical complex system. All human made structures and systems necessitate energy sources. In the earliest civilizations, this energy was extracted from that of living and harvested plants, animals, and humans. Today the energy fueling the system includes fossil fuels, charcoal, nuclear energy, etc. The impetus for this kind of energy transformation is the imperative of what would have previously been the chiefs in chiefdom societies-now rulers of states-to amass, protect, and perpetuate power, wealth, territory, and hegemony. It is all but the ruling elite within civilization that are either slaves or servants to the tyrants and their projects, be they conquest, monument construction, expansion, war, food production, art, science, music, etc.



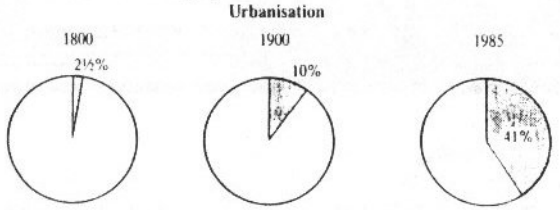
Servitude for sustenance provisioned by the state has only intensified today, as almost half the world lives in urban environments. Unlike the old civilizations, where village subsistence economies were either in the area or not yet faded from cultural memory, the populace of global civilizations have no choice but to be slaves to those who control the means of sustenance. However Feder mentions, " in older civilizations, most people worked harder than people did who lived in simpler Neolithic villages, and they gave up much of the control they had over their lives. Most people were needed to produce a surplus, part of which they turned over to the temple or the army or the state bureaucracy (Feder 2000: 420)." Ponting further concludes that until the last two hundred years, most of the world lived as agriculturalists, outside of civilization. Within this context, controlled by empires, spare resources were taken by the elite or directed into major projects such as temples, palaces, pyramids, and cathedrals (Ponting 1991: 316).

Further, in all civilizations, the political elite attempt to perpetuate the illusion of control over, or divine ordination by, the deities and the supernatural. Ponting mentions that civilizations built their cities, "according to complex designs reflecting religious symbols of divine order...these ceremonial centers are found in virtually every early settled society (Ponting 1991: 296)." Brettell and Sargent discuss Mayan and Incan political theology, "political hierarchies were legitimized by cosmological explanations in early states...rulers legitimized myths that established them as mediators between the natural and supernatural worlds...(Brettell and Sargent 2001: 297)"

As with the enslavement of classes, animals, and the environment, the nature of civilizations, as with most all sedentary societies, is to enslave women to the devalued domestic sphere. Brettell and Sargent associate a shift in gender ideology with the rise of state. Women are increasing subjected to the patriarchal domination of men in their natal families, later their husbands, and their affinal kin. Women are disempowered by men and valued only as mothers and for their purity (Brettell and Sargent 2001: 297). Rapp is certain that with civilization came a rapid decline in women's status. To Rapp, there is consensus that with civilization, women as a social category become subjugated further to the male head of the household. The explanation provided is as follows: with a decrease in reciprocal relations among kin, an inequality of access to productive resources begins. Eventually class society emerges out of the ruins of women's autonomous alliances (Rapp 2001: 301). With industrialization and modernization, the devaluation of women's work only intensifies. Lockwood states that, " 'work' becomes commodity or cash crop production, or wage employment, activities that were typically dominated by men after their introduction: men, then, become associated with a formal, 'productive' sphere that is often physically (spatially) separated from the activities of the household/domestic sphere (Lockwood 2001: 536). Bonvillain adds to the discussion of ideology and status decline in state societies noting that at the root of intensified gender hierarchies lies the ideology of male dominance. Gender biases exist within notions of women's work, legal rights, and quality of family and social life (Bonvillain 1998: 124).

With this cursory analysis of the universal structure and nature of civilization complete, at least for the demands of this piece, the focus will now shift to more qualitative and quantitative data from modern and ancient civilizations on the social, political, and economic elements of life under or effected by civilization. Just as civilization is a recent cancerous artificial entity, its grasp on the world population at least within the "walls" is of even less antiquity.

Only within the last two hundred years has civilization assimilated a major amount of the world population. Until 1800 only 2.5 percent of the world population was urbanized, by the 1980s, this number increased to 41 percent (Ponting 1991: 295).



Percentage of world population living in cities

The conditions of life within civilization have for the majority of the population, including to a lesser degree the elites, have been essentially equivalent to the conditions of disease, death and poverty within modern Iraq under the sanctions regime. To Ponting, the history of settled societies is one of "grinding poverty". People had few possessions, were miserable, and spent most of their time on a razors edge of survival, obtaining only the absolute minimum food resources to survive (Ponting 1991:215). Civilization is also the history of constant low level disease, punctuated by virulent outbreaks killing major portions of the population (Ponting 1991: 227). Only recently have any technological solutions to this constant state of poverty been found, and at that only for the few. Half of the world still lives in poverty. In terms of disease, it has only been within the last two hundred years, that the emergence of sanitation systems and water treatment facilities, rather than actual advances in medicine and vaccination, has managed to stave off the tide of infectious epidemics. In fact, medical intervention after infection seems to have had, since 1900 in the U.S., an effect of only 3.5 percent on reducing mortality rates (Ponting 1991: 234).

Pathology has up until the 19th century, plagued civilization. Beginning with the domestication of animals, pathology exponentially increased in settled societies. Ponting notes that tuberculosis