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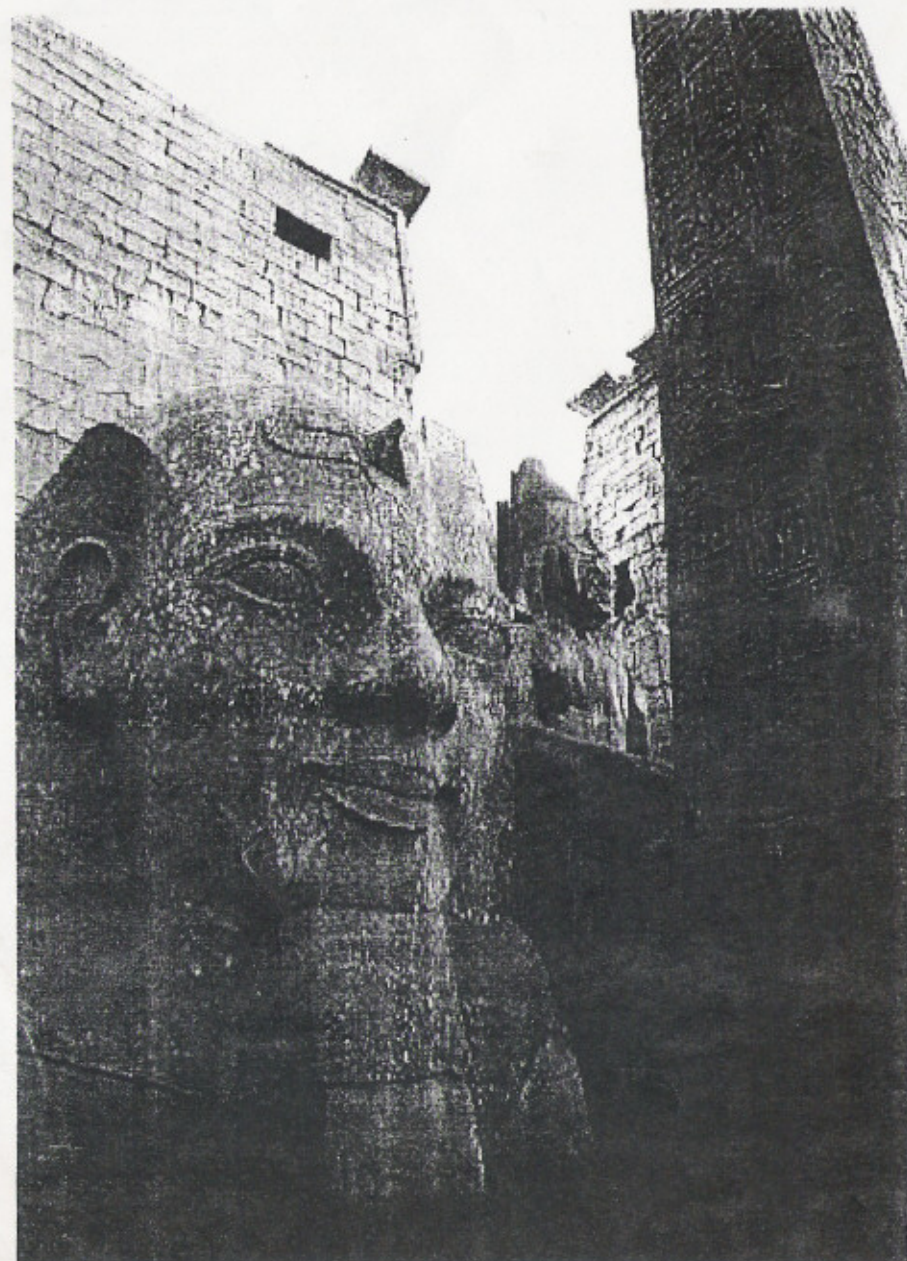
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We also highly recommend reading **A Green History of the World** by Clive Ponting.



OUR ENEMY, CIVILIZATION



Our Enemy, Civilization

The already collapsing civilization to break down more quickly and as it falls, the centers of power will fall with it. Previous revolutionaries have only explored the well-mapped territories of power. I want to explore and adventure in the unmapped, and unmappable, territories of wild freedom. The revolution that can create the world I want has to be a feral revolution.

There can be no programs or organizations for feral revolution, because wildness cannot spring from a program or organization. Wildness springs from the freeing of our instincts and desires, from the spontaneous expression of our passions. Each of us has experienced the processes of domestication, and this experience can give us the knowledge we need to undermine civilization and transform our lives. Our distrust of our own experience is probably what keeps us from rebelling as freely and actively as we'd like. We're afraid of fucking up, we're afraid of our own ignorance. But this distrust and fear have been instilled in us by authority. It keeps us from really growing and learning. It makes us easy targets for any authority that is ready to fill us. To set up "revolutionary" programs is to play on this fear and distrust, to reinforce the need to be told what to do. No attempt to go feral can be successful when based on such programs. We need to learn to trust and act upon our own feelings and experiences, if we are ever to be free.

So I offer no programs. What I will share is some thoughts on ways to explore. Since we all have been domesticated, part of the revolutionary process is a process of personal transformation. We have been conditioned not to trust ourselves, not to feel completely, not to experience life intensely. We have been conditioned to accept the humiliation of work and pay as inescapable, to relate to things as resources to be used, to feel the need to prove ourselves by producing. We have been conditioned to expect disappointment, to see it as normal, not to question it. We have been conditioned to accept the tedium of civilized survival rather than breaking free and really living. We need to explore ways of breaking down this conditioning, of getting as free of our domestication as we can now. Let's try to get so free of this conditioning that it ceases to control us and becomes nothing more than a role we use when necessary for survival in the midst of civilization as we strive to undermine it.

In a very general way, we know what we want. We want to live as wild, free beings in a world of wild, free beings. The humiliation of having to follow rules, of having to sell our lives away to buy survival, of seeing our usurped desires transformed into abstractions and images in order to sell us commodities fills us with rage. How long will we put up with this misery? We want to make this world into a place where our desires can be immediately realized, not just sporadically, but normally. We want to re-eroticize our lives. We want to live not in a dead world of resources, but in a living world of free wild lovers. We need to start exploring the extent to which we are capable of living these dreams in the present without isolating ourselves. This will give us a clearer understanding of the domination of civilization over our lives, an understanding which will allow us to fight domestication more intensely and so expand the extent to which we can live wildly.

Attempting to live as wildly as possible now will also help break down our social conditioning. This will spark a wild prankishness in us which will take aim at all that would tame it, undermining civilization and creating new ways of living and sharing with each other. These explorations will expose the limits of civilization's domination and will show its inherent opposition to freedom. We will discover possibilities we have never before imagined... vast expanses of wild freedom. Projects, ranging from sabotage and pranks that expose or undermine the dominant society, to the expansion into wilderness, to festivals and orgies and general free sharing, can point to amazing possibilities.

Feral revolution is an adventure. It is the daring exploration of going wild. It takes us into unknown territories for which no maps exist. We can only come to know these territories if we dare to explore them actively. We must dare to destroy whatever destroys our wildness and to act on our instincts and desires. We must dare to trust in ourselves, our experiences and our passions. Then we will not let ourselves be chained or penned in. We will not allow ourselves to be tamed. Our feral energy will rip civilization to shreds and create a life of wild freedom and intense pleasure.

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."

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

Feral Revolution

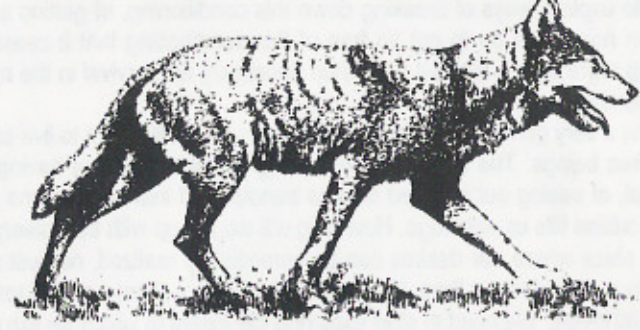
By Feral Faun

When I was a very young child, my life was filled with intense pleasure and a vital energy that caused me to feel what I experienced to the full. I was the center of this marvelous, playful existence and felt no need to rely on anything but my own living experience to fulfill me.

I felt intensely, I experienced intensely, my life was a festival of passion and pleasure. My disappointments and sorrows were also intense. I was born a free, wild being in the midst of a society based upon domestication. There was no way that I could escape being domesticated myself. Civilization will not tolerate what is wild in its midst. But I never forgot the intensity that life could be. I never forgot the vital energy that had surged through me. My existence since I first began to notice that this vitality was being drained away has been a warfare between the needs of civilized survival and the need to break loose and experience the full intensity of life unbound.

I want to experience this vital energy again. I want to know the free-spirited wildness of my unexpressed desires realizing themselves in festive play. I want to smash down every wall that stands between me and the intense, passionate life of untamed freedom that I want. The sum of these walls is everything we call civilization, everything that comes between us and the direct, participatory experience of the wild world. Around us has grown a web of domination, a web of mediation that limits our experience, defining the boundaries of acceptable production and consumption.

Domesticating authority takes many forms, some of which are difficult to recognize. Government, capital and religion are some of the more obvious faces of authority. But technology, work, language with its conceptual limits, the ingrained habits of etiquette and propriety - these too are domesticating authorities which transform us from wild, playful,



unruly animals into tamed, bored, unhappy producers and consumers. These things work in us insidiously, limiting our imaginations, usurping our desires, suppressing our lived experience. And it is the world created by these authorities, the civilized world, in which we live. If my dream of a life filled with intense pleasure and wild adventure is to be realized, the world must be radically transformed, civilization must fall before expanding wilderness, authority must fall before the energy of our wild freedom. There must be - for want of a better word - a revolution.

But a revolution that can break down civilization and restore the vital energy of untamed desire cannot be like any revolution of the past. All revolutions to date have centered around power, its use and redistribution. They have not sought to eradicate the social institutions that domesticate; at best they have only sought to eradicate the power relationships within those institutions. So revolutionaries of the past have aimed their attacks at the centers of power seeking to overthrow it. Focused on power, they were blind to the insidious forces of domination that encompass our daily existence and so, when successful at overthrowing the powers that be, they ended up re-creating them. To avoid this, we need to focus not on power, but on our desire to go wild, to experience life to the full, to know intense pleasure and wild adventure. As we attempt to realize this desire, we confront the real forces of domination, the forces that we face every moment of every day. These forces have no single center that can be overthrown. They are a web that binds us. So rather than trying to overthrow the powers that be, we want to undermine domination as we confront it every day,

Leading into 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 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 could be tragic news for illegal immigrants. Data (biological and other wise) which is written onto the Border 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 the British. 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 oppressive 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*, *Assissions*, "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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Billings King Abacus is available for \$3 from *Venomous Butterfly Publications*, 41 Sutter St, Suite 661, San Francisco, CA 94104

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 of ten 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 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

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*

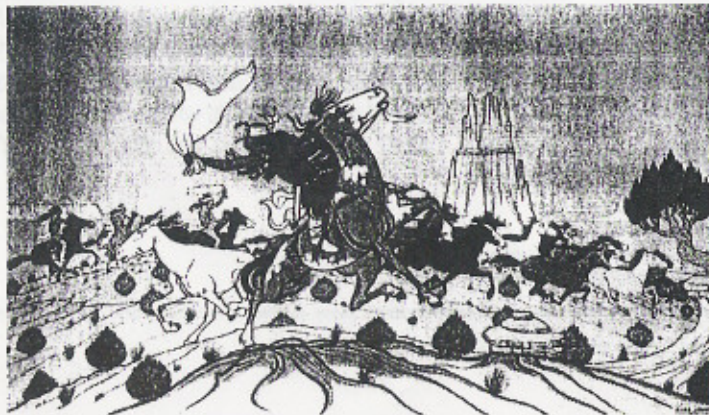
Domestication and sedentization are not processes that were only imposed on "primitive" peoples; these processes occurred in Europe as well. Latin American nomads and European vagabonds experienced similar repression but by different means. Missions and prisons served similar functions: they settled 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

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 workaholicism. 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)

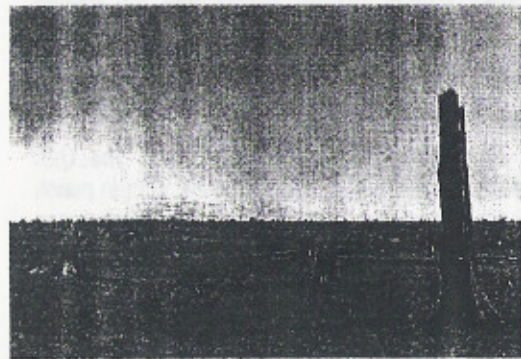
According to a study conducted by researchers Frederick McCarthy and Margaret McArthur, the average workday for men in aboriginal communities in Western Arnhem Land, Australia, including all time spent on economic activities such as hunting and tool repair, adds up to three hours and forty-five minutes; 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 cooling, 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. 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.

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 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, 1999), 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.

you 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 abundance."(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 market exchange terms: I will do this for you if you will do that for me. Even outside our formal work

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) 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

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 exploitably 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 sports 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

how such a constitutive, integrable characteristic could be severed from the dancers themselves. A 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.

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

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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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

Does Work Really Work?

L. Susan Brown

Taken from *Kick It Over 35*

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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 is 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

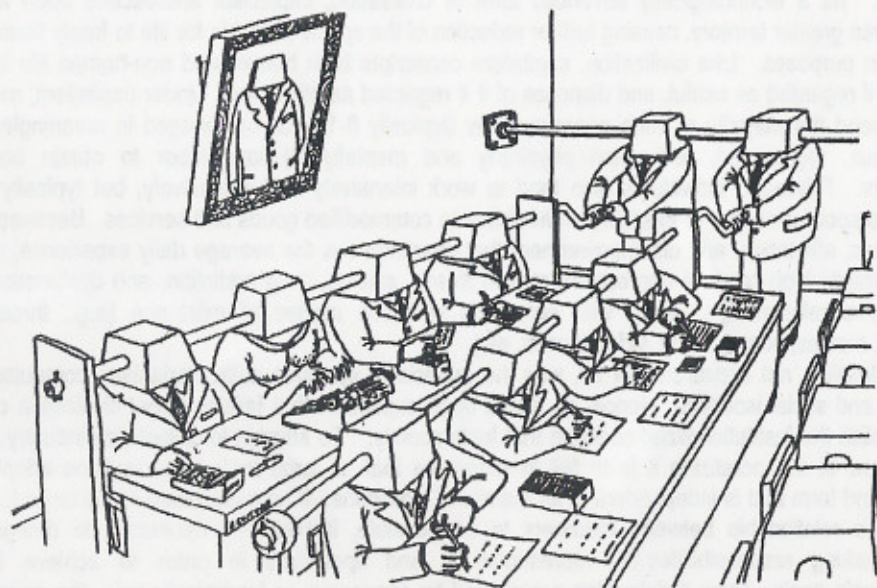
that a person's skills and labour are not inseparable from them, but are rather separate attributes that can be treated like property to be bought and sold. The employment contract assumes that a machinist or an exotic dancer, for instance, have the capacity to separate out from themselves the particular 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

even view the actions of the rest. Additionally, elected delegates are allotted more time and resources to prepare and present a case for their objectives, and are thus more likely to gain further power through deception and manipulation. 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 independently 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 – it is incapable of creating organization without hierarchy and control.

Because mass organizations must increase production to maintain their existence and to expand, they tend to imperialistically extend their scope of influence. Because cities and industries rely upon outside inputs, they aim to seize the surrounding areas 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, leaving ecosystems and non-industrial peoples some room to co-exist. Firstly, this proposal invites the question of why civilization should determine its own boundaries, instead of the victims of its predation. 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. Hierarchical institutions, territorial expansion, and the mechanization of life are all required for the administration and process of mass production to occur. Only small communities of self-sufficient individuals can coexist with other beings, human or not, without imposing their authority upon them.



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 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.

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Against Mass Society

From chrswlsn@yahoo.com

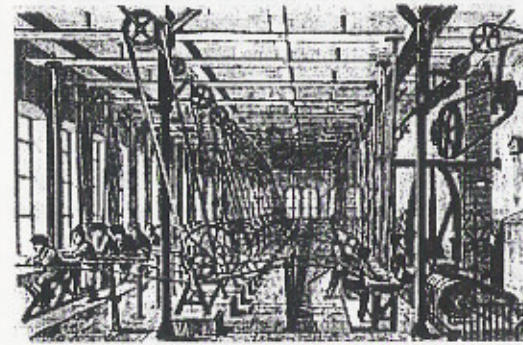
Many people desire an existence free of coercive authority, where all are at liberty to shape their own lives as they choose for the sake of their own personal needs, values, and desires. For such freedom to be possible, no individual person can extend his or her sphere of control upon the lives of others without their choosing. Many who challenge oppression in the modern world 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, etc. Those who prioritize the values of personal autonomy or wild existence have reason to oppose and reject all large-scale organizations and societies on the grounds that they necessitate imperialism, slavery and hierarchy, regardless of the purposes they may be designed for.

Humans are naturally sociable, but are selective about who they wish to associate with. For companionship and mutual support, people naturally develop relationships with those they share an affinity with. However, only in recent times have people organized themselves in large-scale groupings composed of strangers who share little of relevance in common with each other. For over 99% of human history, humans lived within small and egalitarian extended family arrangements, while drawing their subsistence directly from the land. The foraging bands and shifting horticultural communities of past and present are known to have enjoyed extensive leisure time, and have rarely required more than 2-4 hours daily on average to satisfy subsistence needs. Famine and war are extremely rare in these societies. Additionally, physical health, dental quality and the average lifespan of small-scale communities are markedly higher than that of agricultural and early industrial societies. If leaders exist, they are usually temporary, and hold no power beyond their ability to persuade. While hunting/gathering and slash-and-burn gardening do indeed alter local environments and are sometimes wasteful, they have proven themselves to be ecologically stable adaptations. Foraging served humanity for 3 million years, while horticulture has been relied upon by many societies in the Amazon basin for approximately 9,000 years. The small-scale cultures that remain today generally prefer their traditional way of life, and many are currently waging 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 lead to a decline of freedom and health.

The rise of civilization was made possible through compulsory mass production. When certain societies began to prioritize agricultural productivity as their highest value, they began to forcibly subject all life within reach of their cities to that purpose. Communities of people who wished to forage or garden on the land for subsistence would be mercilessly slaughtered or enslaved, and the ecosystems they inhabited would be converted to farmland to feed the cities. Those engaged in the full-time facilitation of crop and animal production would reside in the nearby countryside, while public officials, merchants, engineers, military personnel, servants, and prisoners would inhabit the cities. The task of creating a surplus to feed a growing specialist class caused the duties of the food producers to intensify, while simultaneously creating the need for more land, both for agriculture and for the extraction of materials



for construction and fuel. Humans were forced into servitude for the benefit of their culture's institutions of production as a prerequisite for continued survival, and non-human life was either harnessed or eliminated for the sake of completing human projects. To occupy land, one would be mandated to continuously pay tribute in the form of a tax or tithe (or and more recently, in the form of rent or mortgage), hence requiring one to devote most of one's time and energy to a politically accepted mode of employment. Upon being required to satisfy the demands of landholders or employers in exchange for personal space and commodities, it becomes impossible for people to make their living through subsistence hunting or gardening. Although small-scale self-sufficient communities would resist or flee the intrusion of military and commercial forces, those that failed would be assimilated. Subsequently, they would quickly forget their cultural practices, causing them to become dependent upon their oppressors for survival.



Capitalism is civilization's current dominant manifestation. The capitalist economy is controlled mainly by state-chartered corporations; these organizations are owned by stockholders who are free to make business decisions without being held personally accountable for the consequences. Legally, corporations enjoy the status of individuals, and thus an injured party can only target the assets of the company in a court case, not the possessions or property of the individual 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. As a technologically advanced form of civilization, capitalism encroaches upon and utilizes even greater territory, causing further reduction of the space available for life to freely flourish for its own purposes. Like civilization, capitalism constricts both human and non-human life into servitude if regarded as useful, and disposes of it if regarded as otherwise. Under capitalism, most people spend the majority of each conscious day (typically 8-12 hours) engaged in meaningless, monotonous, regimented, and often physically and mentally injurious labor to obtain basic necessities. Privileged individuals also tend to work intensively and extensively, but typically to respond to social pressure or to satisfy an addiction to commodified goods and services. Because of the dullness, alienation, and disempowerment that characterizes the average daily experience, 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., through television, movies, pornography, video games, etc).

Civilization, not capitalism per se, was the genesis of systemic authoritarianism, compulsory servitude and social isolation. Hence, an attack upon capitalism that fails to target civilization can never abolish the institutionalized coercion that fuels society. To attempt to collectivize industry for the purpose of democratizing it is to fail to recognize that all large-scale organizations adopt a direction and form that is independent of its members' intentions. If an association is too large for a face-to-face relationship between members to be possible, it becomes necessary to delegate decision-making responsibilities to representatives and specialists in order to achieve the organization's goals. Even if delegates are elected by consensus or by majority vote, the group's members cannot supervise every action of the delegates unless the organization is small enough for everybody to monitor each other on a regular basis. Delegated leaders or specialists cannot be held accountable to mandates, nor can they be recalled for irresponsible or coercive behavior, unless held subject to frequent supervision by a broad cross-section of the group. Such is impossible in an economy based upon a highly stratified division of labor where no given individual can focus upon or