

FRONT COVER

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essays on the anthropology of radical dissent



by

Synge Fendersën Yngvaalsën

and

Carlos Pedro Dufús

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PREFACE: The small print on rationality, propaganda and revolutionary consciousness: Question everything!

- *Beyond what is properly secret, spectacular discourse obviously silences anything it finds inconvenient. It isolates what it shows from its context, its past, the intentions and the consequences. It is thus completely illogical. Since no one can contradict it, the spectacle has the right to contradict itself, to correct its own past. The arrogant attitude of its servants, when they have to make known some new, and perhaps still more dishonest version of certain facts, is to harshly correct the ignorance and bad interpretations they attribute to their public, while the day before they themselves were busily disseminating the error, with their customary assurance. Thus the spectacle's instruction and the spectators' ignorance are wrongly seen as antagonistic factors when in fact they give birth to each other.*
- *The individual who has been marked by impoverished spectacular thought more deeply than by any other aspect of his experience puts himself at the service of the established order right from the start, even though subjectively he may have had quite the opposite intention. He will essentially follow the language of the spectacle, for it is the only one he is familiar with; the one in which he learned to speak. No doubt he would like to show himself as an enemy of its rhetoric; but he will use its syntax. This is one of the most important aspects of the success obtained by spectacular domination.*
- *With the destruction of history, contemporary events themselves retreat into a fabulous distance, among its unverifiable stories, uncheckable statistics, unlikely explanations and untenable reasoning. For every imbecile who has advanced spectacularly, there are only the mediatics [admen] who can respond with a few respectful rectifications or remonstrations, and they are miserly, for besides their extreme ignorance, their personal and professional solidarity with the spectacle's general authority and the society it expresses, makes it their duty, and their pleasure, never to diverge from that authority whose majesty must not be damaged. It must not be forgotten that all mediatics, through wages and other rewards and recompenses, has a master, and sometimes several; and that every one of them knows he is dispensable.*
- *All experts are mediatics – Statists – and only in that way are they recognized as experts. Every expert follows his master, because all former possibilities for independence have almost been reduced to nil by present society's conditions of organization. The most useful expert, of course, is the one who lies. Those who need experts are, for different reasons, falsifiers and ignoramuses. Whenever individuals lose the capacity to see things for themselves, the expert is there to offer a formal reassurance.*
- *It is permitted to change a person's whole past, radically modify it, recreate it in the manner of the Moscow trials – and without even having recourse to the clumsiness of a trial. One can kill at less cost. Those who govern the integrated spectacular, or their friends, surely have no lack of false witnesses – though they may be unskilled – but what capacity to detect this clumsiness can remain among the spectators who will be witnesses to the exploits of the false witnesses or false documents, which are always highly effective? Thus it is no longer possible to believe anything about anyone that you have not learned for yourself, directly. But in fact false accusations are rarely necessary. Once one controls the mechanism that operates the only form of social verification to be fully and universally recognized, one can say what one likes. The movement of the spectacular demonstration proves itself simply by going round in circles: by coming back to the start, by repetition, by constant reaffirmation on the unique terrain where anything can be publicly affirmed, and be made believed, precisely because that is the only thing to which everyone is witness. Spectacular authority can similarly deny whatever it likes, once, or three times over, and say that it will no longer speak of it and speak of something else instead, knowing full well there is no danger of any other riposte, on its own terrain or any other.*
- *When the spectacle stops talking about something for three days, it is as if it did not exist. For it has then gone on to talk about something else, and it is that which henceforth, in short, exists. The practical consequences, as we see, are enormous.*
- *To this list of the triumphs of power we should, however, add one result which has proved negative for it: a State, in which one has durably installed a great deficit of historical knowledge so as to manage it, can no longer be governed strategically. – Guy Debord*

[With or without a despotic 'master control program' (a system with its fingers in everyone else's activities – ie., its nose up your ass), bureaucratic growth and its increased specialization, atomization and dumbing down of 'machine components' — with concomitant loss of communication between them — requires insertion of redundancy (and therefore expansion), ultimately leading to total redundancy, still ineffectual components and breakdown of bureaucratic function. — *Fendersen's Last Law of Cybernetics*]

- *Propaganda is a gift given behind your back, with the upshot that you think it was yours all along. Because of this, it is never questioned and effectively becomes swept into the unconscious. It is 'given'. It provides the rationality for custom and the custom of irrationality — the justification for injustice. It is the "blind" in blind obedience, the project of education, the ambition of massive media.*
- *Before there is a consciousness of liberation, there must precede a liberation of the unconscious. That on which we call "bullshit!" must first be brought to light — that which we would first assess must first be accessed. Only then may we ask "is this your idea or mine?"*
- *In Tim Leary's paradigm, "turning on" is one method of accessing the unconscious and beyond, to what he called "cellular knowledge" — instinct, organic, superorganic (to slightly bastardize Kroeber's term). Other pursuits include meditation, strenuous physical exertion ("free" play) or even, according to Freud, many years of psychoanalysis. Surrealists thought one could be shocked into illumination through exposure to novelty. Early satirists tried to humor or humiliate us into rethinking our positions. Reminiscent of Antonin Artaud, R. D. Laing said "madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be break-through. It is potential liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death". The point is not merely the release of endorphins (pleasure) but the liberation of the unconscious — "tuning in", "centering", self-reflection, "critical" thinking, a discernment of freedom found only in realizing desire. At this point, one can then effectively "drop out", "decenter", "let go" or "go mad".*
- *Leary thought this process should arrive/begin with our departure: "drop out, turn on, tune in". I would rather propose that dropping out is the last step of refusal, the first step in creating something new. I have always preferred the order: "turn on, tune in, drop out". Gurus or treatment centers become entirely unnecessary. Just as "turning on" had become reduced to "getting high" as the be-all and end-all, dropping out continues to be mistaken for a simple "withdrawal" or "escape". What is actually withdrawn is the support for the "basic" premises (if only unexpected semantic associations) we find we have unconsciously held on to — the customs and premises we find are not our own — the behavior and institutions which they accompany and which we have come to reject, which now only evoke our anger. When dropouts find comrades along the way, the "counterculture" is born, the condition of the state is denied, the state of the condition can transform. The real revolution is the emancipation of our everyday life, the realization that the "unique one" is not possible without intimacy with other unique ones, the ownership of the 'I' required for an appreciation of the "we".*
- *But whatever their arrangement, these remain necessary conditions for acts of civil disobedience, a general strike, a mass uprising, an insurrectionary movement or a global revolution. They are also the necessary conditions for mental health: the exorcism of unwanted demons. — *Fendersen**

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ESSAYS ON THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF RADICAL DISSENT

by Syngje Fendersen Yngvaalsen and Carlos Pedro Dufús

Dedicated to my mentor, Frenchy and my spouse, Pamela, whose proof-reading assistance was invaluable.

INTRODUCTION

Colloquial wisdom informs us that Anthropology is the study of "primitive" cultures. On the contrary, it is the study of "man" and the only discipline which has historically proposed that these other cultures we have derogatorily labeled "primitive" are also "men". (Forgive the inadequacy of the english language – no 'gender' is implied). The implication of generations of study is not that "primitives" are the first "men", but that they will also be the last, for they are, in fact, "us" and we are they. Although this has not always been the case, the distinction between "primitive" and "civilized" has become merely an academic heuristic. If adaptation and hence survival of the species is valued, the distinction is quite useful and the evolutionary perspective, another heuristic, has come to see cultures as systems of adaptation rather than "stages" of progress. In fact, with this perspective the study of civilization has shown us that it is *not* such a system and despite efforts to expand and eventually globalize the modern social organization, all civilizations end in collapse precisely because they are systems of maladaptation. No environment can sustain unchecked growth. Perpetual war, the reconquering of those whom we have already conquered, can only postpone the death which is sure to come to civilization. In fact, the quest for progress has never been anything other than the quest for immortality – it is properly the field of "alchemy" which for the past few hundred years, we have mistaken for "enlightenment".

There has never been a universal "primitive" culture. As much temporal and geographical diversity as we see in civilization, there is even more diversity among so-called primitives. Primitive culture cannot be defined except in reference to what it is not, and that is civilization, as defined by historians, economists, political scientists and anthropologists. The civilized/primitive dichotomy is merely an academic distinction. It is no more "real" than nature/culture, mind/body or wave/particle. It is a function of reification – the imposition of 'thingness' to what is essentially an idea, a process or a relation.

Despite the diversity, we have come to agree that all civilizations share certain traits:

hierarchical social organization (the state) with a central authority (coercion or force); market-surplus and economic class (slavery, feudalism, manorialism or barter/capitalism); concentrated urban settlements; historians include writing (and therefore history) and progress (growth and inevitably conquest) etc. You will notice too that technology is not even on this list. All humans have had technology. Prior to the civilized relation or "alienation", technology was not destructive to the planet. This is mostly a list of the things anarchists and communists and anti-capitalists are against. The same people who made up this list, this definition, value these things, and therefore have called every group without them "savage", "barbarian", "primitive". "Primitives" are not just lacking these things, they went out of their way to avoid and refuse them and have developed institutions (ritualized behavior, custom) to prevent what can only be described as coercion, exploitation and environmental destruction. If we were to adopt that attitude and annihilate those behaviors we are against, like coercive authority, the capitalist relation, environmental destruction, etc., through revolution or collapse or alien or divine intervention or even psychotherapy, we would be "primitives" according to the definition. Pure and simple. The type of social relation we might create need not have ever existed!

Again, anthropology is the theoretical and sometimes scientific study of our species, the generic "Man", in all times and all places and in all of its aspects. Given our current situation on an increasingly endangered planet, it would seem rather odd for the anthropologist to be disinterested in the future of the species as well. And in fact, since anthropology is the only intellectual endeavor considered the "science of man" (that is, predictive) with access to a database of actually existent humans in the history of the planet, and given that we 'moderns' have sold our lives as men and women in the interest of mere survival, it would seem odd that anthropology is not also the science of revolution – that liberation or freeing which would take our lives back and return to a life of abundance over scarcity, living over survival, social cooperation over competition and domination.

Yet it is not interested in any of these things. There is the clever rationalization of objectivity in science – 'concern' is always a subjective activity and we all know the dangers of subjectivity to scientific enterprise – or so we are told. There is also the fact that the practicing anthropologist must also survive within a system – academia – which is itself hierarchically organized, with those at the top determining not only what gets published, but what is studied and who does the studying in the first place. Obviously, those at the top of any hierarchy will resist any change, not even to speak of revolution, which would be perceived as threatening to their position, their domination which is their own means of survival. So far goes the dictum of objectivity in science!

I have already brought up perhaps the two most important ideological factors of our civilization: 1) a world-view of scarcity which defines the goal of life as survival – a mode many psychologists have described as a "disorder" when properly "cultivated", and 2) hierarchical organization – the endorsement of a social relation in which one's survival is dependent on another's domination. The primary behavior this world-view generates and recapitulates is competition. The result is the establishment of institutions of politics and economics: law and property. What they don't teach us in school is that prop-

erty is king and that politics and economics are two sides of the same phenomenon: exclusivity and exclusion – the imposition of scarcity on the many so that the few may enjoy privilege.

This is no more clearly demonstrated than by the civil wars in the Congo which no well-meaning cell-phone aficionado seems to know about, fought largely over control of coltan, a clay local to the region which is used to manufacture tiny capacitors indispensable to cellular technology. During the height of the atrocities, say the year 2000, it would not have been an exaggeration to say that one million people in the Congo were massacred per year so that you could talk on you cell phone.

The objectivity of the anthropologist, that recorder of past lifestyles, has betrayed hierarchy, for its data presents ample evidence that this world-view, the ideology of civilization, is an absolute rarity in the history and geography of the planet. What we find instead is a notion, almost universally shared (in earlier times), that survival is a starting point, not an end-goal in life. In fact, one might be hard pressed to even discover a distinction between survival and life! "Living is what we do!" As Vaniegem said, survival is nothing if it is not slow death. We also find ideas that nature is a system of relationships marked by abundance. We find that the universal social relation is cooperation – sharing. We find mutual aid rather than conquest, competition and exchange. Without civilized notions of leadership (authority and force), there can be no question of the liberty of the individual – it is guaranteed. And without authority and force, there can be no 'property', which is always a withholding from others. What do we call this idea of life? Utopian communism: "It is not possible". "It is the message of satan". "It is evil incarnate". "It is a life befitting lowly animals". "There are just too many of us to live like that!" But where is the anthropologist to call bullshit? Certainly not practicing in academia! As with us all, he has exchanged his life for survival. In other words, even though the data is there, there has never been a grand revolutionary statement from within the field of anthropology – the one discipline which should have something to say on the matter, the one discipline with evidence that the norm in human history was what we would today label anarcho-communism – 'without authority', 'without property', 'community'.

This is not to say that anthropologists have not historically been well-meaning critics of the modern era. But they (and I as well) have operated under a false logic: "It will be enough to 'educate the masses' in their oppression and offer the notion that another life, a real living, is possible". This is folly. People who rely on authority for knowledge or information will reject even the most reasoned discourse *against* authority. There have been educators on the oppression of tyranny since the first tyrant, *King Thug the First*, and their lessons have been of little avail in the long run. But there have always been those impish few for whom the programming of custom does not completely take hold – the perverse, the dissidents, the insurgents and revolutionaries. And also the artists! That same reactionary spirit which can breed both 'criminality' and 'creativity' needs addressed. Folly or no, I still await the grand statement from within Anthropology. Rather, not to come out of it but to saturate it! As Kevin Tucker stated, "I feel that anthropology can be vital only in deconstructing the universalized and institutionalized myths that underlie and maintain civilization".

Of course, there are some exceptions – Marshall Sahlins overthrew the authority of Hobbes (within some academic circles at least), Stanley Diamond gave us perhaps the greatest critique of civilization, but Pierre Clastres, gave perhaps the closest thing to a revolutionary statement when he suggested that we study the birth of the state so that we can uncover the essential conditions to meet its death. Unfortunately, he himself met an untimely death in a confrontation on the highway – surely an accident. And then there is David Graeber: in anthropology, value judgments are not tolerated. This is a fine methodological dictum when studying 'exotic' cultures, but should not be upheld when undergoing self-reflection, and what else is Anthropology than the illumination of the self through the study of the other?

This is all the more interesting because since the days of Franz Boas, the anthropologist was to achieve his 'objectivity' not through the distancing of him/herself from the 'object' of study, but to the contrary, distancing from his/her own culture or assumptions about "life, the universe and everything" and immersion into the culture being studied. This came to be called "participant observation" through "cultural relativism" – not at all the attitude of the chemist or physicist. Apparently this has been harder to accomplish than our mentor, Mr. Boas, had intended. But this hardship is not unreasonable.

From its emergence in the sixties from a milieu of social dissent, radical anthropology has been intimately tied to marxist ideology. Archaeologists had only been able to dig up and classify tools, and "Man" was already accepted and defined as "the tool maker". Marx insisted that "Man" is "the laborer". It was a marriage made in heaven which ultimately justifies modernity, despite the critical stances of the individual anthropologists. In this sense, radical, or marxist anthropology, like its cousin, marxist political economy, is ultimately recuperative and loses any sense of radicality, for Boas' dictums for a value-free methodology would seem an impossible task. Many of our most deeply held assumptions remain unconscious. They are rarely brought into question. For those who do see those other cultures they study as but instances of a diversity of possible adaptations and come to question the adaptive significance of their own culture and its presumptions, their academic career soon comes to an end if their logical conclusion calls for change.

Of course, none of this is new. Who was it who first said "There has never been an original idea"?

For as long as there have been men – and men who read La Fontaine – everything has been said and few people have gained anything from it. Because our ideas are in themselves commonplace, they can only be of value to people who are not. – *Raul Vaniegem*

Social critique has been around as long as civilization itself. A revolutionary statement from anthropology would attempt to persuade you, not to wake up, organize and take to arms, but to say "No! Fuck it! I quit!" (what ever it is you are fed up with). In fact, it was well illustrated by Boétie in 1548 in his essay on voluntary servitude when he suggested it is not so much force which enslaves the masses, but custom and it cannot be force which liberates them unless it is preceded by refusal:

It is incredible how the people, once subjugated, forget their freedom so rapidly and so completely that they are quite unable to wake up and win it back. They are such willing slaves

that you would say they had gained their servitude rather than lost their freedom. It is true that initially it takes force to reduce people to a state of servitude. But there is nothing reluctant about the servitude of future generations: they carry out willingly the tasks that their predecessors had done through compulsion. Men born beneath the yoke and educated in slavery will look no further; they are content to live in the condition in which they were born, with no other possessions or entitlements, and assume that this condition is the one which nature ordains . . . I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break into pieces.

What the 'commonplace' social critics, dissidents, insurgents and revolutionaries have in the past failed to understand is that no change will be forthcoming until we change our own feeling, thinking and behavior – our custom and our myth.

As is true with all dichotomies, when we eliminate civilization, we will automatically eliminate the primitive and will be left only with the human. In this case, revolution is opposed to dialectical synthesis. Civilization has, in fact, destroyed the primitive everywhere it existed except in the database of anthropological investigation. Obviously, for most therefore, *only* among the civilized is to be found "man". We have returned to the mindset which justified the massacre of the populations of entire continents for our own gain.

It would seem the only task left for civilization would be the annihilation of anthropology. But there is another hope, to paraphrase Yoda, and that is what Edgar Allen Poe described as the "Imp of the perverse", that innate attribute of humanity to resist that which we are told (and even know ourselves, in some instances, to be true) "is good for us". About 2,400 years ago, Epicurus called this "Swerve" – a natural attribute in all existence to take that random, bent path – to swerve against gravity which is the tendency to fall down in a straight line, forever – to occasionally bump into each other and create something novel. For Epicurus, it was the only source of freedom. Civilized academics have labeled this "Brownian Motion" when viewed in a petri dish, but it has always been called "barbarianism" when seen among ourselves. Lately, this term has been superseded by "terrorism". We can now witness the fruition of Orwell's prophecy: the face under the boot, forever. – *Carlos Dufús*

ch 1: SCARCITY, TOIL AND TURMOIL: A QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP

Has there ever been an original idea? Isn't it interesting that we criminalize plagiarism but promote emulation? One is to admire Shakespeare, to follow his literary leadership. But "don't get above yourself!" Leadership and genius are considered scarce commodities. Everything is commodified. Let us talk about discourse, commodity and leadership. One might emulate Eisenhower or even Emperor Norton, but don't make it too obvious. That capital has already been spent, and no one respects a "wannabe". We are taught we must toil for our just deserts, and if our ideas may not be original, we should change the wording to make it look like our own – property. "Paraphrase!" With enough eloquence in our discourse or persuasion, we too can be leaders; "captain" of the debate team, the chess club, the Security Division of the Blackwater Corporation, of industry, of our own destiny. Discourse knocks your opponents off of their path. Toil in your deceits for your just deserts.

Contemporary philosophy and science have acquired the position of leadership. Piously, we turn to their "reasonable" leadership. Did they not save us from the antiquated dogma of the church, with its authority over our own thinking, its cruel inquisitions? Inquiring minds want to know! Unfortunately, today we have confused the scientist with the technocrat, the teacher with the master. We are the "enlightened" because Teacher said we went through a period called "The Enlightenment". This makes less sense than taking a couple hits of eight-way purple micro-dot and shining a flashlight up your nose in a dark room to illuminate your mind. But that's my general view on "The College of Education" and quite another story.

So is leadership itself reasonable? There was a time when sophistry was denigrated, not because it conflicted with established dogma, but because it "twisted" logic for the sake of "winning" (an argument, acquiring power or favor, or sending a petty "criminal" to the gallows). The sophist, the lawyer wins. No one can doubt that hierarchical organizations display a logic – they are "orderly" – and therefore, leadership is reasonable. The empiricist or materialist additionally points to the pecking order or dominance relations among other animal species. "Everybody does it!" he says. This seems reasonable. But is it right? Is it even necessary? Ahhh. Now we travel a tricky path. "Right" from who's perspective? From that of the shit sweeper down at the plant? The mother living under the bridge? The 'sub-dominant' or 'subordinate' juvenile male chimpanzee? [even biologists don't ascribe that despicable trait – submissiveness – to animals; it is a term used by masters and handlers]

Lets, for a moment, talk about animal 'leadership'. It is a misconception that sheep follow leaders. They follow each other. Among such grazing animals, the 'leaders' (those out front or first to the feed) are the inquisitive adolescents intoxicated with the abundance. More mature animals are content to lag behind, as they please. At some point, the youngsters miss their mothers left perhaps far behind and, fretting, scurry back to the group. The predator, "coyote" teaches them the idea of group safety. Elders, more experienced with the territory or range will maneuver to water or other resources as they need. Now the youngsters follow. There is no authority; there is no force except that of the predator. But who would describe the coyote as the leader? If

you survive his assault, he is the teacher!

The dominant male doesn't achieve his station by brutalizing his 'juniors'. Usually, tests of strength are forms of play, and these set up social roles. But the roles are not of master and slave, boss and employee, cop and criminal. The dominant male is just someone you don't want to piss off. You don't fuck with him. His dominance is manifest when he is seen to prevent others from letting their disagreements get out of hand. This may be accomplished with a mere gesture. Observant dog lovers may appreciate this in their own randy male. It is called, by dog handlers, "eye". Mystics might call it "the evil eye". Among many mammals, such as baboons, an important behavior of the male, besides reproduction, is to protect the mothers and babies from predators (such as cheetahs) and often, to share food (yes, even ants and chickens share food). We think of the large male lion with awe and dread, but it is the female who does the hunting and shares the kill with the males. If she is stingy (tyrannical?), he will chase her off.

Brutality and stinginess are the marks, if not the synonyms of tyranny. Tyrants are not unique to the human species. In the end, at least among other animals, they are always disposed of [deposed]. Questions of sharing and sex are usually factors in dominance relations. But this is not a "first-come-first-serve" idea. Nature provides abundance, or one should rather say, abundance is a quality of nature. Competition is not necessary.

Sharing and Sex? Chimpanzees are a good example of individually competent foragers, yet they are notorious for food sharing. In sexual relations, the dominant male chimpanzee is the last to "get any". When she is in the "proper" mood, the female fucks whomever she pleases, usually starting with the eager youngsters. Working her way through the more experienced, by the time she gets to the dominant male, her ovulation cycle is ready for reproduction. Some would say this triggers receptivity in her cycle. And we think we have liberated women!

"Ah, but these are just animals!" you shout, "We are the civilized!" ... "Ooh, ooh, let's get out the whips and chains and mayonnaise!", I am tempted to answer.

Where is "leadership" in all of this? Can animal dominance relations, based on abundance and sharing, even be comparable to our own notions of competitive leadership? Human leadership as we think of it, that is, "THE STATE", was born out of a system or (geoclimatic) period of scarcity. It is a myth that civilization arose from the abundance generated by the "invention" of agriculture which supported population growth in urban centers. Did I say "myth"? It is more properly an urban legend written to support urbanization. It is a racist creation story we learn in grade school from uninformed teachers which pits the urban against the rural, the civilized against the barbarian, modern man against the "primitive"¹.

¹ I prefer the term "primitive" over "native" or "indigenous" if it refers to primacy, not simplicity. These are the "first people" – just ask them. "Native" and its synonyms suggest restriction to a locality. This is also to say prevention from other localities. Without our notion of "property", primitive peoples "owned" the universe. That is, it was free to them. The common historical approach which looks at origins in a specific time or place (the three dimensional or cartographic approach) does not answer the question of who-they-

Civilization: A far more likely tale and more consistent with archaeological, ethnographic and paleo-climate data suggests that people already knew about and some practiced agriculture (shifting cultivation) and animal domestication. A few thousand years after the last glaciation, global warming produced expanding deserts, and as few as five or six times in as many locations, diverse groups congregated in river valleys and walled themselves in against each other and any remaining nomadic peoples. The melting of the glaciers also raised sea levels, spurring unknown numbers of communities living on what are now submerged continental shelves upland and inland, to new and unknown territories already inhabited. The resulting population pressure was in no way caused by increases in technological (and agricultural) production and changes in social organization initiating the neolithic, but may have demanded them in various places. The neolithic was a response to deterritorialization – homelessness, not migrations of explorer-heroes with imperial aspirations. These changes can only be seen through the lense of cooperation. Conquest is rarely a first response except in the modern era. It is the civilized response.

As Fredy Perlman suggested, civilization was born in refugee camps. Some were situated in swamps, others in more hospitable oases. All were Babylons, "melting pots". Their inhabitants were essentially removed from their historical context. Former adaptations to historical and material conditions (ecologic relations) were no longer relevant. It is a hopeful thought that not all, in fact most did *not* become civilized, but where they did, all were around water sources being encroached upon by expanding desert conditions. Food was no longer "easy pickin's" – this was the birth of "productive forces". These productive forces eventually ensured that the entire globe would become desert, no longer a place hospitable to living beings.

It is true that many of these walls and mounded earthworks were erected to displace the waters from living areas, they soon came to displace and separate people as well – the aristocracy from the peasantry, the local group from the neighbors, the priest from the congregation. These congregations were less communities than refugee camps, euphemized as "sanctuaries". Refugee camps are not evolutionary adaptations in the strict sense. They do not display stable or reciprocal ecologic relations but are mechanisms of survival. When the refugee camp (or prison) is made the only option, after a few generations it is the norm, the standard by which all other arrangements are compared. Survival mode becomes the status quo. If the end is only 'survival', any and all means become justified. If competitive trade is not available, rape, pillage and plunder become acceptable means of survival. In the refugee camp, autonomy is not allowed, it is not even possible. Autonomy gives us the notion of multiplicity: multiple arrangements are expected. This demands a sense of 'openness', or 'cultural relativity' where complete isolation is not possible. Isolation is never possible when there are no walls, bounds or restrictions to movement.

were as does an investigation of their metaprogram (the ethnological approach, which asks who-we-are by asking others "who are you?"). "Native Americans" were not discontented Eurasians who migrated to a new continent, but the first people. The entire planet was theirs. That is why local names usually translate to "The People" or "Human Beings" rather than "Bostonians" or "Eugene Anarchists". The only Eurasian ancestors the civilized claim were the discontented, the conquerors. But we, the civilized, are the wayward descendants of the first people.

Cultural relativism is first and last an interpretive anthropological – that is to say, methodological – procedure. It is not the moral argument that any culture or custom is as good as any other, if not better. Relativism is the simple prescription that, in order to be intelligible, other people's practices and ideals must be placed in their own historical context, understood as positional values in the field of their own cultural relationships rather than appreciated by categorical and moral judgments of our making. Relativity is the provisional suspension of one's own judgments in order to situate the practices at issue in the historical and cultural order that made them possible. It is in no other way a matter of advocacy. [– *Marshal Sahlins*]

The conditions in the refugee camp gave birth to private property and the notion of scarcity. "You can no longer water your goats here!", commanded King Thug I. The ancient sport of raiding between groups, which continually recirculated "goods" and people and reflected notions of eternal return and cosmic circulation, became the one-sided and bloody wars of capture and conquest. Because of the abandonment of seasonal rounds (semi-nomadism) and the linguistic and cultural diversity of groups who became settled, previous social arrangements (social organization) broke down. [Later scholars would invert this historical sequence in their "*Tale of The Tower of Babel*"]. Unrestrained competition and a culture of alienation was born. The rulership of 'justice' was largely created to keep this potential free-for-all under control. Sanctuary became prison when an ancient Babylonian philosopher (Thugacles the younger) gave us the culture/nature dialectic as revealed by the very same angels who later informed Descartes. There is no question that conditions of scarcity have repeated in the cyclical course of the world's history, but the *myth of perpetual scarcity* is the oldest social lie, and is only heard among the civilized. This myth provides the foundation for competition and hierarchy.

The 'good' of the few or the one (me!) outweighed the 'good' of the many. If a system of scarcity could be manipulated and controlled, leadership would be maintained. We are fine with this idea when it is the behavior of "leaders", but call each other "psychopath" when we behave thus. In the spirit of cultural relativity and tolerance, the whole issue of leadership might be overlooked, except from the perspective of the shit-sweeper and bridge-dwelling mother. And in fact, it has brought devastation to the entire planet, for the sake of your vinyl siding and groomed lawns. This *civil* leadership is, of course, for you, walled into the middle, who seem so assured of your freedom, security and superiority. The planet may even be past the realm of hope.

Poverty, alienation and the semantics of "hope": In the spirit of H. L. Menken, what is [hope](#) but the expression of one's state of discontentedness? In its modern sense, hope is what one does when all other avenues have been exhausted. That is, hope is an act of desperation. It is resignation; an admittance that your life is out of control. Hope is the statement of a slave and its synonym is "progress". All disgruntled slaves are progressives. All progressives are discontented. By working for or addressing the future, their own "present" will never improve; their own predicament will never change. "Our life is subject to forces beyond our control." This provides the justification [rationalization – in a Freudian or psychoanalytic sense, rationale, reason] for subjection and acquiescence to leadership. This concept "plays the same role that "Original Sin," "Fate" and "The Hand of Destiny" played in the theories of medieval mystifiers"².

2 – *Freddy Perlman* used this sentence in a different context.

Despair is not the opposite of hope. It is the belief or realization that ones hope is in vain. All dichotomies are false dichotomies.

Poverty is the fear of all who are civilized, doubly so the elite. It is the substance of their worst nightmares. This fear is strong incentive to maintain competition and struggle and toil. Our feeling of incompetence as to delivering our own subsistence (I should say "sustenance") is the greatest accomplishment of the rulers. To react and assert oneself demands a seizure – a lifestyle change. But like our ability to provide for ourselves and each other, this too can be co-opted. The anti-consumer movement plays right into their hands: the self-alienated will be a voluntary class of the "have-nots" providing more for those who would "have". No revolution has ever been waged in order to consume less. Less is what we already have.

But isn't the competition for more and more and more what we're fighting? The fetishization of property? Unbridled capitalism? Fetishism arises when we are alienated from our desires. The symbolic representation becomes more important than the thing itself. We, the programmed and hypercivilized, don't even remember what it was we first lost – our pleasure to feed and shelter ourselves and share with others. Even the farmer is lost, who grows specialized crops to purchase money to shop at safeway to purchase food so he can eat. The ever-growing collection of toys we demand does not make up for what we originally lost. There is just never enough. And the leader, the boss, the chief executive officer at safeway is the most alienated – the Human par excellent: competitive, controlling, acquiring. Take away our toys and we experience "the desperation of poverty". [We do not so much fear hunger – "That's what foodstamps are for!" – but how could anyone be deprived of shelter? Ahh, yes! We have jails.] Take away our leaders and we fear "the onslaught of barbarity" – riot, chaos, anarchy for god's sake!. There is no longer room or time for 'quality of life'. The key, of course, is 'quantity'. The reality is scarcity. This is the tyranny of the state.

Along with "barbarity", I think the fear of poverty is the greatest impediment or stumbling block to revolution, to the disposal of tyranny. It stops most in their tracks to even consider an alternative to their predicament. "How would we survive?" "What would we do" (without our masters, our jobs, our leadership, our freedom [to toil], our vinyl-sided "I"-pods)? For those whose passions revolutionaries wish to ignite, the more oppressed of the "working class", struggle and toil is a matter of pride. It is a source of self-identity. "We are the proud, the honest, the hard working!", even as they pronounce "This job sucks!" Maybe the revolutionary slogans should be "Arm the Homeless!" and "We Don't Need Your Stinkin' Jobs!" and "Death to Precarity!".

Goethe proclaimed "None are so hopelessly enslaved as those who falsely believe they are free". I would add: "the man who climbs the windy heights to experience the freedom *of* flight will, if he takes his ambition to its logical conclusion, experience the freedom *from* flight". "Be careful what you wish for", the wise gypsy warned the aspiring job applicant.

So ya say, but do ya do?

When we wake up in the morning and put our feet on the ground we must have a good reason for getting up, if we don't it makes no difference whether we are anarchists or not. We might as well stay in bed and sleep. And to have a good reason we must know what we want to do because for anarchism, for the anarchist, there is no difference between what we do and what we think, but there is a continual reversing of theory into action and action into theory. That is what makes the anarchist unlike anyone who has another concept of life and crystallizes this concept in a political practice, in political theory.

This is what is not normally said to you, this is what you never read in the newspapers, this is what is not written in books, this is what school jealously keeps quiet about, because this is the secret of life: never ever separate thought from action, the things we know, the things we understand, from the things we do, the things with which we carry out our actions.

Here is what distinguishes a politician from an anarchist revolutionary. Not the words, not the concepts and, allow me, in certain aspects not even the actions because it is not their extreme – let us say radical – conclusion in attack that differentiates and characterizes actions. It is not even accuracy in the choice of objective that qualifies them but it is the way in which the person, the comrade who carries out these actions, succeeds in making them become an expressive moment of their lives, a specific characterization, meaningfulness, quality of life, joy, desire, beauty, not the practical realization, not the sullen realization of a deed that is mortally an end in itself and enables one to say: "I have done something today" far from myself, at the periphery' of my existence. – *Alfredo Bonanno, Anarchist Tension*

Is this not also to say that "what we desire", "what we understand", "what we enjoy" should be reflected in how we live? If there is no lifestyle change, there will be no revolution. Throughout their writings, Max Stirner, Feral Faun, Renzo Navatore, etc. suggested that "freedom" is your property, not your right. It cannot be negotiated and therefore must be seized from those who hold it. Freedom is not a commodity to be bartered or traded. That is wage-slavery. Another cannot seize freedom for me – I must take it myself – but we can certainly help each other in the process. Trading freedom for the "security" of the state, the "comfort" of the infrastructure, is subjection to extortion. If you're not having fun, there is something wrong. The fault is not within you so it won't be made right with any amount of medication, but the "tension" needs eased, the "stress" relieved. Revolutionary objective? Subjective revolution? The object *is* the subject, and the subject is you.

Quick! If we are but poor players, strutting and fretting our brief hour upon the stage in this icy pause we call life, perhaps we could all perform in this one act play: we might stand (rise) up, concentrate on our 'present' and our 'pleasure', cross our arms instead of our fingers, and defiantly shout "NO!".

*Practice not-doing,
and everything will fall into place. – Lao Tse*

ch 2: Economics, Cooperation and Competition

What if we thought about the words we choose to use? Are not words merely devices to communicate what we mean? Should we not say what we mean? Or are we forced to mean what we say? Can what we say affect what we mean? Or should we just be mean and force people to do what we say? That seems merely just, doesn't it? Small distinctions, surely! It is true that language changes over time. It changes gradually and randomly. It also changes to accommodate changing conditions we experience around us. Lately, we can witness grand changes within our own lifetime. More and more, these changes seem less a matter of mutual agreement, but imposed from elsewhere, somehow coerced.

Take "economics", for example. Economic used to refer to the management of the household. The "house" is the container which "holds" people and goods. Economics is therefore also the management of the household goods and so refers to the control of, or choices made regarding "plunder" (originally a noun meaning 'household goods') – that which we "have" or have "acquired". Residents of the household, the family, are, like goods, also managed. The provider of the family, the "head" of the household, is the "author" of his family, the producer, the authority. He is "king of his castle". That's how it was when I was growing up.

But through the sexual revolution, the king has been dethroned. The house has been eliminated from the meaning of "economic". The family has been liberated from the tyranny of the "Husband"/Father. "Ecos" is gone. Now there is only "Nomos", management, law. We have acquired a liberating standpoint – global concern.

And so "economics" has always also had a political reference. Or has it? By 1601, "Spendthrift" had replaced the term "Scattergood" in English. So management has also changed reference. Once the exercise of choices in making arrangements and dispersing "goods" (that which is good, or provides pleasure and sustenance), it is now "control" and "power" – the prerogative of masters and bosses who minimize expense (the scattering or "shattering" or "sharing" of goods) and maximize profit (mastery: the professor, professional, proprietor, acquirer, inquisitor).

"Ecos" has acquired a new meaning: the *all*. Nature: 'ecology', 'ecosystem', et cetera. But to the liberated members of the household, "economy" has come to refer to the *small*. We have "economy portion", "economy class", "economy cars", "economy budget". The management of the small and scarce. It is related to "thrift" – skimping, survival mode. "Thrift" once meant the quality of "thriving", having or holding oneself, and referred to flourishing or abundance. Now we need "self-control" just to minimally survive.

We have programs of self-management and psychotherapies for self-empowerment – "taking the responsibility for supervising our own exhaustion and contributing to the mechanism of our own exploitation" [– *Kranti*]. Self-control limits our choices – the economy of thrift. Rather than acquitting (setting free) to abundance in "thriving", we scarcely acquire by acquiescing to abundant authority. Cooperate is no longer "behaving together" but how one behaves to the police. Economic man "submits". While

"power" might have once referred to the ability or freedom to choose, it now allows one to limit the choices of others.

Back when the phrase "Power to the people!" was fashionable, it referred to the ability of the person to make his or her own choices; to freely assemble, to freely organize, and even to freely disorganize. It was a return to a vision of abundance over regulated scarcity, or "economics". After the revolution, we would thrive. What if, instead of "power", we were to return to the word, "choice" and dropped "economic" altogether from distribution? Again, we return to cooperation and sharing. Not "from each according to his ability to each according to his need", but "from me according to my pleasure to you according to your pleasure". Did you ever notice that "please" and "pleasure" share the same root? Back in the day, when someone thanked you, one replied, "my pleasure". This changed to "you're welcome (to it)", and to "no big deal" (da nada – 'it was nothing'), to today's "When do you think you can you pay me back?" or "fuck with me and I'll take it out of your hide". How far we, the civilized, have come.

Competition and Cooperation – or – Isn't Competition Just Another Word for Struggle? Criticism of economic civilization has been around since its inception because of the inherent 'injustice' from the point of view of the *have-nots* when compared to the *haves*. A dialectic was born between competition and cooperation, culminating in the competing politico-economic ideologies: free-market capitalism and socialism or state-communism. Their adherents are known as "top downers" and "bottom uppers" in the same pyramid-shaped social organization. But historical linguistics shows us that the original dialectic is inappropriate. Compare the etymologies [from [Online Etymology](#)]:

cooperation 1398, from L.L. cooperationem "a working together," from cooperari "to work together," from com- "with" + operari "to work" (see operation). Co-op is first recorded 1872, a shortening of co-operative store. [*The possibly distinct co-opt – 'together' + 'choice' or 'mutual choice' – has semantically changed to 'take over' and 'distort', losing any sense of mutuality. It takes on more the sense of 'commodify'.*].

operation: c.1386, "action, performance, work," also "the performance of some science or art," from O.Fr. operacion, from L. operationem (nom. operatio) "a working, operation," from operari "to work, labor" (in L.L. "to have effect, be active, cause"), from opera "work, effort," related to opus (gen. operis) "a work" (see opus). The surgical sense is first attested 1597. Military sense of "series of movements and acts" is from 1749. [*This also coincides with the definition provided by B. F. Skinner: "behavior".*] Operational attested from 1922.

compete: 1620, from Fr. compéter "be in rivalry with," from L.L. competere "strive in common," in L., "to come together, agree, to be qualified," later, "strive together," from com- "together" + petere "to strive, seek" (see petition). Rare 17c., and regarded early 19c. as a Scottish or Amer.Eng. word.

petition (n.): c.1330, "a supplication or prayer, especially to a deity," from O.Fr. peticiun (12c.), from L. petitionem (nom. petitio) "a request, solicitation," noun of action from petere "to require, seek, go forward," also "to rush at, attack," ult. from PIE base *pet- "to fly" [see 'fly'] (cf. Skt. patram "wing, feather, leaf," patara- "flying, fleeting;" Hittite pittar "wing;" Gk. piptein "to fall," potamos "rushing water," pteryx "wing;" O.E. feoðer "feather;" L. penna "feather, wing;" O.C.S. pero "feather;" O.Welsh eterin "bird"). Meaning "formal written request to a superior (earthly)" is attested from 1414. The verb is 1607, from the noun.

Fly: the art and knack of hurling oneself at the earth . . . and missing. [– Douglas Adams]

competent: c.1400, from O.Fr. *competent*, from L. *competentem* (nom. *competens*), *pp.* of *competere* "coincide, agree" (see *compete*). Legal sense is from 1483.

Even in the days of early Latin texts, the distinction seems to have been between action and attempt – acting/behaving with others implied in 'cooperation' as distinguished from attempting/striving/seeking with others implied in 'competition'. Both involve 'coming together in agreement'. Cooperation is especially seen in the etymologically distinct but similar sounding "corporation":

corporation: "that inglorious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility." [– *Ambrose Bierce*]

corporate: 1398, "united in one body," from L. *corporatus*, *pp.* of *corporare* "form into a body," from *corpus* (gen. *corporis*) "body" (see *corporeal*). Corporation "incorporated company for doing business" is from 1530; corporatism is from 1890.

It is a glorious mess sprung from an agreement (Rousseau's "social contract"?) rather than rivalry (Hobbes'/Huxley's "survival of the fittest"?). The semantic transformation resulting in the cooperate/compete dialectic is also found in many other linguistic distinctions we now make, such as dialogue (literally 'speaking together' – 'across' + 'word') and discourse (knocking one off his path' – 'off' + 'path') or argument/debate – a competitive game.

Game itself has an interesting etymology:

game (*n.*): O.E. *gamen* "joy, fun, amusement," common Gmc. (cf. O.Fris. *game*, O.N. *gaman*, O.H.G. *gaman* "joy, glee"), regarded as identical with Goth. *gaman* "participation, communion," from P.Gmc. **ga-* collective prefix + **mann* "person," giving a sense of "people together." Meaning "contest played according to rules" is first attested c.1300. Sense of "wild animals caught for sport" is c.1290; hence fair game (1825), also gamey "having the flavor of game" (1863). Adjective sense of "brave, spirited" is 1725, from the noun, especially in game-cock "bird for fighting." Game plan is 1941, from U.S. football; game show first attested 1961.

We've all, at one time or another, heard the phrase "Life is just a game". An ancient speaker of Old English would probably agree, but for entirely different reasons. There's a new game in town, and it ain't fun! Its rule is struggle, its end is survival, its means is conflict. "Healthy competition" is nothing other than culturally sanctioned conflict. We still leave cleat marks on the face of those on the ladder beneath us, but they are symbolic cleat marks. But in our culture, conflict and competition are not to be confused. Struggle, yes, but not conflict. Personal conflict is a matter of coercing or putting down another's efforts of physical (or other) coercion. Conflict is also used to refer to a discrepancy – 'to make sense, our ideas must not conflict'. Collective conflict is warfare. Warfare cannot even be conducted unless one feels a personal threat from "the enemy" ("they hate us for our freedom!") or the soldier's actual personhood has been stripped away. Who else would volunteer to play this game and why else would military training need to be so 'dehumanizing', even in an all-volunteer army? We may cooperate in our efforts to overcome tyranny – this is called "insurrection". But only modern man would consider this a 'competition'. That is called "revolution" – a competition for control of power. Warfare is a competition for control of resources. Discourse is a competition for control of ideas.

We can now posit an etymology of dialectics itself:

1. obtaining through collecting together (Gk. *dia-* 'through' + PIE. *-leg* 'to collect together')
2. an argument meant to resolve contradiction ('lect-' had come to refer to a collection of words rather than to collection in general. Logos literally means 'the word', from which we get "logic".) [– *Plato*]
3. a kind of discourse or "sophistry" – 'persuasion' synthesizing mutually exclusive ideas: the art and knack of doublespeak [– *George Orwell*]

The modern notion of competition is the establishment of authority or power and position. This is the basis of economics – 'control' and 'one-upmanship'. We compete *for* 'things', the 'prize', 'social status', and even the basic things required for survival. We are judged according to our *competence* or *mastery*. But we moderns are a peaceful lot. Conflict is bad. It's also messy. We need a new word for our "good" struggle on which we can all agree. "Yes, 'competition'! It means collective agreement. Yes, that's what we'll call it!" When in doubt, euphamize. Our colloquial sense of the term, 'competition' derives from property and our ownership or lack of it – value placed on things rather than on our relationships to them. It is the original contradiction or simply 'sin' – an acronym for "Simply INconceivable" to *Homo au naturalis*, "Simply INcontrovertable" to *Homo economicus*. Control through withholding is just another word for property, which for those under control, establishes scarcity. Linguistic analysis would suggest that the inventor of economics might just have been a thug! If this seems a bit biblical, perhaps a more scientific approach would help solve this dilemma.

A.L.F. Parable #3: Thesis and Antithesis – or – **The Real Revolution of Scientific Paradigms** Properly used, dialectical analysis is often not synthesis at all but provides the illustration that the dialectic is itself false. The scientific approach to the world attempts to show that the null hypothesis (a simple contradictory statement) cannot be proven with the demonstration of conflicting evidence. This contradiction allows us to reject the null hypothesis (-antithesis) and therefore retain the hypothesis (+thesis) – nothing is proven. The antithesis is thrown out because it contradicts our senses when we see the data. However, there is still room for argument because reason (actually, 'intuition') might just suggest that the contradiction (conflicting data) was not 'real' in the first place. We all do this. It is rationalization to justify a belief (our thesis) we adhere to despite evidence that we might be wrong ... Sometimes in this we are even correct, but we may never *know* it.

For example, consider our good scientist's thesis which states that "in nature", competition "rules" in relations between species. Nature is operationally defined as an absence of human intervention (obviously, humans are already *not* included in natural operations – we call this "objectivity"). The null hypothesis states that we will not find evidence of competition. Several years ago in Wyoming, a pair of coyotes killed a pair of bobcats over what appeared to be rights to a carcass. This obviously disproves the null hypothesis, even though we admit to this being an extremely rare occurrence. An objection is countered: "How can you consider that natural? Human intervention created a system of scarcity with over-hunting in the area, and fenced highways impeded 'normal' territorial behaviors!" "This is a false dialectic!" Now we righteous scientists compete to see who can find more similar scenarios, who can accumulate more contrary analogies

illustrating such things as respect for other species' territorial boundaries, etc. To finally settle the dispute, we create an experimental environment (an artificial nature) which looks like a huge black box with video monitors (obviously ruling out human intervention), placing therein enough prey to last four predators a lifetime of sustenance (to exclude scarcity operating as an intervening variable). We introduce a pair of very young coyotes and a pair of very young bobcats and wait to see if they fight. If they fight, it should dispel any rumors that competition and a drive for accumulation are not inherent rules operating in nature – the null hypothesis reformulated.

However, during the night, a well-coordinated team of A.L.F. enters the facility, frees the animals and leaves a message denoting the artificiality and cruelty inherent in scientific "nature" and signed *"The Death to Science Brigade"*. Upon arriving to work early the next morning, and witnessing the after-effects of the previous evening's act of terrorism, the cooperationists and competitionists enter the cage to have a look and begin to fight, since that terrorist act itself seemed to prove the cooperationist' thesis on trans-species relations. The competitionists saw only human intervention in the activities of the previous night and said their own conflict proved not only that the experiment was still on, but their side was winning.

Things got quite out of hand and blood was appearing on cage doors and one-way mirrors when, fearing actual property damage, the administrator called in the police. After a long spell with a swat-team negotiator, the good doctors agreed to religiously appeal to a higher authority, the philosopher, Dr. Zaius from the Ministry of Culture, with the questions "What is nature?" and "Does Man belong there?" His more profound dialectical synthesis was able to transcend the original conflict by appealing to our basic cultural assessment, that nature has already been defined as "freedom from human intervention" (anarchy) and that scientists must therefore adhere to the strictest levels of precision, specialization and objectivity. Any alternative would require a paradigm shift we are just not ready for: *"Nature, being that condition without human intervention, is by definition 'anarchy' and therefore, anarchy and precise scientific 'objectivity' are one and the same"*. In fact, it might just cause the collapse of civilization! Since 'laws of natural systems' have therefore no bearing on human systems, the question of cooperation and competition is rendered academic, and our own competitive "nature" remains justified. The conflict has ended, the revolution denied, and, after the ringleaders of dissent are booted out the door, resumé in hand, the scientists carry on in a new spirit of cooperation. – the end

Evolutionary Lessons for the Revolutionary Well, etymology is not helpful – we know what *we* mean by competition, whether it used to mean something else or not. Scientific experiment seems little better. Bureaucrats only dictate truth. What might some of our grand theorists contribute?

Evolution was a grand theory meant to account for the great diversity observed in the world around us. It was an attempt at constructing a new "world view". Darwin coined the phrase, "natural selection" as a 'law' to explain this great diversity. Natural selection is a metaphor of the puppeteer. No one promoting evolutionary theory would suggest an actual cosmic string-puller – that is the realm of the theologian. Does natural selection produce diversity? No, it operates on & maintains it. Diversity is. Diversity

is the existing order, the rule. Diversity gives birth to selection, although nothing is 'actually' selected. That behavior or structure which promotes reproduction *and* maintains diversity survives. Cooperation is one such behavior. Cooperative relations allow the maintenance of abundance. Cooperative relations allow the maintenance of territory or niche. The maintenance of territory or niche maintains autonomy. Autonomy generates more diversity. Diversity means abundance. Natural selection is not a being or thing. It is *ex post facto* deduction. That which is selected is simply that which lives to reproduce. Reproduction is, of course, a matter of intimate cooperation among sexual breeders. Rape occasionally occurs here and there, but even among goats, proper wooing, that special grunt while nibbling on the ear, will grant that old smelly he-goat a bigger harem and waste a lot less energy. Physicists tell us this conservation of energy is the first law of nature. I don't know about such things, but it is certainly a thing easily witnessed in the world around us.

Overpopulation occurs when ecological relations (reciprocal or cooperative arrangements between species in the context of the resource base) are ignored. One might say that conflict would be selected to reduce population size and eliminate the resultant scarcity (the usual suspect evoking competition). One could also say death after reproduction is selected for the same reasons, and we would not therefor see a trend toward immortality. But continued indefinitely, this competition would result in the growth of scarcity and the eventual demise of all life. Physic's second law states that continued growth of a system (eaters compete to consume the eaten) always leads to collapse when feedback loops – reciprocity – are removed. Cooperative relations are by definition reciprocal. An extension of this law states that natural systems tend toward homeostasis (balance, reciprocity). If competition is a factor in natural relations (and I do not deny this), it is always tempered by reciprocity/cooperation – and in fact, by diversity itself – unless the observers restrict their observation to civilization, defined itself by unrestrained growth, unassailed competition. This is the nature of 'progress'. The situation of children fighting over possession of a toy is the usual counter-argument for competition. This can just as easily be seen as a case of setting up a time-sharing arrangement (cooperation). The toy represents scarcity. The 'winner' usually drops the toy when finished and occasionally even gives it to the other. We also call this setting up social roles, or dominance relations. If one remains a possessive bully, a hostility is engendered and the other eventually attempts to clean his clock. Thuggery always breeds insurrection and revolution. Insurrection is another feedback loop which resolves competition, conflict, struggle.

However, the maintenance of reciprocal ecological relations prevents overpopulation in the first place, so we could suggest that cooperative behavior has more selective potential than competition/conflict/death until cooperation again breaks down, as when scarcity is imposed geo-climatically or culturally. Territorial arrangements evaporate and the population can only compete or disperse. The more nomadic populations merely move on. Isolating mechanisms are cooperative agreements/arrangements toward mutual exclusion. This establishes territory. This need not entail a notion of defined boundaries which must be defended. If territorial competition was resolved or "successful", the resulting 'frontier' isolates the population and the competition is at an end. Another isolating mechanism is the time-sharing arrangements seen among graz-

ing animals utilizing the same pastures – competition is avoided. If natural selection is deduction after the fact, one could not say that nature favors a state of competition. This tendency toward reciprocity, autonomy and diversity is, in fact, responsible for the origin of species when the logic of Darwinian evolution is applied.

Evolution has been highly criticized not only because it eliminates reliance on a god for our ontological explanations (one could argue that, consistent with enlightenment thinking, "nature" or "natural selection" actually takes over for god – hence, "intelligent design") but because it is seen to justify or promote social darwinism, and in fact racism and nazism. What we call social darwinism is actually Herbert Spencerism as refined by Thomas Huxley. Drawing from the philosophy of Hobbes (and probably a little Machiavelli), Spencer coined the phrase, "survival of the fittest". Huxley, an eloquent dialectician (bullshit artist), collected examples "in nature" which seem to demonstrate this position. The scientist, Kropotkin, had pretty much refuted this idea, but "History" favored his anarchy over his science. To this day, mainstream evolutionists persist in the notion that competition is the engine of natural selection. It jives with the conception of human nature as is *only* demonstrated by the civilized. It paints a picture of the world of eaters and eaten all fighting for their lives just to survive to reproduction. It is the view of the world as a filthy monster. If risen to a point of fanaticism, it generates an opposing view of nature as an uncorrupted golden age of righteousness and nobility and peace and harmony – the kingdom of heaven on earth. Thus we are divided into two camps: We name each other "fascist" and "bleeding-heart liberal". The competition/cooperation dialectic which gives us "hedonists and "altruists" breaks down when one sees them as polarities rather than oppositions. Would the hedonist suggest conflict as the basis of a loving relationship? (In fact, many do.) Would the altruists suggest cooperation as a response to vampires or rapists? Or, for that matter, tyrants? Sometimes conflict is necessary, but should it provide the basis of our existence? What do the first laws of physics suggest? *Relax!* (turn on?). *Party!* (tune in?). *Refuse!* (drop out?).

'To the clean are all things clean' – thus say the people. I, however, say unto you: To the swine all things become swinish! Therefore preach the visionaries and bowed-heads (whose hearts are also bowed down): 'The world itself is a filthy monster.' For these are all unclean spirits; especially those, however, who have no peace or rest, unless they see the world from the backside – the backworldsmen! To those do I say it to the face, although it sound unpleasantly: the world resembleth man, in that it hath a backside, – so much is true! There is in the world much filth: so much is true! But the world itself is not therefore a filthy monster! [– Nietzsche]

Human beings are not absurd, and the world is not absurd, but for humans to be in the world is absurd. Human beings, recognizing the limitations implied in being human in this world, cannot create another world which ignores the absurdity of this existence – but they can revolt [– Albert Camus, Paraphrased]

The scientists have told us "Man has transcended the state of animal nature via civilization". Today's headlines show us what appears the more obvious: "Nay, 'Man' is the 'Beast'." But I say unto you, "Belief in the great beast, the filthy monster, the leviathan is not absurd; but the beast itself is absurd, as is he who alternately promotes the grand intelligence of the species." Did I say "absurd"? It's a Greek fuckin' tragedy! [– fendersen]

ch 3: PLEASURE AND THE FETISH OF REVOLUTION

Suffering is the pain of constraints. An atom of pure delight, no matter how small, will hold it at bay. To work on the side of delight and authentic festivity can hardly be distinguished from preparing for a general insurrection . . . People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have corpses in their mouths.

The moment revolution calls for self-sacrifice it ceases to exist. The individual cannot give himself up for a revolution, only for a fetish. Revolutionary moments are carnivals in which the individual life celebrates its unification with a regenerated society. The call for sacrifice in such a context is a funeral knell . . . The fact is that there will never be any friendship, or love, or hospitality, or solidarity, so long as self-abnegation exists. The call for self-denial always amounts to an attempt to make inhumanity attractive.

The real demand of all insurrectionary movements is the transformation of the world and the reinvention of life. This is not a demand formulated by theorists: rather, it is the basis of poetic creation . . . The complete unchaining of pleasure is the surest way to the revolution of everyday life, to the construction of the whole man. – Raul Vaniegem

If we were to imagine a world of abundance, the young and inexperienced might face it with excitement and name this feeling "Pleasure". Their elders call this "play". The older and experienced, utilizing their powers of induction, presume that abundance is a permanent thing, a quality of existence, and face it with contentment. This unhurried approach they label "pleasure". The very young experience life as an orgasm – "a festival of intermittent explosions, exuberant and disorderly creations, monstrous and excessive fruitions."³ But passions can only be maintained for so long. Soon rest periods take on the quality of contentment and pleasure as well. Rest periods become decreasingly necessary as we age if we search out unhurried contentment over passion and "orgasm". The elder may even forget about passion altogether. When rest is deprived from the young, they become old prematurely. When the orgasm of play is denied, they become neurotics, revolutionaries or willing slaves.

Where can there be room for pleasure if contentment is stifled? All that remains is a search for orgasm. And if the orgasm is also inhibited, a life of addictions and fetishes results. By denying abundance (with "morality" and "poverty") and regulating scarcity (with wages and welfare), capitalist civilization essentially outlaws experience as orgasm *and* contentment. It outlaws pleasure. If pleasure is seen as reinforcement [I wish someone would take the "force" part out of that word]⁴, all living things will follow that road. All things "desire" reinforcement. If pleasure or reinforcement is denied, life

3 www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/kka/volcano.html

4 Reinforcement is one of those unfortunate words which has come to mean some very different things. I almost hesitate to use it. The military sense is obvious, but in construction work, it suggests a buttress or support. Reinforcement rods ("rebar") keep concrete from crumbling. Basically, my use is meant to reflect the notion of behaviorists – synonymous with "reward" but without the economic implications of that term. The pleasurable anticipation of food made Pavlov's dog salivate when the bell rang, not the fear of punishment or deprivation. The food given coincident with the bell was the reinforcement, not a 'reward' for salivating. Behavior is repeated (reproduced?) when it is associated with positive or pleasurable reinforcement – sexualised behavior doubly so. All organisms respond favorably to pleasure.

can only be experienced as frustration, discontent and paranoia.

We become fat but never satiated. We might play but are never satisfied. Our life becomes a series of empty motions. The dose must continually be increased because the fix, the rush gets further and further from our reach. Commodity and fetish merge and become one. Fetishism arises when we are alienated from our desires. The symbolic representation becomes more important than the thing itself – the thing itself is forgotten. Fetishism is the situation and the spectacle. Commodification generates competition and struggle. Competition and struggle is the new definition of "Pleasure".

"Then can fat people even be revolutionaries?" you ask.

Can gaunt junkies become revolutionaries? Can a zen buddhist? Distraction *is* pleasure. It is the novel and the source of adventure. It matters not whether it is experienced as orgasmic excitement or unhurried contentment. I want both in my life. Both are pleasurable. For an old shepherd analogy, sheep will choose a grassy path and spread out from there in all directions. Their distraction from the path is their "purpose". However, if there is a bear or fog, they will choose a wide barren path and "string" – they travel in single file. They do not do this because the path is free of distraction, but because they are frightened, and escape takes precedence over immediate pleasure, gratification, distraction. We, on the other hand, might choose to fight the bear or defiantly face the fog head-on. We compete with them and our revolution is couched only in the terms of struggle. Our struggle becomes our pleasure and in this, it becomes a fetish.

I bring up the idea of fetishism because intimacy is often forgotten. The pleasure of climax is no longer the "reinforcement" of intimacy but the goal itself. Sex itself becomes fetishized and dissociated from intimacy in a culture which seems to do everything in its power to prevent intimacy. In the same way 'struggle' can be fetishized by the revolutionary and the original goal (the end of struggle) is forgotten. Isn't the end of struggle the beginning of pleasure? Or need we wait till after the revolution, when all the rulers are lined up against the wall? Thus, for the "proper" revolutionary we have permanent struggle for its own sake and death to pleasure, a personal hangup and an impediment to "proper revolutionary theory". For Reich's "orgone addict", the search of pleasure by the alienated, we have pleasure in the rituals of fetish, the "better-than-sex" rush for the junky, the uncontrollable appetite for the bolemic, the rapture of the snake bite for the pentecostal fundamentalist, the unending search for a cosmic orgasm for the uncontented. But still, there is no intimacy. At the "clinic", you are diagnosed with an "impulse-control" disorder stemming from anxiety or depression or both, the famous "bipolar disorder". "It is due to your own imbalance of brain chemistry". In other words, "It's your own fuckin' fault". And we eagerly fall for this shit. Now we fetishize psychotherapy and pharmacology. Still, there is no intimacy, no pleasure, but there *is* commodity!

Perhaps from a marxist point of view, morality-driven repression has always been a useful tool to offset (or detract from) the oppression of work and maintenance of class division. In Marx' as well as Freud's day, the "pleasures of life" could be restricted to the wealthy and culminate in and passed on to the inheritors of property. All other pleasure in the social arrangements of the worker is reduced to the orgasm experienced in

the privacy of the monogamous dwelling-place for the purpose of reproducing units of labor – workers. Consistent with the Puritan ethic, intimate social relations outside of this arrangement are aberrant, neurotic, criminal, sinful. There is yet an element of Charles Dickens' London with us today.

It is natural for the "dominant class" to want to restrict or subvert pleasure because that is distraction from production and might lead to novel ideas like sharing. Intimacy might just be the greatest fear of the paranoid. Intimacy might lead to passion, and even passion about work, the approach of the craftsman and artisan, is to be avoided on the assembly line.

I think very few would suggest we could have 'pleasure' 100% of the time. Of course, what many see as pleasure is itself an illusion, that is, pleasure itself is fetishized and we experience 'pleasure' through commodities. Pleasure itself becomes a commodity. Pleasure is consumption. You might agree that many others (I'm thinking of our fine young boys and girls throwing live goats down wells over there in Iraq) derive pleasure through conflict and struggle. It may not be commodity, but it is still fetish, it is still part of the spectacle – the illusion that we are alive.

What we are against is the fact that genuine, subjective pleasure is increasingly limited in our society. Public displays of pleasure are often suspect, if not outright illegal. When it's only residence is in our leisure time, it can become forced and empty. There's just not enough time to plan out how to fit pleasure in. Any old diversion will do – even an evening with a six-pack in front of the tube. Passion and spontaneity are no longer a part of the experience. When luxuries are ubiquitous, they lose their luxuriant quality. In the same vein, the most pleasurable moments are not prolonged, but the experience of pleasure its self exists in the moment.

By the same token, many have come to view work as exertion or toil. Unless one is a professional player, I'm sure a game of soccer is not viewed as 'work' or its exertion as 'struggle'. The soccer match as workplace struggle? In [The Abolition of Work](#), Bob Black pointed out that leisure-time would disappear if work-time was eliminated. The abolition of work does not mean the abolition of "productive" activity. The abolition of work/leisure is the abolition of bosses, the abolition of authority, the abolition of time management. It is the liberation of desire and creativity. For many, the sense of community and camaraderie is only found at the workplace. Perhaps that is something "revolution" would liberate as well, so that community and camaraderie become part of our "everyday life".

Perhaps we will come to view pleasure in a new way as well. The point is that we do not propose to replace work with pleasure, but to permit pleasure with the abolition of work (and leisure). Part of Vaneigem's 'revolution of everyday life' is an attempt to bring pleasure itself back into the subjective realm where it belongs, not to promote a coke-snorting disco generation of happy hedonists, as the detractors of Situationism have tried to detourne it. The point is also not that "this is how the revolution will play itself out", but that if we do not ourselves address these concerns, the spectacle will follow right through our revolution like a dormant herpes virus hiding out in your tail bone, and re-emerge in a pandemic at every period of stress in our future social relations.

Gratification is the process of becoming free (gratis) – the freedom of pleasure, the freedom of our own distractions. If civilization is a barren road free of distractions which might interfere with production, I should think any revolutionary theory should demand distraction, demand pleasure. The alternative is continuous struggle, and civilization is fine with this, as struggle also forgoes pleasure, the freedom *from* struggle.

ch 4: VALUE AND THE MYTHOS OF THE AD-MAN

There is a saucy ghost, the spirit of Edward L. Bernays, which hovers above the head of every ad-man on Madison Avenue. The most susceptible of them research and analyze every social movement, especially defiant or revolutionary movements, and ask themselves, "outside of the revolutionary or rebellious context, does this behavior actually threaten the capitalist order?" If not, it is passed on to the producers in Hollywood to incorporate it with capital value. When they are finished with the idea, what was a symbol of rebellion becomes the socially acceptable and, among the young, required behavior. It is, thus, capitalized and incorporated into the mainstream. The very same acts now deny the revolutionary potential. There are, however, behaviors which are contradictory to the capitalist arrangement, such as gifting, squatting, free stores, etc. and never become the centerpiece of Hollywood productions or represented by Mc-Toys. For example, we see documentaries on the 'Hibijibis' busy at work building canoes, tilling gardens, getting tattoos, even to displaying nudity and circumcision 'rites'. If it is 'exotic' or illustrates a primitive necessary stage in the process of the progress of glorious capitalism, these things are highly exploited. It is totally racist production. It suggests our own historical inevitability.

I defy you to find a similar documentary on the discovery channel or national geographic (our 'authorities', of course) depicting the gifting economy as an intimate system and efficient means of so-called 'economic' redistribution and a viable alternative to capitalist exchange. This never happens. Even the socially critical message in the film, Lord Greystoke, suggests no alternative. The protagonist escapes the corruption of civilization, returning to the jungle to "live with the monkeys" – obviously antisocial behavior from our 'cultured' and 'civilized' perspective. Even the Africans did not offer a viable alternative to our hero. They were depicted as nasty and brutal. Civilization, even if in need of reform, is rendered the only game in town.

Ad-men provide us with the possible alternatives we may chose from. Some ad-men are studio bosses, some are marketing researchers, some make up the board of directors of granting institutions for scientific research, some are cia analysts, some are the editors of publishing houses. All political campaign managers and presidential advisors are ad-men. All are charged with maintaining the logic of the culture or making certain that 'innovations' or change adhere to that logic. Bernays called this "propaganda" and this has given rise to "secret" conspiracy theories pointing to the "illuminati", "alien invaders", "zionist networks", "communist conspirators", "the left", "the right". I could go on all day. Conspiracies are always "vast". The big secret is that there is no secret. The system works too well to require vast conspiracies.

Some of the conspiracy theories have a historical basis. For example the "vatican conspiracy" is based on the historical fact of the papal discouragement of literacy and the charges of the benedictine and olivene orders to confiscate classical works of philosophy and science. The Roman Catholic church itself was patterned after the utopian theocracy envisioned by Philo of Judea before 50 a.d. The "Illuminati" itself springs from the beginning of the "Renaissance" (culminating in the "Enlightenment"), when Arab scholars "leaked" classical works into Europe out of retaliation to christian Euro-

pean and Judaic leadership renigging on an agreement to divide the known "civilized world" into three theocratic states – Christian, Judaic and Islamic. The Moslems were short-changed in the deal. This spat, of course, resulted in the crusades, from the same source which gave us the likes of an enlightened Galileo or Newton or Da Vinci.

Many of these theories themselves originate from the professional ad-men. This is not so much to prove P. T. Barnum's edict on the preponderance of suckers, but to point dissent away from the logic of the state. It must remain in the unconscious, unquestioned. If it is protected, then even mass uprisings and violent revolutions will eventually reproduce the "established order". Thus, even revolutionaries (particularly Marxist revolutionaries) and anarchists are tolerated. They are confident that every individual within the order is him or herself an amateur ad-man – every parent, every teacher, every priest. The ad-man is the high priest as well as the secret police. When the ad-men are overtaxed (in every sense of the word), when things start to look shaky to our 'leadership', the toleration of dissent is relaxed and the real police become more apparent. We are seeing this today in Europe and North America. We become a "police state" until things have settled down a bit. We saw this "settling down" with the fall of the Berlin wall and the so-called collapse of the Soviet Union. There was no "defeat of communism". There has never been a communist state, nor will there be – It is a contradiction of terms, an oxymoron.

But just what is this logic which is so well protected, which we do not question? A very important part of it is our notion of value. Very generally, value reflects our relationship to objects and to situations we encounter. A reductionist view might present value as ultimately defining our approach (pleasure) or avoidance (pain). But value is much more than this. It is symbolic and emotional. We can speak of spiritual value, nostalgic or sentimental value, moral and ethical value, cosmetic value, and of course economic value (use value or labor value). What we call 'property' is generally defined as "that which has value", "that which is owned". "That which can be withheld". It is "the object of productive forces". "The product of labor". When slaves produce objects of value for others to own, those slaves and the tools they use are called "the means of production". What was once a personal relationship or association is now a characteristic of the thing itself whether we are around to appreciate it or not. This is the fetishism of production. Only that which is produced by slaves (also called "the proletariat" or the "working class") has value. This 'inherent value' is nothing other than the expropriated life of the worker, stolen and merged with the object. The object is now valued property, of greater importance than the man or the woman who provided it. Naturally, during hurricanes, "looters" will be shot!

Wealth used to be merely a term of possession. Its synonyms included 'world', 'health', 'the good', and 'plunder' (originally meaning household 'goods'). It was a notion of abundance which was gathered and divided up (sheared) and scattered about (shared). The one implied the other – in Indoeuropean, the gathering and sharing were not even linguistically differentiated). Today wealth is a symbol of something else. It is the ability to accumulate, to own. It is 'to have and to hold'. Property is deprivation from others. It allows others to toil and provide favors for small amounts – enough to minimally survive. Property becomes commodity when it gives one person leverage over

another or enables one to acquire more property. Now the par excellent notion of value is leverage. Everything else is luxury or garbage. Only the luxuriant retains an emotional association. Money, less and less a physical representation of property but an idea of leverage – a credit rating given life by electronic transaction of ones and zeros, is a symbol of wealth and luxury. It is both a means to property and a means to power. This is *the* social relation and for the capitalist par excellent, the only source of pleasurable emotion.

The old adage, "necessity is the mother of invention" is today restated: "invention is the mother of necessity". This is the illusion/image of the spectacle. It is what we experience today – the cell phone is a necessity produced by it's invention. The same process/lie which allows capitalists to accumulate capital is what Rexroth called "the social lie", which allows governors to govern. Marx's materialism had itself progressed/detoured with the reification of capital itself – it can only be expressed in terms of money/credit, wealth and power, yet we speak of capital doing this or mediating that. It is now a thing, a force in itself. Marx's analysis of capitalism (the process, not the thing) is only concerned with economic/productive relations. Those things can be measured and are subject to scientific inquiry. Debord's spectacle refers to the totality of social relations, not just economic and productive. The spectacle is not quite the metaphor that is Perlman's "Leviathon", but both refer to the same thing – civilization. In fact, since the spectacle (or the capital relation, if you must) comes to produce illusions as much as commodities, consumption becomes a more important focus of attack by situationists as well as the entire 50's/60's counter-cultural current.

Debord, the 'father' of situationism, was less concerned with the consumption of commodities (is this not also a kind of accumulation?), or the capitalists' accumulation of capital (is this not also a kind of consumption?), but with the consumption of illusions – ideas. Luxury becomes indistinguishable from necessity. I don't think even Marx would object to this idea. Only illusion is not easily measured. Bernays, following the teachings of his uncle Sigmund Freud, discovered that it can indeed be measured and also manipulated. The social lie became a growth industry – we now commodify fetishes. Marketing-research (psyops) makes the more extensive critique by the situationists (than marxian empiricism which downplays consumption to productive processes) even more profound today. We are the inheritors of lies. The 'Beat Generation' in America and the Situationists in Europe suggested we start working on them right now – learn to recognize the illusion and deal with it in your everyday life.

Inherent value is the myth of capitalism. It leads to such statements as "the ultimate inherent value of an item derives from the labor put into it" and "the ultimate inherent value of a thing is found in its capability to be used". (Sounds like something the scarecrow might have said when he was given a brain). This myth is the basis of manipulation and sexism and racism and exploitation and control. It is the myth of domination, the myth for slavery. It provides us the meaning of life: it gives us the rulers and the ruled, the haves and the have-nots, the master and slave.

Our ad-men, the valiant preservers of myth, can convert almost any property ('that which has value') into commodity ('leverage'). Moral and ethical values are no longer personal and social codes of conduct (providing "manners" or "etiquette") but may be-

come 'law' – a coercive code of conduct with consequences of imprisonment, pain and even execution and eternal suffering. The first rule of this new commodified code is "obey". The second is "work". The third is "acquire". For the king, it is only "acquire" and "command".

When 'luxury items' are commodified, people strive harder to obtain them. They must work longer hours. Luxury is doled out like bread and circuses and this establishes and defines a middle class. Progress is guaranteed since the workers will never achieve actual abundance. Many know this to be true, and toiling at the hardest tasks with the longest hours, adopt a spartan pride: "we are the workers, the backbone of civilization, the real people". Thus we have come full circle to the Calvinism of earlier centuries, the Reformation and Enlightenment to attain universal literacy and freedom from papal authority. But the ad-men were well in control. Our civilized notions of value, property, wealth, 'wise' leadership and the 'ethic' of work were not only well protected but fine-tuned.

From the early sixteenth century, Hobbes was perhaps the greatest of the modern ad-men. Originally working for the papacy, he shifted to the monarchy of the nation-state, and then to the parliamentarian of republic, from whom he escaped back toward the protection of the pope before he died of plague. Hobbes gave us the notion that before and outside of civilization, "Life was nasty, brutish and short" – the opposite view of the ancient Greek cynics (anarchists). In the comfort of his armchair, he arrived at this proclamation from the travelogues and journals of racist and ethnocentric colonial administrators and their front-men, the culture-demolishing missionaries. As far as revealed by 'history', the only alternative to the capitalist ethic, the cultural logic of civilization, is represented in 'prehistory' – almost the entire history of humanity on the planet – and in remnants of 'primitive' peoples, most of whom were and are still being annihilated by capitalist encroachment, the colonial process. As long as they are portrayed as savage and brutish or even innocent and noble (from the other ad-man, Rousseau) but uninformed and unenlightened – ie. backward and stagnant – our progress is assured. We will see nothing in their lives as possible, even if it seems admirable.

We can only make assumptions about life before civilization based on the physical things they left behind – their artifacts, and also by comparison with their descendants who did not adopt civilization, which is none other than capitalism and the state (sticklers of semantic precision may attach the prefix, 'proto-'). Reconstruction of ancient languages, for example, Proto-Indo-European, which traces back to about 5000 years ago, also sheds some light on our own 'prehistoric' notions. Hobbes was an armchair theorist. Since the early Greeks (before Plato) there has been little systematic or scientific study until Napoleon, Thomas Jefferson, and finally Franz Boas. This study has come to be known as Anthropology. What has *not* been found by scientists and investigators is a depiction of life as nasty, brutish or short. It is much closer to what the early Greeks romantically described as "the Golden Age", which their critics and cynics yearned to somehow return. This is definitely *not* a notion to which our ad-men would ascribe. What is revealed of life on the outside of civilization is a "primitive" communism. No endorsement of property as commodity, of coercive authority, of labor (as opposed to playful exertion) and of economic transaction (in the modern sense of the word). Instead

we have a picture of an abundant, integrated, circulating cosmos which is recapitulated in daily life as gifting, sharing, pleasure (as opposed to our toil) and cooperation (as opposed to our coercion). It is an appreciation of associations and relations, not the enamoration of objects and things. It is a trend toward the altruistic rather than toward the hedonistic.

Yet how are they portrayed by the ad-man? Sort of like Saddam Husein: they remove babies from incubators and throw them into incinerators. Sort of like the Yahoos of Gulliver's Travels: they muck about in the mud stealing raw meat from each other. Sort of like the orphaned deer in Bambi: they need taken in, watched over, managed. Primitive peoples need to be brought into "the brotherhood of man" or be annihilated. "You will be assimilated . . . Resistance is futile!" Hell, even the Borg incorporate and learn from the distinctiveness of other cultures in their search for perfection, their own voyage of domination. "We are the Borg!" – only more subtle and more malignant.

Even though our revered scientists assure us that the cosmos is an integrated, circulating system, civilized man is the only one who feels he does not have to take part in this circulation. The Enlightenment and historical materialism have told us we are not bound by cosmic forces. Didn't god give us the planet to abuse, ahem, use as we will? We are reactionaries. We will not be slaves to nature! We will tame and control it.

And so we eagerly bind and become bound *by* (rather than *to*) each other. Interesting.

ch 5: DIALECTICS: INFINITY AND MATHEMATICAL OPPOSITION

Dialectics is the science of the most general laws of development of nature, society, and thought. Its principal features are as follows:

1) The universe is not an accidental mix of things isolated from each other, but an integral whole, wherein things are mutually interdependent.

2) Nature is in a state of constant motion:

"All nature, from the smallest thing to the biggest, from a grain of sand to the sun, from the protista to man, is in a constant state of coming into being and going out of being, in a constant flux, in a ceaseless state of movement and change." –Friedrich Engels, Dialectics of Nature.

3) Development is a process whereby insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes lead to fundamental, qualitative changes. The latter occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, in the form of a leap from one state to another.

"Merely quantitative differences, beyond a certain point, pass into qualitative changes." –Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1.

4) All things contain within themselves internal dialectical contradictions, which are the primary cause of motion, change, and development in the world. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectical_materialism

The first three points do not diverge from Epicurus' notions from around 367 B.C. as revealed by Lucretius (*On the Nature of Things*) in 50 B.C. The divergence or uniqueness of Dialectic Materialism is seen in the fourth point, where we have a platonic or cartesian notion of opposition and conflict operating throughout the universe.

In a one or two dimensional mathematical universe, two points an equal distance from a central point along an axis are said to be opposed or "opposite". Move the center point and the opposition of any two points disappears, or must be thought of as gradients of opposition. If there are an infinite number of points on this line, and the central point is therefore arbitrary, the concept of opposition is rendered meaningless. The notion of infinity demands relativity.

In a three or more dimensional universe, two or more facing geometric structures [matters] existing in space [arbitrarily imposed universe] are said to be opposed. If space [the universe] and matter [structures] are infinite in time, dimension and number, then opposition can only be thought of as points of comparison. That is, all things compared are in opposition and may be said to be two sides of an equation or statement of equivalence, and multiple sides in advanced mathematics. Opposition is rendered academic, since everything will be seen to be comparable and therefore in opposition. It does not follow that everything is in opposition and therefore, is comparable. Comparison does not necessarily imply a cause-effect relation.

Opposition and *dichotomy* can now be stated as "true in some sense, false in some sense, meaningless in some sense, true and false in some sense, true and meaningless in some sense, false and meaningless in some sense, true and false and meaningless in some sense" (Gregory Hill, *Principia Discordia*).

If the universe or space is infinite, the beginning of universe, space, or the infinite

"container" of everything can be found at the end of the individual geometric structure. If "you" are that structure, then the universe is "you" and "everything else". It branches out from "you" in all directions forever. It is big, infinitely. This idea led god to the mistaken idea that s/he is the beginning and the end. Many philosophers have themselves entertained this mistaken notion. If the quantum folks are on the right track, that is, the universe is also small, infinitely, then the individual structure, or "you" is a finite structure (with a definite boundary) which nevertheless contains infinity branching in every direction toward the infinitely small. Thus spoke Lao Tse 2500 years ago:

"The Tao is like a well: used but never used up. It is like the eternal void: filled with infinite possibilities. It is hidden but always present. I don't know who gave birth to it. It is older than God."

If everything which exists, that is, "existence", actually does exist, then the only sensible dichotomy or opposition is between the individual structure [such as you or me, or this rock], which begins at your edge and continues to the infinitely small, and everything else, which begins at your edge and continues to the infinitely big. If the tau [or totality, or universe (U)] is "you" plus "everything else", then it is precisely twice as large as infinity (∞): $U=2 \times \infty$. This statement is linguistically unreasonable. If space-plus-time is a foldable fabric, then inside can be outside and even this dichotomy breaks down: $U=U$. Existence is a pure redundancy. Sense and nonsense are now reducible to each other and the only sense left is "humor", which may be described also as "pleasure".

The 3-d Order: Stream of thought on the impossibility of a discourse on the dialectics of dissonance:

disordered → disorganized → disagreed → negated → denied → discredited → argued → deluded → delusioned → disillusioned → disallowed → deprived → economized → dejected → rejected → ejected → neglected → subdued → vanquished → enslaved → entangled → sorted → arranged → ordered → organized → accorded → included → classified → opposed → disordered → disorganized → disagreed → negated → denied ⁵

It is a circle starting at "disordered". If any other point in the circle is selected as a starting point, for example, "argued", a new circle of meanings may be drawn which might include: fought, discoursed, dialogued, communicated, intercoursed, kama sutra'd etc. etc. The comparison of any two points in the circle will exhibit 'fuzzy' relations. Intersecting circles are also related this way. Any point may have emotional markers such that we view them more or less negatively or positively. In "Information processing", emotional attachments help us focus and remember. Where can there be a dialectical synthesis where oppositions are selected arbitrarily, where there are so many shades of meaning and intent, where the map itself changes depending on where we are standing?

We can communicate so well because we can make nearly unlimited semantic distinctions. The distinctions we make derive from associations, not oppositions. The brain, which is the parent of language, functions to make associations. That is what it does. In "classical conditioning", and even "operant conditioning", pleasure (reinforce-

5 'dis-' separation = apart; 'dia-' transformation = across/through, between; 'de-' origination = from

ment) is associated with a behavior or an idea. When we repeat that behavior, it is said we have learned. By the same token, when the reinforcement re-occurs, we also tend to repeat the behavior whether or not we have notions of a pay-off. When something is associated with pain or deprives us of our pleasure, we overcome it or avoid it. "That is the way things are!", said Old Lodge Skins (Thomas Berger, *Little Big Man*).

We, the civilized, have been taught to submit because we are deprived of any alternative to overcome or avoid our pain (or misery). Fortunately, dissent among the civilized is guaranteed. The fly-swatter is never as efficient as honey when catching flies. This was the essential notion of B. F. Skinner (as in, "Hey, stop beating on your kids"). He has since been totally discredited and satanized by both mainstream and californiachique psychology. But goat-herders have always known this to be true. One could say wage-slavery was the dialectic response to counter the ever-present slave revolts by co-opting pleasure and replacing it with symbolic reward – the creation of commodity fetishism. The problem is that pleasure was already negated by the system of restraint and punishment and we continue to view the wage as an improvement. Free men were already enslaved by the illusions of property, value and rights to their acquisition and appropriation. The analysis only reflects the success of the illusion colloquially held (but in error) that reinforcement and reward are the same beast.

We respect the person whose actions reflect her ideas. He whose actions and ideas are in opposition is called a hypocrite. Distinction is an expression of uniqueness and a measure of diversity, not opposition. Those distinctions we collectively agree on are rehearsed and repeated – learned as language, given by our culture and history. We are not always in agreement because we each draw our individual circles in a unique way. We only relate to each other in a fuzzy sort of way. This guarantees both uniqueness and diversity. Thus, without diversity, there can be no communication and without common ground, there can be no community. A community is an association, not a collection of oppositions. That is a prison. A language based only on a logic of dialectics would be extremely limited. It would lead to an information culture – a culture where everyone is in *formation*. Its language is a well-ordered machine language. The individual is expressed as a one or a zero. It is the language of Vulcan.

Alternately, there is the parable of the two hunters.

There were once two hunters, Hordrik and Edelgraff, disagreeing as to which direction the injured deer went, west or east. The Shaman was called from the village south of the hunting-ground to mediate. Many of the people followed her to see what was the trouble. Her dialectical synthesis provided the answer: "North, up in the hills", an elegant choice of a middle path. "How can this be?" asked the hunters. "The tracks lead to the west and to the east!" After putting on war paint and having a dance the people decided to split up. The spiritually-inclined went north, the left-enders went west, the right-enders went east.

All things being equal, can you predict who did *not* find the deer?

At dusk, the three groups returned to the camp-fire, each with a deer. All the people congratulated the shaman and thanked the grandfather, Abundance, for this miracle. They went out and collected the people from the other villages and celebrated with a feast. The people were happy.

The original injured deer, however, after leading Hordrik and Edelgraff west, and then east, had circled around the village on a difficult rocky path and went to the south. There he met

many other deer who took him in and collected herbs and healed his wounds. Over time, he met a beautiful maiden among them, and the two had many children who grew and had their own adventures wandering the four directions.

In nature, which is abundance, all things are never equal, and nothing is opposed. They were all right, and they were all left. They were all up, and three deer went down. The question is rendered meaningless, but the truth is made abundant: dancing celebration, tasteful venison, healing herbs, skillful hunters, beautiful maidens, and plentiful children.

revolution and cognitive dissonance: Cognitive dissonance is not, or should not be viewed as stress resulting from conflicting ideas. We all hold conflicting ideas, and they rarely cause a problem. Surely, when we critically look within and discover conflict, we make adjustments, or at least rationalizations, and this is pleasurable. Pleasure should be the basis of real education.

The stress we usually attribute to cognitive dissonance (which is, itself a dialectical approach to understanding "thinking"), appears when that which defines us as an individual, or an individual member of a group is attacked. To use John Lilly's term, when our "metaprogram" – the filter through which we view the world – is attacked, we experience stress. If the attack is not strong, we fight. "Them is fightin' words!" If it is strong enough to actually damage us, that is, we acknowledge some portion of its logic, we retreat. There we fall back on Freud's "defense mechanisms" and possibly even shut down – "this does not compute". If the attack is successful, it is said to be a revolution. Someone is escorted to the guillotine.

But, while human beings employ logic, they are not logic machines, as the A-I crowd presume. The metaprogram relies on basic assumptions which usually lie at an unconscious level. They need not be in a state of formal agreement. They are not questioned. An aristotelian metaprogram, especially as formulated by Descartes, renders the world as composed of opposites. If one side is good or true, its opposition must be evil or false. At the very least, every idea has its opposite. "All things being equal" (that is, in a state of machine perfection), if part of a thing or idea is offensive it discredits the whole system, structure or idea. We *want* to "throw out the baby with the bath-water".

This underlies all our notions of dualism. Either or. The world is either perfect ("It is as it should be") or imperfect. Thus, "enlightened" humans strive toward perfection. The old discourse between Epicurus' atoms and Plato's essences became Descartes' idealism and Locke's materialism. Now we have mind/body, sacred/mundane, science/philosophy and waves/particles. The old evolutionists told us "everything strives toward perfection". Their cousins, the revolutionists, told us "the revolution must be permanent". To this day, this grates on the nerves of the enlightened, who, wanting to feel "special", tell us our imperfection (sin) is our special gift from a perfect god so we alone can strive toward perfection. Progress through struggle. Dialecticians sought to quiet the argument by eliminating the conflict rather than the oppositions themselves. Borrowing from the utilitarian epistemologists, 'Truth' becomes "whatever works". But this liberal attitude does not jive with the conservative who would strike the child who arrives at the correct answer through her own intuitive logic rather than through the prescribed steps. Intuition is often mistaken.

Finally, we have the opposition, "Man is either basically good or basically evil". Enlightened conservatives like the "evil" side. It accounts for our special gift, sin. We therefore need rules and leadership. Liberals may chose the good side, but do not consider perfection. We are considered weak and incompetent. We therefore need beneficent rules and wise leadership – a Fidel Castro, but certainly not a Che Guevera. We need liberated. Purist anarchists seem to be the only crowd who see humans as basically good *and* competent. "Screw your rules and your leaders! We will liberate ourselves!" Nihilist skeptics share this same sentiment, but also throw out the oppositions altogether. They keep the baby but throw out the bath water. (Or is it the other way around?)

Dialectical synthesis (which we get not from Hegel, but from Plato, Aristotle's teacher) attempts to discover the most basic oppositions and rectify them by throwing out that which does not conform to the metaprogram (paradigm) and merging what remains on both sides. It is "Middle Road" philosophy and conservative analysis. The truth of the equation (=) lies within the lines of the symbol, not on either side of it. It is an approach toward unity and conformity. "Let there be no question about this!" What a limiting approach to a world which might otherwise be seen as a source of novelty, humor and adventure.

This is not to say novelty, humor and adventure do not exist in our culture, but only as they are interpreted within the paradigm. Even surrealist art is interpreted in terms of form and color use, or a limited view of creativity (that which is *obviously* 'untrue' is a source of entertainment, as long as it conforms to our sense of form and color). The truly novel, humorous and adventurous is relegated to "(drug-induced?) fantasy", "dream", "sin", "crime" and "insanity" – mostly the latter. Associations which derive from a novel logic are labeled "schizophrenia". The first rule of our enlightened metaprogram is that it is the only one. There is only one logic and it is ultimately mathematics.

I am not suggesting eliminating dialectics. Surely, it is part of my own metaprogram. It may even be necessary from time to time, for example, in choosing situations which give us pleasure over those which produce pain. Nor am I suggesting we should throw out all our analyses, some of which are excellent. But we need be mindful that the map is not the territory. Dialectics is not sufficient to overthrow the paradigm or metaprogram. It will always reproduce it. It *is* our metaprogram.

But what would happen if we did away with our obsessive insistence on opposition and its synthesis? At the very least there would be a lot less competition and a lot more room for diversity. Competition is a road toward unity, the ultimate project of the enlightenment: globalization. More options ultimately mean more choice and less leadership. What conflict remained would become both ultimately personal and ultimately useful. We could return to the old Indo-european sense of the term "dialectics" displayed by Hordrik and Edelgraff – "collecting together" [from PIE **leg-* "to pick together, gather, collect"]. Eliminating opposition and competition is a return to a "primitive" sensibility. Without a world of oppositions, anarchy (without authority) is reduced to local (or 'nomadic'), and ultimately individual autonomy.

"Primitivism" (outside the usual connotation of a revolutionary praxis) is not crouching around the fire picking cooties off each other (although that doesn't sound too bad

to me), but a logic of abundance and choice, autonomy and cooperation ("sharing"). There is no room for unity as conformity to law, which always implies authority. Some will argue the "authority of custom", but both ethnology and oral tradition suggest that diversions from custom were not only tolerated, but eventually incorporated into the body of custom. The exception is in coercive diversions, but then the response is not a matter of collective authority, but of self-defense against potential tyranny, which crops up from time to time even among other animals.

TRUTH IS FOUND IN A PISSING COW

If "Falsity" is bullshit, then "Truth" is a pissing cow. The noun becomes the verb; the solid becomes the liquid; the male becomes the female - a perfect tripartite inversion.

As with any Divinity, so also with Man, the idea of creation itself is perceived as a point-of-origin-to-terminus linear process starting with the "creator" (or alternately, "producer") and ending with a product passed on to the distribution network, the so-called "analytic third".

This is the result of the illusory separation we feel from the rest of the world, allowing a feedlot equipment engineer busy at the drafting table to be comfortably unaware of the coal miner at a distant end of this process, himself unaware of the people murdered or displaced from the hillock under which he toils, while above ground, the construction worker climbing the cell tower need not be aware of the coltan wars which have killed millions in the Congo so that manufacturers can build their tiny capacitors so Hubby, forklift operator at the Armour plant, can confer on the selection of vegetables from the busy aisles of Buymart with Wifey waiting out in the parking lot, and she can carry on business transactions with the home office to the tunes of Hoyt Axton coming from the pickup speakers on *classic-cowboy-radio channel 95*, Hubby's favorite station inferioratingly interfering with her transaction, yet unable to find the "off" button on a remote she is frantically searching for in the glove box and under the power reclining bench seat which for some reason has just started tilting forward, and her connection to the office in New Jersey is still as clear as a dropping pin, but Hubby seems to have gone out of range on aisle 35, while across town, the upwardly mobile connoisseur, delicately munching on that safeway select prime rib without even the remotest sense of apology, requires a certain Scarlet O'Hara approach to the world, a convenient amnesia or aristocratic ignorance to avoid the image of the kill room floor just three miles away, with the living carcass wiggling, screaming, then thrashing above so that the last drip ka-drip ka-drip of blood is forcibly pumped out onto the floor and washed away with the rest of the murky slime, and cleat-booted sculptors in pinkish overalls are already carving on her flesh, and the new high school kid operating the cutting gate with tears camouflaged by sweat is desperately trying not to puke, fearful of the ridicule sure to come when the show is over and the crew reconvenes at the local honky-tonk.

All this talk of dialectics. At least since the sixth century, European thought has been increasingly oriented around trialectics. Even dialecticians portray reason as thesis, antithesis and synthesis. If you're not a christian, you're either a jew or a heathen (or, as organized religion has spread, a muslim – in proclaiming "the word" (logos) as "it is written", religion projects the world onto two dimensional space). Everyone has three names – any more requires hyphenation. In the states, there are three political parties (democrat, republican, and

NACINTWOW – "not a chance in the world of winning" – sometimes called the third party).

There are three socio-economic classes. There is science, art & philosophy, ego, id & super-ego. Ours is, despite priestly proclamations, a three dimensional world. This represents intellectual progress, as it had been noted that there are always oddballs who don't seem to fit anywhere. This idea came to be known as "the category of leftovers", or "Everythingelse" – progress added gray to the previous black & white color arrangement. While it may be admitted, "there are many shades of gray", there is only one true gray, "gray par excellént".

The third part sits at the bottom either as a base or pivot, preserving balance ("goodness") to the other two, but leaving itself open to the charge, "evil". Confusion itself has triplicated contradiction so all bureaucratic forms must be signed in triplicate.

Sometimes the category of leftovers has unified in the tripartite show, changing general content of attachments, but leaving the overall form alone: a pyramid projected onto two-dimensional space is an equilateral triangle no matter which corner points upward. In relations of power, places always remain the same, only the names are changed to delude the innocent. In a trialectic universe, there is always plus, minus and neutral. If trialectics makes sense in constructing a theory of socio-political change (aka "revolution"), I also have some swamp-land in Florida you might be interested in. – Bagatella Gambadé

But the universe is not three-dimensional, we only watch it go by through 3-d glasses: two-coloured lenses we've constructed ourselves. More than three points of view, such as the good, bad & ugly, are not tolerated. Everything is connected! But that is a secret. Instead, we are offered truth: a serene but disconnected landscape visible only from the basement of an ivory tower. As Deleuze might say, "just another typically american rhizomatous multiplicity deterritorializing arborescence with a territorial crab-grassesque [*herbe divan*] speed, consumed for later rumination by the holy chao".

ch 6: CAN MARXISM PRODUCE COMMUNISM?

The defense of primitivism – Revolution and The Tendencies That Could Abolish Civilization: Revolutionaries and insurrectionists alike ponder the great question of how to "organize the masses" such that a mass uprising can take place. The intent of past revolutionaries has been to provide the numbers needed to storm the Bastille, take over the factories, to destroy the machine without destroying the machinery. The revolutionary is most insistent that we need to maintain production. We will keep the slaves but eliminate the masters. Self-managed workers learn the knack of managing their own exploitation for the collective good. There is a fine line between the good of the collective and the good of the state. In this sense, revolutionary thought has been criticized as essentially reformist, but many, if not most anarchists still follow the lead of revolutionary theoreticians.

Has it ever occurred that the "masses" are already well-organized? They are, in fact, too organized. They are, for the most part, inextricably integrated into the system anarchists wish to demolish:

The goal of the social relation is domination and exploitation in the interest of the dominant sector – the proletariat takes the form it does so that it might be dominated and exploited. Bourgeois power, derived from its property, is defended by means of the productive relations that are re-imposed by the social relation.

... the nature of the capitalist social relation is not one of simple 'domination' – bourgeois power is derived from its appropriation of the capital extracted from productive activity. In other words, the bourgeoisie is dependent on the activity of the object of the capitalist social relation: the proletariat!

In reality, the world is produced by those who do not hold power. The proletariat has no 'manifest' power, and they appear in ideology to be powerless, and yet latently, in reality, they have power over the whole of reality because they have literally produced reality. – Frere Dupont

What is needed is the *disorganization* of the masses. Bourgeois power is deprived when productive relations break down, when productive activity comes to a standstill. *This* is the end of exploitation. This is the general strike. No compromise. It all stops here. You might then say that we must organize the strike, and if you attempt this, you will find yourself on the same familiar ground the revolution now stands upon. As Kropotkin said, the people first of all need food. A generalized work-stoppage can only take place when the people have no more need of the bourgeoisie. This will only be achieved when it is learned they can take care of their own and each other's needs without *any* form of mediation. Without the proletariat, the bourgeoisie is stripped of power and the very notion of property becomes meaningless. Perhaps the bourgeoisie are more dependent on the proletariat than the other way around?

The message of primitivism might just be that the people can learn to take care of their own and each other's needs and desires – it's been done before and within a communist social relation. The actions of the dropout and lifestyle affirm this message, as much as we might disapprove of some of their choices. Who are we to cast stones, some kind of privileged elite?

I find it intriguing that the great revolutionist thinkers, the master debaters of

revolutionary theory chastise any who actually go out and do something different, something radical as *counter-revolutionary* and demonstrating useless subjectivity. They are the same ones who proclaim that the objective material conditions for revolution are not yet here and that any criticism of this position demonstrates *anti-intellectualism*. One might be led to believe they fear an actual revolution might just disrupt the little gravy train they've got going! Whence will come the esteem and the book contracts which invariably follow? Come the revolution, maybe the revolutionists will be among the first lined up against the wall.

Today we focus on the abandonment, since communism only can be produced by people abandoning those practices that constitute the abstract capitalist machine. – Marcel

If the goal of revolution is to "smash the state", or "annihilate the capitalist dialectic", "end the class struggle", etc., what then? If the inside is corruption, what is on the outside? Ultimately, my question is "How do we keep the state (or capitalism, etc.) from returning?" Revolutionary theorists and in fact most utopian idealists have suggested a form of communism as a goal we should strive for. This is not to say a form of government or type of economy, but a communist social relation. Unfortunately historical revolutions have stopped at a socialist or democratic condition maintaining capital, labor and central authority. Is a communist order possible? Is Marxist theory up to the task? Perhaps much confusion is based only in our differing notions of economics, capitalism and communism. When I distinguish capitalism and communism, I refer to the difference between a competitive and a cooperative social relation. These generate entirely different "economic" arrangements.

Thinking along economic lines, we might distinguish collection from accumulation and gifting and sharing from exchange if we are to get closer to the unadulterated package, the uncorrupted human condition or what some have called this outside (of our grasp) "species-being". My own anthropological bias is that this is communism, specifically a condition without endorsement of authority and without property. We are ready made for social relationships, but if my presumption is correct, how would these relations look, and especially, what went wrong to produce the present system in the first place? I do not think systems of exchange developed into capitalism but quite the reverse, when 'value' became attached to things rather than relations. This attachment occurred as a result of manipulated scarcity, or withholding replacing sharing.

Our notions of exchange are deeply embedded and we conceive the minimal expression as a form of barter or direct trade. The only alternatives imagined are theft or gifting. Theft is obviously not an option but for a few, "we're not criminals!" Even gifting is seen to entail a potential injustice. How many times have you heard folks bitch about the "cheap" gift they received at christmas? This arises because we think that things have a value in themselves. Sure, we've heard "it's the thought that counts" but that is only an archaic saying, a meaningless artifact from a time long gone.

Barter or direct trade is rare among people in non-capitalist cultures. Marcel Mauss suggested that in gifting societies, a gift carries with it the obligation to reciprocate and he equated reciprocity as the primary moral value. I think this is slightly mistaken. Reciprocity is the *effect* of giving when the value is in the act of giving itself, not the

thing given. It, giving or sharing, is born of altruism, a basic human characteristic, not obligation. Even recent psychological research seems to bear this out.

Capitalism came from the institution of a centralized authority. In this I would insist it originated as a psychological disorder. Someone once said that civilization began when the first psychopath-bully took the village grain and dispersed it back in return for favors. Capitalism is maintained because we have inherited it as a cultural logic. Most do not question its basic premises, even when they think that there is something terribly wrong with the situation. For the average person, capitalism is not a psychological issue, but I would not be the first to suggest that our leadership tends more and more toward the psychopathic.

Gift-giving is one of those activities which reproduces the human, not capital. Many call it an act of altruism, but I think the term, intimacy is more appropriate as it does not suggest sacrifice. Our culture stresses sacrifice even to describe friendship. A gift should not be a sacrifice. The Northwest Coast Indian's Potlatch is a good example. In Kwakiutl, the word for "chief", the highest 'rank' in the social order, literally translates as "the privilege of giving to his relatives". Hell, he wasn't the chief, he was the party king! When accumulated goods (salmon, blankets, even names and stories) were distributed in large community feasts, any "surplus" was actually destroyed. This is not sacrifice, as the Europeans thought, but the prevention of excess, and everyone knows that excess brings disease and misfortune. If an item couldn't be given away, it had no value. Obviously. The value is in the giving and the giving reinforces the social relation.

In areas of South America, gifts were even taken to 'enemy' villages, left in a pile outside. Europeans again mistook this behavior and labeled it "silent trade" and "hostile trade". In the same way, ancient predecessors of Phoenicians were categorized as a "trade empire". Yet there was no conquest. What have been erroneously called "trade outposts" were more likely "potlatch centers". There is no evidence of actual trade or direct exchange (until later periods) but quite a bit gleaned from ancient texts for a potlatch type arrangement.

I do not distinguish a state of "primitive" communism and communism derived from revolution. To me there is only one communism, and it is without coercive authority and without property. Beyond this negative definition one can only infer from past examples of communist societies. Communism is the state of nature. If you think I am overly reifying "nature", then I will say that communism is the natural state. It is the order prior to capitalism⁶, but not in the sense of an evolutionary determinism. Capitalism stems from the regulation of scarcity and competition for the means of existence. This is the foundation of the state (the enforcer) and economic class arrangements. Anthropologists call this civilization. In fact, capitalism and its' enforcement is the basis of economy itself. Diverse forces brought on civilization but only a very few times in a very few places. Most admit to only six places in the entire history of the planet! Clearly it was a fluke – a social accident. It spread through force and conquest, the annihilation of local autonomy and the imposition of poverty, not through any historical determinism or "progress". It is maintained through the imposition or indoctrination of a cultural logic.

6 Obviously, I am including here "Feudalism" in the sense of a "proto-capitalist" relation.

Within a communist social arrangement, there is no ownership – no personal property and no communal property. No property period. Possession is not the same as ownership. Ownership is either a merging or a withholding from others. "I have an apple" is a statement of possession. I can only own it if I consume it. It becomes part of me and loses its uniqueness. If I do not want to consume it, I may as well leave it be, give it to you or even destroy it. In the capitalist arrangement, ownership is the permission given by the state to withhold something from another – to deprive them. Ownership is leverage in every sense of the word. If there is no ownership and therefore no property (theft?), there can be no capital and no labor (as opposed to 'exertion' which is also present in playful activities; Marxist doctrine defines labor only in terms of its relation to capital). Communism precludes withholding. That, withholding, is the capitalist foundation just as force is the foundation of the state, as conquest is the foundation of empire. Corporate commerce manages or administers property – Perlman's "octopus". Socialism is but a variation. Government manages people – Perlman's "Leviathan". Fascism is the condition where the distinction between people and property disappears.

What do I mean when I distinguish possession from ownership? One can set up an equivalence: property is to competition as possession is to cooperation. Property is a right. Despite what we are taught, there are no inalienable rights, they are always dictated, if only by social agreement, although for us, always backed by threat of force. Rights are themselves property, in that they can only be granted or earned and can be taken away. The first day of class, we are granted ten gold stars. Each infraction of the rules subtracts a star. Stars may be earned back through appropriate behavior. Those who accumulate the most stars win. As we progress to the next grade, it becomes harder to earn new stars.

Property, however does have inalienable rights. As we see all too often, looters will be shot. Thus, only property has inherent value, and as people struggle harder to earn it, its own value increases. One should rather say that inflation provides incentive for others to toil harder or longer. Thus "healthy" competition promotes excellence, however we know all too well how easily competition becomes conflict, the actual polar opposition to cooperation. When property is involved, we see an inflation within conflict itself. We call this "escalation". We are afraid this escalation, this inflation will one day result in total global annihilation.

Property is an *exclusive* possession gained through inheritance, exchange, competition or force. If one loses possession of a thing, such as when it is sold or given away, lost in a game of chance or stolen, and we desire or need a replacement, if we cannot reproduce it ourselves, authority sanctions exchange, competition (to "work" for it or "win" it back) or punishment of and expropriation from the thief to replace it. The authority of state dictates that property can only circulate through exchange, if not with comparable property, then with labor. Under capitalism, that which you give in exchange for a thing far exceeds that which you receive in return. This gives us the notion of 'surplus value'. It is usually considered that we exchange our time for a living wage. As if time were itself our "property". What is actually exchanged is our life which would have been lived during that time we spent toiling for another. That which should be your own every waking hour belongs to another so that we can just survive. We

need to struggle for possession of "property" which, for us is our "means of existence". We all have heard the statement, "my life is not my own" and sympathize, yet we tolerate stripping another of his/her "means of existence" and even imprisonment for those who would attempt to take their lives back. We chastise those "living on the fringes". As the old saying goes, "you can't get something for nothing!"

If this does not seem an overly complex and potentially dangerous solution to the problem of maintaining a social existence, consider the alternative. Possession without ownership only involves cooperation. For example, If I am a hole driller because it is my pleasure to drill holes and others appreciate my talent and request my services, it would be a good thing if I were in possession of a drill. Assuming there are only a few drills among us, and others also like to drill holes on occasion, the drill is shared through some cooperative arrangement. It is not community property, it is just a drill. Its possession at any one time is a matter of social etiquette. If it is lost or rendered unusable, it is replaced by those whose pleasure it is to make or repair drills. It may be given to me or anyone else to possess, to hold, to use, but this is not ownership. It is taken for granted that the drill will be shared when the need arises. It is that simple. I cannot be taken advantage of because in a community with the freedom to pursue one's own pleasures, one has to be free not to pursue them as well. One can always refuse. They must then make other arrangements. The 'authority of custom' is not coercive and needs no legislation or enforcement. It is a matter of 'polite behavior' among 'polite company'.

Politeness is a necessary casualty in the progress of civilization. How do you politely exploit another? How can you be polite about withholding something from another? How can you be polite about competing for your little area to dump upon such that others have nothing? Whoever came up with the phrase, "a gentleman's war" or "the humane treatment of prisoners"? There is nothing humane about imprisonment. There is nothing gentle about war. How is it that the behavior we might expect within the household or between close friends is almost never seen outside that arrangement? Was De Sade's Justine right when she thought we are not esteemed unless we have property and position which might come to benefit the esteemer? In a world of scarcity, real or imagined, a world where one's very survival seems at stake, ideas of competition and accumulation as "driving" mechanisms behind motivation should not surprise us. The corollary in perception is a defensive stance – paranoia.

Surplus accumulation is not the intent in communism. This is not my "ideal" of communism, but the product of many generations of study and generally regarded as an anthropological "fact". Production ceases when everyone is fed or when winter stores are provided in temperate climates. Marx suggested that labor and production and therefore, economics provide the foundation for human existence. This seems reasonable, since we all must eat. Our own experience suggests that to eat, one must work. But the actual collecting or producing of food took up a comparatively small portion of daily life prior to capitalism. Most of the time was taken up with resting, gifting, making and raising families, philosophizing, drama, music, art, story-telling and, of course, in festivities. Even subsistence activities were performed as a festivity, and certainly, eating was on occasion done in feasts (more days were "occasions" than not). I should

think that "partying" would be a more descriptive basis for human social existence. Do you think we could make the same claims regarding a post-revolution communism?

If this line of thinking is considered primitivist, then I guess I'm guilty, but so then is anyone who would promote communism, or at least the end of property and authority. I happen to think of it as human. Others might call it childish. I say, "right on". What better indicator of natural inclinations than children? I once had a theory that if you gathered up a bunch of five-year-olds and dropped them in the jungle and didn't return for twenty or so years, you would see what it really means to be human.

Marxist socialism may be redistributive and produce an "equality" in resource acquisition, but it depends on value and surplus and labor potentials and capital and production forces and therefore property and coercion, even if communal and democratic. Marx would not eliminate property, only private or personal property. He would not eliminate capital, only the "capitalist dialectic", and this is called the end of the capitalist machine. I should think that if property is collectively or communally owned, I, even as a member, a loyal party member, would feel obliged to seek permission to access it. And that permission may be withheld. Doesn't there always seem the need for a "central committee" despite rhetoric about consensus and direct democracy? The authority of the collective, the dictatorship of the proletariat, they are still authority. Without property, of what use is authority? Is authority, then, even possible? Is politics? Is economics?

Sharing and gifting contradict capitalist exchange. Gardening and subsistence farming will feed more people per hour of your activities than commercial farming or wage labor. Sharing is more direct and accessible than the market. But these require an appreciation of intimacy and of locality. And this is enjoyable! Why would we even act if it is not pleasurable? Because we are forced, if not by the secret police, at least by our notions of social convention. Sure, gardening might be a primitive artifact we still carry around, but isn't persisting in pleasurable activities despite their insignificance to revolutionary theorists or social convention an insurrectionary act? The time spent gardening for your own pleasure and subsistence and sharing with your neighbors is not surplus labor (if you can call it labor at all) and therefore does not produce capital so obviously does not reinforce the capitalist order.

If economics (theories of property management or administration) is maintained, Marxism cannot produce communism, and what else is Marxism than an alternative politico-economic theory? It has been suggested that it is a theory of man and human development. I would suggest it is a theory of modern man and progress, and therefore, is restricted to civilization: 2-5% of human history (depending on where the archaeologist draws the line in classifying the bones s/he digs up). Marxism only co-opts the term, "communism", and maintains capitalism under a new name in a slightly different social relation and mystifies us with mathematical equations modeling economic relations. It is ultimately reformist capitalism. If the goal of Marxism is to annihilate the capitalist dialectic, it will produce communism only when it also annihilates itself. Trotsky's "permanent revolution"? Not exactly, but if revolution must be permanent, the revolutionary must say "adios" to his/her revolutionary desires and goals unless the only goal is an ever bigger piece of the pie. But then I must ask "who, after the revolution,

will the Marxists get to clean their toilets?" Ahh, yes, "revolution is progress! We will work it out later." "Struggle on, revolutionaries! End homelessness and feed the worker! Solidarity with the worker! Work will set you free!" "The capacity to labor is the essence of Man!"

Am I being too harsh? Probably, but I only wish to point out the contradictions in a theory which promotes the end of capitalism but holds on to the notion of property. Even Max Stirner wanted to maintain that notion, and without a state, was forced into an egoism which does not distinguish possession from ownership and therefore maintains property through might. My own slogans would be "Death to property!", "Clean your own toilet!", "Liberate the worker!" and "Party on, revolutionaries!"

"Throw out morality and justice, and people will do the right thing"

Throw out industry and profit, and there won't be any thieves. – Lao Tse

ch 7: MISCONCEIVING PRIMITIVISM

Agriculture, the indispensable basis of civilization, was originally encountered as time, language, number and art won out. As the materialization of alienation, agriculture is the triumph of estrangement and the definite divide between culture and nature and humans from each other... in domesticating animals and plants man necessarily domesticated himself.

sacrifice, which is the killing of domesticated animals (or even humans) for ritual purposes...is pervasive in agricultural societies and found only there...The scrupulous tending of strains of plants finds its parallel in the domesticating of animals, which also defies natural selection and re-establishes the controllable organic world at a debased, artificial level. Like plants, animals are mere things to be manipulated [– John Zerzan AGRICULTURE]

Domestication: A rigid interpretation of John Zerzan to generate some sort of praxis does more to discourage primitivist discourse than to encourage it, although he provides a good critique of civilized practice. How can I say this? It reinforces a few logical and empirical errors inherent in *our* culture and *our* language. A repetition of our own cultural metanarrative, it is generalization based on unsupported presumption and sampling error. Thus, '*Agriculture is the indispensable basis of civilization*' (and, are we to deduce it should therefore be abandoned?) is a myth as well as miscalculation. It is like arguing that "*Birds have wings, bats have wings, therefore a bat is a kind of bird*". The proper conclusion would, of course be: "*Both fly*". Because all existing states have had agriculture, then agriculture must be the cause or essential condition of the state, or civilization: it is ignored that the majority of agricultural cultures did not produce civilization. The same logic was once used to promote the idea that pot smoking invariably led to heroin addiction. The second problem is that everything occurs as opposites. In the case of primitivists, there are only two possibilities – hunter/gather (or foraging) existence and agricultural civilization – an aristotelian extremism.

Modern intensive agriculture and animal domestication techniques are extraordinarily recent developments. Not only did plant cultivation and animal husbandry predate civilization by thousands of years (I would say tens of thousands of years), but occurred throughout the world without adopting or creating civilization or a state sociopolitical arrangement. The more reasonable conclusion would be that a pre-existing horticultural condition was adapted (corrupted?) to a permanently settled and hierarchical arrangement.

Shifting cultivation, swidden, digging stick agriculture, gardening are terms for primitive or archaic methods of farming. They are not environmentally destructive nor do they lead to class division or specialization. In fact, they represent communal events in the lives of people which actually promote growth, or re-vegetation. To distinguish 'collecting' in foraging and 'harvesting' in farming sets up another false opposition or dichotomy. The whole discussion is based on western notions of labor and property. A more appropriate label would be 'festival'. *The Camus Festival* of what is now south central Washington state is a good example. People from the entire northwest congregated to this area around vast fields of camus and harvested the root. The particular method of the harvest actually promoted more luxuriant growth of camus in the way that open-range livestock grazing promotes more luxuriant growth of range grasses and forbs. When the practice stopped, so did the camus. This is **not** an "extractive

economy". If the first roots of the harvest were returned to the earth in the same way as the first salmon were returned to the sea at the start of the fishing season (Westerners mislabeled this 'sacrifice'), would we not call this farming or at worst, inadvertent farming? And are we to say that the harvesting of camus was more important than the social gathering, the feasting, the 'give-aways', the festival of the event?

Animal husbandry presents another mass of confusion when we think only in terms of modern, settled (fenced and factory farm) practices. Nomadic and seminomadic herding of animals is not very far removed from hunting range herds. Even in our own open-range herding techniques, (which have largely been eliminated since the Reagan/Thatcher years) the state may determine *what* range is 'open', the animals themselves determine day to day foraging. There is an old shepherd expression: "Let them be natural; sheep don't overgraze the land, herders do!". And what of dairy animals? There is force and there is cooperation. Force is the modern approach. With a less modern approach, the mother bonds with the milker like she does with her own offspring. The relationship between the husbandman and the animal is one of sharing and cooperation. In the same way, Westerners describe Mongolian Steppe horses as nearly "wild" – hard to catch and hard to ride. Yet the Mongolian horsemen did not, nor did they need to confine or coral or tie their horses. In fact, using guerrilla tactics, they were able to overturn the European social order on their horses. Anyone who has actually spent time with livestock will be able to tell you of this personal bond. Perhaps John Zerzan should have talked to them.

Traditional wisdom tells us that the animals are our kindred and our teachers. "Who domesticated whom?" I would ask. When my goat demands of me the time I milk her, like a mother hurrying her child to the dinner table, who is dominating whom? Confusing corporate farming practices which are cruel, extractive, exploitive and destructive with all possible arrangements between the human and the earth, between the human and other animals reinforces a false culture/nature dialectic and has in fact led many vegetarians to reject any "animal products" like milk or manure for their gardens often out of protest to a condition of cruel domination. I sympathize with their cause but I wonder what would happen if they knew there were other possibilities without entailing domination and exploitation.

Savagery: A return to a primitive condition should not be seen as getting dropped off into the middle of the jungle or forest or desert and learning to chip arrowheads from stone or to milk camels. I prefer to think of it as a return to a primitive (as in 'primary') sensibility – a different view of existence and our relationship to it and to each other. There is not a primitive way of doing things as opposed to a modern one. In 'archaic' times and on the 'outside' of civilization, there was an extraordinary diversity of ways of doing things. Diversity was celebrated. Property was non-existent. Territory was the land one lived on or traveled in seasonal or annual rounds. There was no authority but that derived from wisdom and experience. In other words, expertise is not a necessary function of labour specialization. All things were symbolically related by kinship or marriage. There were no wars of conquest. Raids between villages were conducted like we conduct football, only less violently. Here and there, raids were also conducted like marriages. Chiefs did not rule, they made sure everyone ate well and had enough blan-

kets. Slaves were not "beasts of burden" but members of the community not related by blood or marriage within the 'clan'. In other places, newcomers to the community were given a relationship of kinship. Technology was encouraged and admired, but not outside the context of its use or beauty and the ability for any to reproduce it. There was no job to go to. Neither was there play if this is described as 'what we do in our allocated leisure time'. If work and play refer to exertion and pleasure, then there could be no distinction.

All this is not only possible without coercive authority and property, but predictable.

An extension of the primitivist logic which would allow only a hunting/gathering existence would lead us to chastize farming or nomadic herding communities. This extremely limits the choices we may soon face should revolution or collapse befall our civilization. What with the destruction we have already done to the planet, hunting and gathering suggests to many the need for a huge die-off of the population if all were to adopt that lifestyle. In fact, this is one of the biggest criticisms of a primitivist outlook. Another argument is that there will be enough garbage left laying around in warehouses that we will be able to survive for generations before we need to worry about creating new social arrangements and situations, and these will occur naturally and gradually. A third criticism is that the primitivist view is often seen as overly romantic and therefore an unrealistic option.

The danger of romanticizing is not so great as chastising. Though both romanticizing and chastising are essentially based on misinformation through looking at a situation through the lens of our own cultural categories, the former at least suggests the possibility of an alternative to our own system for the purpose of change. It suggests an ideal state and the possibility of happiness. The latter suggests that resistance is futile, since there are no alternatives. Utopianists should not deny that acts of repression or exploitation ever occurred in 'primitive' cultures. Certainly murder is an ancient phenomenon and you can't get much more oppressive than that.

But in cultures on the outside of civilization or the state there were means to keep thuggery and exploitation at bay and they were largely seen in the message of legend and myth and taught in stories. In fact, many of the fantastic acts of cruelty described to early anthropologists and travelers were likely misinterpreted as things which *routinely* happened rather than as tales depicting things to be avoided. This is not to say, like the romanticist, that acts of cruelty never occurred. As long as we do not propose universal rules of morality, the task of priests and judges, there is nothing to be feared in codes of personal and social conduct, morals or ethics. Certainly we all want more than just to be able to get along. We want more than mere survival. In one way or another, don't we all turn to the story-teller to guide us, even if he is a Guy DeBord or Karl Marx instead of an Ernest Hemingway or Karl Rove?

Probably the most distinctive feature of our own system when compared to other systems or cultures is that our story tellers or propagandists promote the continuation of violence, exploitation and ruthlessness – personal gain at the expense of others. Sure, pleasant but contrary tales are told to children, but it is necessary that they get along in order to get the *real* message in school. They are set up to trust authority and thereby absorb the lies of the propagandists. The sense of hypocrisy and bullshit experienced

in middle school and high school is a pool for potential revolutionaries, but the assumption of the good ad man is that his message will prevail, and it usually does since there are so few options available when we are thrust into independence from the family, we decide to buckle under and play their game ... and remain in a constant state of confusion. The state is maintained.

Gifting: It has been often noted that "*gifting*" was a large part of "primitive life". This is the key statement. One can just as correctly use the word "*sharing*". It is not just another, even "large" part of primitive life, but **the** critical and essential part. "Ya just can't emphiskasize it enough!" (to quote Popeye the sailor man). Without sharing, all the chipped-stone arrowheads you can knap and cat-tail baskets you can weave or women-folk you can drag into your cave by the hair will not make you "primitive". Sharing occurs not only within communities but between them. It circulates 'goods' across vast distances when nomadic folks transport gifts between distant settled peoples in their seasonal migrations. Funny how so many 'primitive' cosmologies stress circulation and even consider the fruits of their own "labor" (if you can call it that) "gifts". We oversimplify and misinterpret the matter by labeling such things "trade networks", as if they had the same notion of property and value (think "exchange value") as we. What is valued is the connections or relations, and of course, the gifting itself. Since what is given is that beyond which you require, that is, surplus rather than sacrifice, the problem never comes up as to how many ears of corn is worth one horse. Exchange value is a delusion of modern thinking.

Who needs private ownership when everything is free? Does this mean folks lived in a gentle paradise of continuously amicable relations? Not at all. If you didn't like the folks in the next valley over, you raided them. You might have thought them too stingy, but any reason is good enough to play the fun game of raiding the next village down the stream or over the hill – those nasty buggers who insulted your (fill in the blank) at the party last week. Another funny thing, raids still ensure the movement or circulation of goods, whether they're pretty clamshells, bushels of beans, horses or marriage partners. It's not 'theft' if there's no sense of 'property', and it's no more 'warfare' than the NBA playoffs.

"Primitive life" was communism, pure and simple. Even the progressivist anthropologists Lewis Henry Morgan and E. B. Tylor thought so, and they preceded Franz Boas and informed Mr. Marx. Yet the Marxists tell us that Communism can only occur as a stage following capitalism and socialism through revolution! (They're obviously thinking of a different sort of communism than I). Without property, there is obviously no withholding going on, and if there are no withholders, there is no authority. Primitive life was also "anarchy". Anarcho-communism is therefore redundant (but let's keep the term anyway so we're not confused with those other misinformed anarchists – the anarcho-capitalists and anarcho-syndicalists). Personally, I think anarcho-primitivism is also redundant, and also a synonym of anarcho-communism. I don't prefer it because modern folks would be even more willing to embrace communism than "return to the harsh struggle of the 'cave-man' – "Ughh! Mongo no like caves!"

Chieftoms: Chieftoms are most commonly associated with traditional farming communities. I have often wondered myself about the authority of 'chieftoms' and even

some early 'kingdoms' which existed prior to or outside of the feudal/capitalist arrangement. Seemingly, it represents class division defined by social rank and a sense of rule and law. The chieftainship was generally an inherited position of leadership. In the Indigenous Northwest Coast (of North America), it was the position of giving away 'property' but also involved the settling of disputes and the coordination of collecting activities. But was it the 'authority'? There could be no arbitrary edicts because the ultimate authority was the message of the story-teller. Myths and legends and drama informed the people of the 'rules' of custom or appropriate behavior and the chief was most bound to these 'rules'. Without invoking an idea of democracy, the chief would lose weight to his name and therefore his rank by behaving contrary to the expectations of the people. Without recuperation, he is no longer chief. When you think about it, even in our own culture, is there any authority greater than the propagandist, or ad-man? He is backed up by the enforcement of the police and the threat of imprisonment. The chief had no such body of enforcement.

The old Kwakiutl said a chieftainship is the privilege of taking care of ones relatives – one's kin. S/he takes care of them by giving. The word for gift is also the word for property and it's literal translation is 'salmon'. Salmon is the greatest gift, a sacred gift. The chief inherits this position because kinship is always a matter of inheritance, not democracy. Rank is inherited and acquired since, if the village is well taken care of and the people take care of each other, the whole village (local kin group) reflects the chief's rank and therefore gains in rank, which is nothing more than prestige. And prestige is a firmly attached soul. It is health. Thus the children of a high ranking person will obviously share, acquire and inherit that rank.

But the chief also gives to those who are not his relatives by blood or marriage. These are called the *slaves*. A more appropriate definition of Kwakiutl *slavery* would be *public assistance*. They are properly *wards* of the chiefdom. *Slaves* are 'captured' in raids on other villages or might have wandered in from different groups of relatives. He has no rank because he has no relations in his new village. The *slave* has no privilege and therefore no responsibility to give potlatches. He has no relatives to take care of. If a *slave* was taken from a stingy village, obviously his lot would improve even though his previous rank vanishes. Although marriages, like raids and potlatches were undertaken between groups or individuals of equivalent rank, a *slave* could marry within the group and obviously become a relative. Since everyone has a share in production (i.e. collection of food and reproduction of technology), it becomes clear that the *slaves* were not a work force for an 'elite' kin group. Yes, it is a rudimentary class system – kin and non-kin – but there is no economic or political class since there is no 'economics' and no 'politics' in the sense we normally infer. All the terms Europeans used to translate other languages should probably be stood on their heads and re-examined from their backside.

A raid is when you *take* gifts from those who are stingy scoundrels. *Slaves* are only 'property' in that they are also gifts. The village is where all the relatives live. It is called the salmon weir – the fish trap. *Slaves* are salmon in a trap, gifts from the cosmos. The great feast called *the potlatch* is 'making war with property', that is, with wealth, with gifts, with salmon. Marriage between villages is 'making war on the brides relatives'.

Kwakiutl war is the opposite of conquest. It is giving, and when giving between villages becomes competitive, giving is war. Giving is what makes the cosmos move. If not conquest, what is gained by war? Weight to your name. The soul and your name become more firmly attached. So you gain health. You partake in cosmic circulation. If something cannot be given or passed on, it has lost its value, since value is seen in the actions of giving, not in the thing itself. It is destroyed, but in this it is also given back to the earth or cosmos. It is dead, to later return in another form. Do words like "*slavery*", "*looting*" and "*vandalism*" and even "*ritual sacrifice*" give us *more* clarity on the situation?

Anthropologists distinguish between *chief* and *headman*, the former very often an inherited position. Sometimes the difference is only a matter of degree. The Hollywood depiction of the biggest and strongest thug (perhaps aided by a group of accomplices) beating off competitors more accurately describes a *king or dictator* and the birth of the *state*, a centralized authority. On the contrary, if you took care of you and yours, and everybody everywhere had the same attitude, wouldn't everyone be taken care of? Everyone could be chief. If, you might argue, this would be impossible since there are always scoundrels popping up here and there, wouldn't the chief or headman provide a good example to follow as opposed to, say, the authority of a collective or representative police force which scorns and chastises and imprisons the scoundrel? Isn't the chief the source of example, putting into practice the message of the story-teller, especially if the stories scorn the stingy scoundrel and all forms of domination? Or is this an argument for benign monarchy? No, I say this is a chief without authority. There is no law. There are only stories. The stories are ritualized and performed as drama. The chief's leadership is no more than that of the leading man or leading lady in one of our plays.

In many cultures, the chief is not so much the leading actor, but the narrator. Clastres presented an illustrative anecdote from South America. There was once a chief (with a little 'c') who had desires to become a big Chief (with a big 'C'), an institution historically *not* present in their culture. He began his diatribe to 30 village mates to establish his authority. The 30 promptly turned their backs to him. This would normally be enough to suggest to him they thought it was a bad idea and he should go away. Instead, he went on to push his ideas, his authority, whereupon they turned around and plugged him with 30 arrows. Spontaneous direct democracy. No vote, no committee meeting. Their behavior was appropriate within the body of custom and reflected in their stories or myths, heard since they were able to hear. The 'Chief', normally the story-teller, contradicted his own story and their expectations of a 'chief'. Is this a situation of victimization under collective authority? No, it is a situation of self-defense no different than had a big cat attacked a group of small children – only the big chief was given an opportunity to back off when faced with collective refusal.

The story is the authority and the chief its agent. I would say that if you took care of your own scoundrels and yours took care of theirs, then all scoundrels would be taken care of. Again, we are all a potential chief and some are the story-tellers. The story-teller does not make up the stories. Stories are also gifts and so are continually passed on and revitalized in drama. But as story-teller, I would enjoy no special right to be the

chief since there might be those who set a better example of the stories. They are better actors. They are more believable, more consistent in actualizing the character in the script. We are talking about the difference between a character actor and a method actor. What they say is not distinct from what they do – they remain *in character*. Even we consider this a point of admirability. We label it "integrity". They then have prestige, a higher rank, and by their own example they are chief.

The story-teller points out that which defines the scoundrel and how we might behave such that we are not called "scoundrel". If I the story-teller, insist on you following me, then I am the scoundrel, a priest, a guru. If my message is about the value of giving, then s/he who most gives is the chief. Sometimes this is confused as s/he who gives most. There is a difference. If the chief gave away the most, his own family would become hungry and s/he would no longer be chief. If s/he mostly gave, everyone would be contented. Potlatch can be seen as mutual aid. It is aid because it is the gift. It is mutual because *each for all* must entail *all for each*. It is a circle. There is a danger. If the story is lost, the chief might become king. The mission of the missionary as well as the educator is to demolish the human story and replace it with law. Along with the new story of alienation, struggle and anomie (his-story), the pig – the police, and his counterpart, the mental health technician – is born for those who cannot maintain the *self control* to act their parts.

The Neolithic: There is one problem I see on which most folks seem to rest their arguments. I think I've stated this before, but civilization by most definitions does not equate with the so-called "neolithic". In most places, the latter preceded the former by six millennia. Temporally, the neolithic followed the last glacial retreat (more accurately, "melt") around 11-14,000 years ago. Sea levels rose quite rapidly with populations retreating inland and upland, creating a new population pressure through an increase in density rather than number (the traditional view states that the invention of agricultural production increased population size *and* density, demanding sedentary lifestyles and ultimately producing civilization – this is the myth).

Culturally, the neolithic represents a vast diversity of manifestations, all of which didn't necessarily have intensive agriculture or mines and forges from which were manufactured weapons of war. In fact, a small minority did these things, but one thing is certain: none beyond that minority left artifacts and arrays (such as *cities*) suggesting a state socio-political organization or economic class which is characteristic of civilization (economic class creates hierarchy with *haves* and *have-nots* (or *have-lessers*), the *haves* becoming a centralized authority). Equating the seeds of civilization with the neolithic comes from a progressive environmental determinist view of history. Centralized chiefdoms, which some neolithic cultures displayed, had little more 'authority' than a paleolithic "head man". The institution of chief functioned to redistribute "wealth", preventing the occurrence of economic class and its necessary economic disparity. Only when this system breaks down, when bullies and thugs are allowed to become chiefs, do we witness the birth of property and protostates. For Elman Service, the state is defined by "the presence of repressive, formal-legal social controls based on physical force" and is the essential element in the development of civilization.

If one disregards the classic definitions of civilization and extends the term to include

so-called neolithic cultures, then at least 90% of those who ethnologists have described (including "neolithic hunter-gatherers" and all of whom most label "primitive culture") would in fact be civilized and the entire primitivist critique and much of the anti-civ thinking would logically collapse. A good source for background reading would be Elman Service' *On the Origin of the State and Civilization* and Pierre Clastres' *Society against the State*. If the standard academic criteria defining civilization is accepted, one can only conclude that this cultural manifestation was a historical fluke. Perlman suggested only one origin (Sumer) but this is largely discredited by archaeology, particularly in the new world. The standard view of prehistory posits five to six independent original occurrences of civilization, but even if this number were increased tenfold, considering that archaeologists have not dug up the entire planet (and almost nothing of the continental shelves), the number of incipient civilizations would still be statistically insignificant when compared to the incredible number of sociocultural manifestations humans have exhibited in their history on the planet. How then did civilization become ubiquitous? The answer lies in the notion and fact of progress – a system of positive feedback producing conquest and growth. Clearly, DNA cannot provide a basis for civilization, or we would see no order or patterns in biology, since natural selection would only favor the flukes of history, and adaptation (a system which must incorporate negative feedback to reduce the chance of auto-extinction) would be rendered meaningless.

Mistranslation: The so-called "chiefdom" I'm most familiar with is/was the Kwakiutl in the Pacific Northwest. They've been described as the "highest evolved" or "most developed" group of hunter/gathers ever assembled, outdoing many settled agriculturalists in "cultural achievement". These (pathetic) value judgments refer to the degree of complexity of their social organization, not that they "resemble us" in any way, except that they've been presented in the literature as highly competitive accumulators of wealth who also routinely practiced sacrifice, had social classes consisting of both nobility and slavery, and in fact, had rudimentary money (coppers) proving symbolic exchange. This standard view should be enough to suggest that fendersen is so full of shit that, well, you get the picture.

When I began researching the primary "scientific" literature (mostly Franz Boas' field notes, including his complete analysis of Kwakiutl linguistics), I came across something Anthropologists have been trying to tell budding students since Boas' time. We can't interpret others' behavior through the lens of our own categories and the labels we apply to them. When we take this approach, we find that the entirety of the colloquial wisdom about the Kwakiutl breaks down and is exposed as a myth constructed, sometimes quite innocently, by missionaries, romantics, and colonial administrators.⁷

⁷ I always have to remind myself that we all just construct theories from an array of artifacts. When asked to "show me the data!", all one can come up with is circumstantial evidence, which is an attempt to arrange things in a way we feel comfortable with. My purpose here is not to convince you of anything beyond rethinking one's own categories, which might be appropriate to one situation, but may not universally translate across the board, particularly when dealing with completely different languages or cultural traditions. I think Derrida has an ultimately scientific attitude: nothing is proved, but our assumptions we carry around and use as a standard to judge the rest of the world can be deconstructed, pointing to an entirely different view of the world. We should be warned, however, that this too is only another construction.

To be brief, I'll only cover a few of these "mis-translations". In their own language, chief translates to "the privilege of taking care of one's relatives". The word for wealth translates to "salmon". The word for slave is "gift" and also means "not a relative, not required to give potlatches". The implication of high social rank is not wealth, but health, which refers to a "firmly attached soul". The term translated "soul" literally means "name". The function of the chief is to coordinate potlatches and feasts which correspond to "give-aways" elsewhere in Native America. I've always thought a more appropriate title than chief would be "party king".

This is the purpose of accumulation everywhere outside of the state. If a chief didn't give away the accumulated wealth, s/he would lose rank and possibly be killed. What could not be given away was destroyed. We called that "sacrifice", a very bad translation. Bride-price and dowry are not "tribute", which brings up a picture of Roman tax collectors accompanied by military escort (just to be sure that the peasants had the proper giving spirit). They are gifts with no notion of tribute or exchange. "Bride-price" is an offering meant to illustrate the gifting nature of the young gentleman horny for your daughter. It shows his ability and intent to take care of his relatives. The competition involved between potlatchers functions to gain health by giving away the most (but not to the point of impinging on the health your own kin, which would be a losing game move). *Competition* itself is a bad translation, for the point of the game is not to win, but to keep playing. The end result of all this is the circulation of "wealth" (goods, services, food, marriage partners, stories, blankets, etc.) throughout the cosmos. The word is bandied about but there is no notion of property or ownership beyond the idea of fish caught in a trap – what good are they until distributed? The Kwakiutl word for village translates to "salmon weir".

Even in our own history, there is no accumulation without redistribution. A class based analysis illustrates just who in our culture this benefits and at whose expense. All chiefdoms accumulate wealth, but at no ones expense because wealth must be distributed or destroyed. Among the Northwest Coast Indians, excess always leads to sickness, not only for the accumulator, but the entire village. Among all social animals (even insects), stinginess crops up from time to time, and there are always ways, either instinctual or culturally patterned or learned to limit its damaging effects. Only among the civilized do we find stinginess and greed the normal operating procedure, which is why in every case, it must be accompanied with physical force or disguised with illusion, deception and diversion.

Ecology & Revolutionary Conservatism: Contrary to most conceptions, revolution and revolutionary consciousness is always conservative. It does not arise except as a matter of reappropriation. Revolution centers itself in the past (if only to the point of a past regime), but is always set in the future. Where there is no memory, no tales of a previous condition, no alternative which comes to mind, it is rarely even possible. Revolutionary consciousness, on the other hand, is the force of conservation. It is evident in the "redneck" slogan of refusal: "Don't tread on me!" Conservation is the status quo, only possible with intact negative feedback mechanisms. Conservation is the maintenance of ecological relations. It prevents growth of authority from arising in the first place. The death of this consciousness marks the birth of submission. Clastres directed

us to this revolutionary, conservative consciousness in the chiefdoms he studied.

The main difference between a chiefdom and an incipient kingdom lies in the fact that the chief is always subject to assassination or banishment if s/he behaves un-wardly (un-sacredly, or against the *order* of the cosmos, the community and its traditions). The monarch, on the other hand, controls a force of bodyguards, a police force, a praetorian guard, a military establishment replacing the natural revolutionary disposition of the people with fear, ultimately canceling out tradition in favor of the caprice of the central authority. This only exposes the fear inherent in any positioning of that authority. An hereditary chiefdom is the closest thing history provides us to direct democracy – the delegated (by tradition, not by vote) representation (of tradition) as well as its delegated scapegoat. Without revolutionary consciousness and its potential saturating the community, the chiefdom disappears.

The chieftainship, as the Kwakiutl chief noted, is a privilege without fear. The king is privilege itself and lives and dies in fear of a revolution which can never occur because its potential has been eliminated. He comes to love his police who can spend their days dining on doughnuts and their evenings raping peasant girls because kingship has itself been institutionalized. The father of that girl might be able to win the king's favour and judgment against his own police, just as today we appeal to the law to protect us from abuse. The king's subjects, even its loyal "rednecks" will themselves eagerly die to protect their kingly institution. It's a matter, after all, of tradition and this is why we never see a king or any other ruling body stray far from the earshot of the high priest or advertising agency. But still, as Bataille noted, social power is "condemned not to develop, in fact, or even merely exist, unless it exercises a material domination over the whole".

The question which interests me is why, after a few million years without chiefs, did traditions evolve to incorporate them, but only here and there, now and then?

The usual suspect is increased complexity demanding increased delegation of responsibility and therefore, specialization and the birth of centralized authority. This is a teleological explanation resting on the assumption of progress in nature: all things evolve from simple to complex organizational structure. What science has actually illustrated is that complex relations are just as apparent at the micro level (cellular biology, biochemical ecology or even molecular chemistry, atomic theory & quantum mechanics) as at the macro levels of analysis (general ecology, astrophysics). The answer is that simplicity itself is a figment of the imagination. It does not exist except as something abstracted from its context. The "natural" progressive dialectic is destroyed. If we concentrate on parts removed from context to demand the simple-complex dialectic (for example, that picking berries off a bush is simpler than managing an orchard), we merely chose to ignore all the other complexities involved had we only turned our attention to the context surrounding both activities instead of the one we chose to perceive as more complex. The berry must still be picked!

The only ecologically framed suspect left to account for the development and maintenance of chiefdoms is a generalized feeling or experience of precarity in feeling and experiencing individuals after geo-climatic or social conflict from forces outside the community – the negative feedbacks were interrupted, the status quo was disturbed. The timing of retreating glaciation and the birth of the neolithic with its first archaeological

demonstration of chiefdoms is illustrative. We are talking about increased population pressure arising from a decreased land base (loss of coastal territories due to rising sea levels and desertification due to drought). This is the same process which, in less auspicious circumstances, led to the formation of civilization and empire.

The chief is the last bulwark of community and tradition. It is a position not of authority, but of conservation. His death gives birth to the king who reigns over progress, the system of total positive feedback which makes his reign a self-fulfilling prophecy for all future generations. The death of the king by the bourgeois revolution only scattered and dispersed his authority, just as today's proponents of direct democracy wish to do with the bourgeoisie, the oligarchy of authority. It is a doomed project without an ecological (centerless) world view of infinitely complex reciprocal relations.

There is a legend/story that the Indians in one part of British Columbia slipped from this condition of reciprocity ("circulation") and became civilized and went on to try to conquer (rather than merely raid) their neighbors. The fact that there is no evidence left to us (It occurred in "myth-time") illustrates to the attentive audience the unhealthy nature of this situation – they went extinct. The implication is that civilization, *archism* itself is always possible, but never necessary. It is neither an evolutionary stage nor the result of progress. The very notion of primitivism is threatening even to many radical dissenters precisely because it is our tradition to have no tradition at all. We are children of sustained precarity caught in an ever accelerating spiral of positive feedback, and it is this which we worship as "Progress". The fallacy of most primitivist discourse is that tradition and heritage is something which can be constructed in the here and now. The fact of the matter is that our Eurasian heritage consists of five thousand years of slavery.

ch 8: PROGRESS AND THE LOTUS BLOSSOM

The great question of Anthropology is "What does it mean to be human?" In fact, the question is probably as old as civilization itself. The study of modern man – history, sociology, economics, political science, etc. just doesn't seem to do. Many feel we are somehow corrupted from the original package and we know there is great diversity among us, especially when comparing east and west. There must be an alternative to sitting around the campfire picking cooties off each other or getting a part-time job at the local walmart. "This life sucks; there must be a better way". Many have looked East for an answer, for they may have been addressing that question even longer than we.

Although Eastern wisdom has been with us at least since the beginnings of Western colonization, Alan Watts increased public interest in Eastern mysticism in North America in the late 1950's and '60's. His association with the likes of Allen Ginsberg, Tim Leary and Gary Snyder resulted in waves of youth quoting Ghandi and carrying Mao's 'little red book' in one back pocket and Hesse's *Sidhartha* in the other. And alongside the peace symbol, one could often see the symbol of the yin and yang. An interesting syncretism but not unreasonable considering the civil rights, free-speech and anti-war movements – a situation of growing waves of generalized dissent. Alternative ways of looking at the world were being explored. Zen had come to North America.

Watts described the shaded and light sides of the circle of yin-yang as polarities rather than oppositions. To illustrate, the world is seen as a magnet with a north and south pole. This presents no problem for those in the west. If one were to take a hacksaw and cut through this magnet at the equator, one would be left with two magnets each with a north and south pole and an equator somewhere around the middle. You can try this at home. Thus, polarities persist in nature but oppositions, such as "top" and "bottom", can be cleaved. When our dichotomies are separated or isolated, they undergo a semantic transformation ('middle' becomes 'bottom') or disappear outright (without ugliness, there can be no beauty). Opposition is seen as an illusion of the mind. Thus Lao Tse said "When people see some things as beautiful, other things become ugly. When people see some things as good, other things become bad. Give evil nothing to oppose and it will disappear by itself".

It has been suggested that at the time Lao Tse wrote this (around 400 – 500 bc: *Tao Te Ching* or 'The way of virtue and essence/nature'), the yin-yang symbol was actually a direction finder and a time-piece, or calender. At least, it can be used for this purpose. An eight foot rod was placed in the earth and after determining the directions, one could find the time of year by observing the location of the shadow and even make crude weather predictions. In one solar cycle, one year, the shadow will have drawn a perfect yin-yang symbol on the ground. Yin and yang have variously been defined as "shadow" and "light", "moon" and "sun". By the end of the fourth century bc, this symbol came to represent oppositions as well as poles, and the distinction between dichotomy and polarity largely became lost. The great 'purpose', 'mover', 'principle' in existence, began to be looked upon more in terms of transcendence than balance. The symbol had come to represent the all – the Tao, and dualities within could be transcended. There is an

interesting parallel here to Plato's dialectical synthesis – both give rise to ideas of progress in nature, doing away with earlier notions of balance and transformation ('pole shifts', 'reversals' and 'rebalancing'). Of course, East and West is itself an illusory distinction. They are "poles" with, historically, the multilingual Central Asian Nomads not only mediating relations (they were used as translators) but occasionally diluting distinctions. These were the unconquerable "barbarians".

Compare the Yin-Yang to the symbol of the West. When we think of western civilization, we are directed to the symbol of the pyramid as the model of nature – hierarchy, and we experience this hierarchy in terms of domination – weight, coercive force, even if it is only the force of the lie. This is a simple symbol corresponding to a relatively simple social organization (as compared to, say, the four section system of the indigenous Australians). This pyramidal social organization, a fusion of bureaucracy and monarchy, was no better explicated than by Boetie, an eighteen year old aristocrat punk in France of the late 1540's (well, I think they had a better education system back then). On the other hand, Eastern civilization brings to mind the symbols of the yin/yang and the lotus blossom giving birth to god – quite a different picture indeed. We study eastern philosophy/religion and find repeated notions of beauty, relationship, connection, tranquility, syncretism and toleration. In fact, it would not be unreasonable for the lowliest untouchable in India, the birthplace of Buddhism, or the gelded slave (eunuch) in the Chinese imperial palace to proclaim "I am god" and not only get away with it, but congratulated for his discovery.

If your BS detector just kicked in, you are in good company. Toleration? Untouchable? Eunuch? How can all this jive with the obvious hierarchy of the eastern state, India, China, Korea or Japan, obvious illustrations of this pyramid scheme? It is not a contradiction. Conquest is always also a matter of incorporation. The state accepts these notions, this ancient poetry, when accompanied with the idea of progress and stoicism, which not only maintains progress, but re-reinforces it through the idea of successive incarnations leading to enlightenment and thus acceptance of the life of deprivation – that of the stoic or ascetic.

When I speak of "the state" tolerating or accepting or co-opting other's ideas, I am not trying to paint a picture of fat cats with cigars conspiring in smoke-filled rooms. That would be a description of Plato's "philosopher kings". We do this to ourselves in attempt to make sense of the world. We carry ideological artifacts, fragments of our ancestors, and new fragments of those we conquer. Of course, your professional thinkers, philosophers, priests, alchemists and the like, spend more serious effort at this and it is their syntheses which are accepted or rejected according to how well they fit with the existing order. Even "progressives" are basically conservative and the "powers that be" can authorize the new "state ideology" in order to maintain or enhance their rule. Conservation is, after all, the first "law" of physics. The fundamental dialectic of civilization is the balancing of progress, the necessary condition of the growth and maintenance of the state, (whether in the form of empire or global capitalism), and conservation, the fundamental condition of sanity – that self-assured feeling of "settling in".

With a new context – the context of subservience – old ideas take on new meanings. Thus, tolerance, implying relativity, might be transformed into indifference. Spiritual in-

difference, a common zen theme, can certainly be a hindrance for the slave who might otherwise seek freedom. And what is this cool sounding "transcendentalism" if not a one-upmanship: we strive to transcend this cruel nature. Nature is to be overcome. Thus we have the commandant of the prison camp announce to the p.o.w.s from atop his little box, "Be happy in your work" after spending a tranquil afternoon of Zen flower arranging – a dictum of contentment and spiritual indifference from an enlightened 'master'. Contradiction is only seen among the conquered. It is "cultural conflict", "culture shock". It is not a contradiction from the point of view of the elevated zen commandant, quite unlike the sign on the gate at the entrance to Auschwitz – "Work will set you free" – surely a transcendental moment in the experiences of those workers. All labor camps are death camps. The so-called gas-chamber is a useless redundancy, for at least a slow death arrives as soon as the gate is closed behind us.

After the transcendence of death there is reincarnation. Even the Neanderthal buried their dead in the fetal position, presumably in the position awaiting, if not a return from mother earth to experience life again, a return to the comfort of mother's womb. The logic of reincarnation plays itself out with the question, "What's next?". Ideas of relation, connectedness, and eternal return are as old as humanity itself. The ideas of progress and asceticism are the new additions brought in with civilization. The primitive notion of re-incarnation corresponds to the statement: "Hey, let's do that again!" Reincarnation among the civilized is stated: "Well, that really sucked, let's try it again and see if we can get it right this time". "When we're finally enlightened and reach Nirvana, we'll NEVER have to come back to this shithole again!" This is Eastern progress. One is never quite good enough. It is a very good ideology of submission to authority. With very little superficial change, primitive (read "communist") ideology was coopted and then maintained with minimal force. For the state, it is good for the toiling peasant to declare his godhood. In the same way, Lenin and Trotsky, following Mr. Marx, seduced millions with the simple phrase, "Dictatorship of the Proletariat". Obviously this didn't quite pan out for the soviet worker, so Trotsky added "permanent revolution" – just another euphemism for progress and corollary of enlightenment.

But you might argue, "if Eastern wisdom is ultimately corrupting, what of Lao Tse and the Taoists you quote from so often?" Like the Cynics in Greece or Shinto in Japan, Taoism was never a religion or philosophy of the state nor was it promoted by the state until it was corrupted with the logic of state. These were philosophies of anarchy. If you look closely, you will find a pyramid protruding through and adding dimension to the new circle of yin/yang. There is no duality, it is all one – nature, god. It is the all and thus includes the pyramid. For the enlightened easterner, "Man is god". For the enlightened westerner, "God is man".

Whether west or east, the state has always been interested in unity. Today this is represented by "globalization" – just another pyramid scheme. Some say when it achieves unity civilization must collapse for its driving principle, progress and growth must necessarily end. Primitive societies have always invested in "multiplicity", to use Clastres' term. This is nothing else but local autonomy. Relations of course, occur between groups – both hostile and amicable (but never with the intent of permanent unification or annihilation of the other) for them, the self and the other is a matter of polarity.

On reason and enlightenment: Sophistry is a means to power. We are easily confused. With the forceful annihilation of diversity, of local cultures or local autonomy (and this has always been the necessary agenda of the state to continue on its road of progress), the sap, ('dupe', 'hoodwinked', victimized), is drained (sapped) of his own 'life blood'/autonomy (sap) and becomes a sop, a sponge for the new. This is the art of sophistry, the history of sops. At least that would be my wayward etymological analysis. Philosophy (and its child, science) has become not the love of Sophia, knowledge, but perfection of sophistry – rule by persuasion. It thus replaces religion. Let there be no question, implies Bertrand Russell, philosophy is mathematics or it is know-nothing – the creation of an unassailable argument. The game of persuasion is one-upmanship. It establishes leadership.

In the east, on the other hand, we find "the tolerant". "Let them have their taoism and shintoism". Elements of these systems of thought were incorporated into the state ideology – not 'syncreted' but 'synthesized'. This provides a new transformation – synthetic, plastic, malleable, artificial. The saps (that is, the sapped) soak it up. In the principally agrarian economy, they are left in peace after the tribute has been paid, work performed. In China, taoism transformed into transcendentalism after the teachings of Chuang-tzu, maintaining the name "Taoism". The transcending of oppositions superseded the balance of polarities. Progress replaced homeostasis. While classic Taoism decried external authority, decried too much logic, saw many of our dichotomies dissolve through transcendence, the search for ultimate principles and causes (e.g., the soul) provides an acceptance of rule – an authority of law, acquiescence to leadership. For Chuang tsu, it was imperative that we realize all dualities of existence, whether dialectical or polar, are transformed into unity, and this is the essential transcendence – all things mutually involve each other. Classic Taoism did not distinguish dream from reality – they are but mirrors of each other. Paradox and contradiction are only apparent.

Chuang tsu was himself a product of a thousand years of rulership. While power of some over others is criticized, he could not help but be influenced by the language and culture history reproduced within him, which is to say, by civilization:

"The Tao gives me my body so that I may be carried, my life so I may toil, my old age so I may repose, and my death so I may rest."

Toil, repose and death – the great circle of life anticipating Karl Marx. Tennyson just had to ask "Does the flower toil?"

But for these emotions I should not be. Yet but for me, there would be no one to feel them. So far we can go; but we do not know by whose order they come into play. It would seem there was a soul; but the clue to its existence is wanting. That it functions is credible enough, though we cannot see its form. Perhaps it has inner reality without outward form.

Tao has reality and evidence but no action or physical form. It may be transmitted but cannot be received. It may be obtained but cannot be seen. It is based in itself, rooted in itself. Before Heaven and Earth came into being, Tao existed by itself for all time. It gave spirits and rulers their spiritual powers. It created Heaven and Earth. It is above the zenith but is not high. It is beneath the nadir but is not low. It is prior to Heaven and Earth but is not old. It is more ancient than the highest antiquity but is not regarded as long ago.

The Tao as immaterial or prior to and outside of heaven and earth anticipates Rene

Descartes and Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Lao Tse had described the Tao as the totality, or the way of the totality, not a separate 'force', a separate reality. *Tao* translates to 'the way' – Propositions can only assert 'how' things are, not 'what' things are: "*Ein Satz kann nur sagen, 'wie' ein Ding ist, nicht es ist*" – Wittgenstein.

Take the human body with all its hundred bones, nine external cavities and six internal organs, all complete. Which part of it should I love best? Do you not cherish all equally, or have you a preference? Do these organs serve as servants of someone else? Since servants cannot govern themselves, do they serve as master and servants by turn? Surely there is some soul which controls them all – *Chuang tsu*.

Woody Allen aptly responded: "The brain is my second favorite organ".

Later revisions of Taoism could not do without certain dialectics of nature and the contradictions in society. The philosophy of Tao transcended into the religion of Taoism. The incorporation of Buddhism introduced the idea we must transcend reality itself to gain enlightenment. Rather than eliminating the dichotomies to transcend contradiction, dichotomies are maintained by transcending reality – Reformist recuperation. By 50 A.D., we have the Taoist philosophy of indifference to life and death and the acceptance of the natural course of things – "the Profound Principle is the perfection of utility" [- *Yang Hsiung*]. Confucianism and Taoism merged.

When Buddhism (a hindu sect) had come to eastern asia, select notions from it became incorporated as well. In Japan this combined with Shinto to become Zen. Is it not interesting that the above changes reflected in ancient texts coincide with periods of political and economic turmoil and social fracture? Confucianism, the political philosophy of state and empire, was always waiting in the wings.

Analogically, in the west, Epicurus' cynic-based "egoistic hedonism" (more properly *not* hedonism since he also promoted altruism and distinguished the satisfaction of vain and empty desires which should be avoided at all cost – e.g. power and wealth – from natural and necessary desires – e.g. food/shelter – as well as natural but unnecessary desires – e.g. luxury items) became stoicism and asceticism – voluntary deprivation and subservience to a system of scarcity. Only the elite would enjoy an epicuran lifestyle, unhindered by the "bloody struggle for survival" imposed on the rest through the regulation of scarcity. This was another time of dissent. Socrates was sentenced to death essentially for having the balls to publicly demonstrate that a common slave could be trained in Pythagorean mathematics and the fineries of philosophical discourse while his student, Plato was setting out the perfect system of social stratification (his "Republic") based on innate inequality.

Ultimately, sincere philosophers look to find what is meant by "life", or "man", "knowledge" and such. They have looked for what it is we have lost on the road to civilization. As they have approached what might be considered a critique of the basic premises of the state – property and authority – and become popular among the propertyless and the ruled, they are buried, literally and in every other respect. There is always a dose of hemlock handy or a great fire at the libraries of Alexandria. It is interesting how the fire knows just which texts to burn. "Yes, burn Epicurus and the (largely anarchist) Cynics, but for heaven's sake, let's leave Plato alone!" Of course today in academics, we no longer set fire to libraries, we merely fire the scholar. Ideological intolerance is a thing

of the West even though we are led to believe that the reformation and the enlightenment and the North American revolution in general were revolutions for religious freedom. Hogwash.

It is insidious and diabolical – the "social lie": the tactics of deception by governors in order to maintain a hierarchy of exploitation and servitude in the governed (– *Rexroth*). The method perfected in the east is synthesis rather than syncretism – an adding or incorporation. Syncretism practiced by primitive people gave quantitative change. Without notions of progress, the 'status quo' is preserved when new customs are added. With the synthesis practiced by the civilized, progress is maintained (the status quo of the state), but in a new context the conquered become radically transformed.

The big secret, of course is that humans are not logic machines on a path toward perfection. Reason is not the highest order, as Hegel would have us believe. And what is this "ordering" but a reflection of our view of nature as hierarchically arranged? With Wittgenstein, we can see that language/reason/discourse is quite acceptable in covering the basic necessities or propensities in life, but falters when applied to the great questions of the philosophers. "What time is it?" is easily answered, but what of the question, "What is time?"⁸ The answer of the scientist or philosopher is no more real to us than that of the poet. The postmodernists are criticized for reviving poetry: "Time is none other than the memory of that which has yet to occur and the annihilation of that which has!" "Time is imagination and forgetfulness!" "Time is the lotus blossom giving birth to god!" "Time is our linear motion across the curved fabric of space!" "Time is a circle!" "Time is now!" Frankly, I don't see the difference between scientific, philosophical, religious and poetic explanations – at this level they are all poetic. Yet we don't want to think about it, or even experience it for that would bring us nearer to death. But we want an answer and we want it now! Yet we ultimately have only our metaphors.

"The ultimate result of centuries of enlightenment stated: 'we are enlightened in that we now know we are not able to be enlightened'. The New Man, whether according to Marx or to Nietzsche, never appeared; the Adam of old triumphs" [– *Bernd A. Laska: Ein dauerhafter Dissident*].

The idea of progress gave us the enlightenment. "Enlightened Man" is criticized by Max Stirner as nothing but idealized "spook". Progress gave us Nietzsche's "Superman", it gave us the Hindu "Brahman" – the aristocratic caste of enlightened ones, it gave us transcendentalism in China. One might just as easily say that all these notions

⁸ According to Wittgenstein, "the great questions posed by philosophers had arisen because they were operating on a mistaken view of language and its relation to reality. Philosophers in the Western tradition were not "wiser" than anyone else, as had been assumed – they were simply more likely to get caught up in linguistic confusion by taking language beyond the context it was meant to deal with". "while we can meaningfully discuss our experience, we cannot meaningfully discuss those things upon which our experience of the world depends. Thus, if someone on the street were to ask another "What time is it?" there can be a straightforward and meaningful answer. However, if the same person goes on to ask, "Well then what is time?" the situation would be quite different (for how could you meaningfully explain time without appealing to the very concept?). Thus, questions such as "What is time?" and "What is the difference between sense and nonsense?" are nonsensical questions for Wittgenstein. This does not mean that they should not be asked or that they are bad questions, but that their answers can only be shown. These answers, then, will be descriptive rather than explicatory." [– *wikipedia on Wittgenstein*].

gave us "progress". All of these notions tell us "you're not good enough!" And how easy this is to believe! Isn't it the first lesson we learn as children? The second lesson, of course, is "Life is hard, then you die". This notion would be total nonsense to a member of a primitive society: "hard luck" is always a matter of fortune or magic, and there are always ways these conditions can be remedied, that is, by persons who have not been sapped by missionaries and machine guns and that other sap: structural adjustment programs. Today's add-man is the *missionary* who accompanies the machine gun to make room for the *machinery*, a state to which all life is to transcend.

The world is meaningless, this provokes us to construct meaning. Our situation is absurd, this provokes us to commitment. I think many people in the world would accept the 'reactive' form of these gnostic principles. – Frere Dupont

Primitive Transcendentalism, Gnostic Mysticism & Superstitious Wingnutism:

I may be a fellow traveler of the gnostic tradition. Not sure. But I'd say kabbalists and buddhists are gnostics, as are Sufis, or at least fellow travelers. If I'm not mistaken that's where we get the term 'libertines', and 'egalitarians'...

Now plunge with me into super wingnut mode:

I don't agree that gnostics see nature as evil. That's just an exercise at best, and a new morality (called Satanism btw) at worst. I think instead they see it as idiotic at worst and a place we're just visiting (perhaps for good reason) at best. I don't really see gnosticism as moral, but as a rebellion against the morality of the biblical jewish god/rabbinical authorities, or any "ruler god" which is why their gods aren't rulers, but are Jesus, Dionysus or Osiris etc. I see gnosticism as the inner teaching of religions – which is mysticism, which is transcendent, which is where the conflict is with primitivism or even, sometimes taoism, and definitely with communism and European materialist based anarchisms.

I don't agree with the necessity of this conflict, even though it is useful for capitalism, with transcendence by the bourgeois individuals of their environment – ie., denial of one's context and of the existence of natural and social relationships – as a way of seeking relief from our current dilemma being very popular right now via new age crazes and "spiritual" past times and self conceptions abundant.

Mysticism for me is not in conflict with anarchism or communism. Zen Buddhism is an example of a materialist mysticism. They don't even believe in the psyche or the soul. Though I guess you could argue that it's not mystical at all, and is just a system of psychological techniques. The psyche though is a pagan gnostic concept, and psychoanalysis, which is what picked it up in modern times, is certainly not scientific, no matter how Freud thought of himself. Jung was an out and out mystic.

Mysticism is always transcendent, but that doesn't necessarily mean a separation of the material from ideal in practice. After all, the gnostics were pioneers of gender and sexual liberation, many were against property and tyranny. It's really the church that solidified the spiritual vs. material antagonism, freezing a process into a morality.

So is communism not transcendent? Or anarchy?

What's the difference between saying that all physical forces are part of the mind and saying that the mind is part of [a//] physical forces? The terrain is seen from two different angles, but it's the same terrain we have to grow, act and die in.

I think Christian gnosticism was basically a reaction to the roles of class society at the same time as against the weak willed individuals who inhabit it – unable to know what they want on one hand – giving in to any craving or lust they get swept up in – and being unable to see processes bigger than the moment.

The hungry stomach is always myopic, not worried about the big picture, just the next meal. That's why they [*gnostics*] criticized identifying with our bodies. Your body is changing and aging. Things are moving and you're stuck with your identity built on what you like and don't like. Like the buddhists, they claimed this identity was an illusion – the real identity being whatever process made perception of all this – and memory of it – possible, whatever glues it all together. They felt people just following their stomachs was an impediment to stepping back and seeing processes at work, not seeing a bigger potential self than a socially constructed one or a consumption based one.

Primitivism seems to idealize biological nature – the nature of the kingdoms and phylums. Mysticism idealized a natural force that is so deep that it is called supernatural. It is beyond comprehension for one. It is the spark of life. It is maybe pure verb or pure context. It makes nature possible. The more you can see it, the more conscious you are. I feel that despite its marxist influences (via the Frankfurt school & Situs), primitivism verges on historical materialism – which I don't think is useful and really obscures things. The idealism in mysticism is not a historical [*reality*], and does not obscure what could be called a material reality.

I think they can't coexist for me.

But I think a gnostic criticism of technology and all creative work is a false path in so far as we may think of it as only *our* creation or as a solution to *our* problems. That is why the Edilion built christ's cross and why christ was a carpenter before he became a god – they thought they made stuff, but there's no building stuff without trees for wood, and hands and many other things not of the carpenter's invention. In fact the ability to build is the result of very complex and dynamic processes we would now call evolution. The false god of the bible is false because he thinks he created everything, but he didn't create creating. This critical attitude towards a certain crude materialism does not a rejection of technology make.

I've said it before: I don't think there is one philosophy that lends itself to anarchy or communism more than another. A huge amount of our discourse is wrapped up in getting a clear picture of reality, or what schools of philosophy (or critiques of them, or ideas from them) lend themselves to action, or to opposition to the current order.

But just look at christians. The movement for the free spirit, the catholic workers, capitalists, monarchists, the pope, the zapatistas all went in for it. They all think their positions follow from christ.

For my money, opposition to the state and to class society and a willingness to try to decide what is part and parcel of those institutions is what makes an anarchist or communist. –
Arthur

Today, there is hardly a distinction between East and West. We are unified. We have merged. The Brotherhood of Man, the G-8. Modern, civilized "Man" imposes, if not evil, at least an absurdity and alienness on the world and therefore wants to transcend nature. This is accomplished through reason (and therefore science) and technology. The pure capitalist technocrat and politician has a more utilitarian philosophy – nature is merely a resource to be molded, shaped and controlled for profit and energy. If we can't have slaves, we create machines to do the work we have no wish to perform ourselves. For the more devout and those taking advantage of pharmaceutical technology, life is endured, until released from suffering in the afterlife.

On the other hand, romantic idealists impose good on the world and therefore want to transcend civilization. Artists also fall into this group, although more and more, sharing a more negative view of nature. When suppressed, creativity always seems to be able to just manage to escape. There has always been a dropout culture, a 'lunatic fringe', the 'wingnuts' of discontent. The radical political philosopher, the revolutionary

theorist, sees all this ongoing dissent and calls it part of "the struggle". Unfortunately, while theorists may "dig it", their refusal is also theoretical. Theorists will only join the revolution when they are surrounded by their comrades, and only then do they call it "Revolution". Their mistake is in the fact that the revolution *is* the struggle, and has been in progress since the beginning – the days of King Thug the First.

More "primitive" ideologies (such as seen among tribal peoples, in early Taoism, or Shinto, or as rediscovered by early Greek Cynics) acknowledge that "shit happens", but this is neither good nor evil. Gnosticism came to see nature in a "fallen" state – evil or at least absurd. Buddhist indifference is akin to Greek stoicism – "Ignore it and maybe it will go away – Accept your suffering with humility". On the other hand, primitive "awe" is a respect rather than christian "fear" which is subjugation. Of course, absurdity, cruelty, pain and suffering exist, but these alone do not define nature any more than do mystery, beauty, symmetry and chaos, which also exist. It is not a dialectic for the primitive, who is immersed in totality – the original 'participant observer'.

We can all probably agree that the universe containing our 'dead', mechanistic world is way way bigger than we'll ever fathom. There is much mystery! That does not mean that our tiny, circumscribed modern world is the 'real' and everything else is supernatural. I think it is only we moderns who make the distinction of the natural and supernatural. We think of 'primitives' ruled by a world of superstitious ritual and beliefs. Maybe they only live in a much bigger world than we? In fact, in many languages, what we have translated as "natural"/"mundane" and "supernatural"/"sacred" really refer to the "obvious" and "not obvious". In fact, the etymology of our own "superstitious" breaks down to 'standing on top' in Proto-Indo-European. The root, 'stare' in Latin and 'sta-' in PIE also gives us the word "stare". It all suggests to me 'getting a bigger picture of the world', 'the view from the top'.

We see two different meanings in transcend: an escape from the world and the realization of a bigger world. In primitive belief systems, we see a lot of the idea of transformation from one state of being to another. This is usually thought of by us as transcendentalism, but not with my usual notion of "escape". Vine Deloria talked of connections and relationships in a living world in native wisdom as opposed to the view of the world as a collection of dead objects. Einstein and Eric Fromm portrayed similar pictures. Not to portray "natives" as a perpetually happy lot, but, living in a bigger world full of possibilities (I call this abundance) where would there be room for a notion of transcendental escape? Why do suicide rates increase with the progress of civilization? If you are under attack, you fight back or move over – your choice. In a living world of connected states of 'being', communication between states are expected. We call this "magic". We also call it "gnosis" – 'revealed knowledge'. In a world of dead objects, there is little room for such transcendental relationships – there is only slight-of-hand and the possibility of revolution or escape.

I think that a real 'primitivism' could be seen as a way to eliminate the whole good/evil dialectic without eliminating meaningful construction or commitment. I think I would say that primitivism would be the tendency to want to transcend this small, circumscribed world and live in the bigger picture, no longer needing the transcendence of escape. The kind of primitivism I'm discussing is something which does not yet exist in

the critical milieu – but which could. This, in my book, is the same as anarchism as well as utopianism. Why then even bother with the word "primitivism"? Because primitives managed to do quite well without all that shit we oppose, like prisons, the state and capitalist exploitation. Because 'primitive thinkers' (the likes of Vine Deloria or Albert Einstein or Edward Abbey) have been telling us for years to climb that hill and get a bigger picture – view the panorama of the living connections going on all around us!

As someone haunted by a documentary that showed a lioness who would starve to death because her jaw was broken by a kick from an antelope, I would say acceptance of pain [*stoicism*] is not the point – rather, [*it is*] acceptance (and appreciation) of a lack of control. I do not accept Nature. I do not accept its cruelty, nor do I see its unnecessary sufferings as anything that human rationality has to adjust itself to. I can accept that nature is not all good, that being a process it is full of mistakes and gaps, and that it is in essence a kind of horrific-wonderful cornucopia of complexity and chaos, but not that its fundamental principles are the principles of the hierarchic, capitalist state and all the misery it represents. Such a view is enough to make one want to hang oneself. [- *Gnostic*]

I use the word 'primitive' as an ideal to denote a society comprising of mechanical compounds. Each primitive element in a society may be easily unbolted, shifted about and rebolted somewhere else. Primitive is basic, bits and pieces, what fits easily in the hand and head (and heart). Elaboration is simply a matter of 'adding' – the fantastical is an eagle's head on a lion's body. I see the word 'gnosis' as an intuition of something that is more than nuts and bolts. I may be walking beside the river, I feel the 'goodness' of this scene, there is something that flows through the leaves, the light, the air, it is in the bird and cricket song, I feel it in myself too. This fusing of parts is the object of 'gnosis'. A collective subject may be thus infused, a crowd, a moment in time. [- *Dupont*]

The implication that gnosticism is mysticism, and mysticism is always transcendentalism (not at all my notion of escapism – which I still think saturates much Eastern and 19th and 20th century western transcendentalism), suggests the transcendent is a momentary or even prolonged synthesis beyond simple amalgamation. Dictionary says of 'gnostic': "of or relating to intellectual or spiritual knowledge, revealed knowledge." Dupont's 'good feeling' is transcendental and existential – something beyond the common and obvious. It is exalted and mystical. It is also gnosis. "We may perhaps just as well speak of "immanence," but we are most definitely talking about something that we cannot understand as the sum of its parts" [- *BZ*].

I share the feeling of goodness walking beside the river, but then gaze across to the other side and see the emaciated, maggot-strewn corpse of a lion with it's last breath frozen on the broken jaw, hanging open at an obvious tilt. My spirit sags to the sad and somber. Is it a contradiction? Is this something to celebrate? Would a "primitive" man not look on me with sympathy? Or would he simply tell me that in this great world there is much danger, so one should exercise caution when dealing with desperate antelope? The world itself is not, therefore a filthy monster. Thank you, Mr. Nietzsche, and the world is not, therefore a golden paradise, but it's really, really big, and that makes me glad.

Gestalt vs. Nuts-and-bolts: Immanent, inherent, unspeakable. We are incoherent without our context. Divorced from the total, parts are absurd. We are not an amalgamation, not an artificial synthesis.

I had sent (Romain Rolland) my small book that treats religion as an illusion, (*The Future of an Illusion*) and he answered that he entirely agreed with my judgement upon religion, but

that he was sorry I had not properly appreciated the true source of religious sentiments. This, he says, consists in a peculiar feeling, which he himself is never without, which he finds confirmed by many others, and which he may suppose is present in millions of people. It is a feeling which he would like to call a sensation of 'eternity', a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded – as it were, 'oceanic'. This feeling, he adds, is a purely subjective fact, not an article of faith.

The views expressed by the friend whom I so much honour, and who himself once praised the magic of illusion in a poem, caused me no small difficulty. I cannot discover this 'oceanic' feeling in myself.

If I have understood my friend rightly, he means the same thing by it as the consolation offered by an original and somewhat eccentric dramatist to his hero who is facing a self-inflicted death. 'We cannot fall out of this world.' That is to say, it is a feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole. I may remark that to me this seems something rather in the nature of an intellectual perception, which is not, it is true, without an accompanying feeling-tone, but only such as would be present with any other act of thought of equal range. From my own experience I could not convince myself of the primary nature of such a feeling. But this gives me no right to deny that it does in fact occur in other people.

I have nothing to suggest which could have a decisive influence on the solution of this problem. The idea of men's receiving an intimation of their connection with the world around them through an immediate feeling which is from the outset directed to that purpose sounds so strange and fits in so badly with the fabric of our psychology. – *Freud*

"What gnosis apprehends cannot be arrived at by calculating the sum of the parts. In this sense, gnosis is the ultimate counter-current to this historical moment, in which everything is reduced to calculability, and the existence of anything which falls outside of that is denied" [- *BZ*]. This is what I mean by "primitive thinking". It is what Deloria implied when he spoke of the view of the world as alive and organic and connected as opposed to the western view of a collection of dead objects – parts of a machine. Eric Fromm said much the same. When we feel that 'oneness', that 'goodness', we are experiencing (as opposed to intellectualizing) the fact that we 'egos' are part of that gestalt. Although the lion carcass may inspire feelings of 'badness', Dali would remind us that it is also part of that gestalt. Artaud thought that if we confine depictions of evil to the theatre, we will not feel the need to incorporate it into our daily lives.

I think 'primitivism' as we usually see it is born of a misplaced racism, as is the anti-primitivist current. 'Primitives' are not a different species, a quaint, simple people. We are still haunted by Hobbes and Rousseau. It is our conception of them which is simple-minded. They are us, without the machine. It is the machine we live in which makes us modern. I call it 'civilization', but that is only just another word. It is not symbolic thought which brings 'evil' into the world, but it certainly allows us to imagine it:

"capital has colonized pattern recognition and made it into rationalized 'fordism'" [- *Dupont*].

The argument against technology is not primitivism. Primitives have technology. Technology does not have them. Primitive architecture designs places to live in, modern settlements are places in which to navigate machinery [- *Chtcheglov*].

I think what I call "primitive thinking" (unconventionally, to be sure) saturates the lunatic fringe. I think it is another source of creativity. If gnosticism is an argument for a gestalt perception, then I'm a gnostic too, even if an incompetent artist.

So I ask again, what does it mean to be human? This is something that can only be lived, not told. The greatest journey of life is to realize your being. The answer comes in the form of experience which shows that there are no answers. What we will find is that our questions are over-looking the real world that lies before our eyes. [– *Kevin Tucker*]

- signed, 'The Death to Romanticism Brigade'

ch 9: THE COURSE OF INSURRECTION TOWARD MENTAL HEALTH AND THE BASIS FOR ITS ORGANIZATION

Depression and anxiety, sorrow and anguished toil, ruthlessness and survival – the state of living in the state.

Along with many other critics, John Zerzan has pointed out that oppression is built into our language itself. When we study etymology, we find the semantics of the word often changes more drastically and rapidly than the word itself. Languages change with our collective behaviors and social relations. What were words describing sharing relationships become recipes for coercion. Many see language in a determinist light, forcing us to follow its 'laws'. It is true that language reinforces and even reproduces our behavior and thinking, but when we change the context of our behavior, language accommodates. Language and thinking and behavior are only reflections of each other. Does the shadow cause the man or vice versa? Or are they expressions of the same phenomenon? If we are concerned with a revolution of our behavior and social relations (coercion, capitalism), can we take some direction from the psychologists?

Neurolinguists think that by changing our language, our behavior and thinking will follow. Cognitive theorists want to start with our thinking. Behaviorists say we only need change our behavior. Rational-emotive therapists tell us "Think clearly, be happy". Cognitive-behaviorists have recognized this problem, but many still try to impose change according to the whims of a standardized social normality rather than to let it happen through assisted self-reflection, which was Freud's intention in the first place. In other words, they all try to get us "happy in our work" – we call them "Dr. Feelgood". They constantly compete as to who is more correct/effective and, with the help of insurance companies, their science has gotten bogged down to the point that many now merely recommend an appropriate pharmaceutical treatment according to the diagnosis within standardized sets of symptoms (the DSM) created by or at least in collaboration with the neurochemists themselves. Perhaps they should try a more holistic, and therefore revolutionary cognitive-neurolinguistic-behavioral-organic approach which does not concentrate on things and ultimate causes and proper diagnoses and forced standards, but rather, relations and associations which enhance or reduce mental and all other forms of struggle. Perhaps revolutionaries should do the same.

But all professional scientists, like the anthropologist and psychologist, themselves struggle within the competitive, hierarchical social relation. "Produce!, produce!, produce!" is the watchword of science. It will take a revolution of the totality before they can become more effective, and then, I wonder, will we even need them?

Our health is measured in terms of a hierarchical social relation of production, reinforced by such ridiculous notions as "the peter principle". Physical health is measured in terms of one's ability to return to work, and mental health is measured by not only one's willingness, but also eagerness to go back to work. The peter principle sets the limit of one's disability – that is, the level of "responsibility" and pay one is able to achieve upon return to work. Obviously, then, those unwilling or unable to work are mentally or physically ill and incompetent in either case. Competency is, of course,

one's ability to raise to the level set by the so-called "peter principle" through "healthy competition". Another way of describing this is the level just below total psychological burn out. This is how "upward" social mobility is equated with mental health. Consistent with enlightenment thinking, one can actually transcend physical limitations to perform labor through the "mental progress" (called "growth" in psychotherapeutic circles, "education" and "skills acquisition" at university) and is defined by the ability to convince others to do your work for you or to work at tasks useful to no one. This we call "leadership quality". Those doing the work (and who have read *Tom Sawyer*) often call it a devious scam.

The Pyramid and its Discontents: Oppression is experienced at *all* levels of this pyramidal social organization. Those at the bottom feel it as a crushing weight – a personal attack on their very lives. Their mode of existence is a survival mode. Those at the top feel it as a fear of flying – being assassinated or overthrown (tossed over the side) by those just beneath. The minions in the middle experience it as a fear of failure. No matter their comfort level, they fear they might at any time lose it all, lose the game, experience the crushing blow of defeat. The attitude thought most healthy is an accepting resignation: "Don't think about it". "Stay busy". "Try not to watch the clock". "Keep the faith, baby, it'll all be over soon". It is a culture of paranoia. The social arrangement itself generates violent reaction at most and social criticism at least when the weight of this pyramid begins to be felt as too heavy to bear – when the paranoia goes beyond the subclinical. Often this is characterized as mental illness and may lead to suicide or even murder. Almost any reaction is hoped/can be felt to ease the tension, no matter the consequences. The lack of concern itself is considered the defining component of psychopathy.

General insurrection from the bottom is rare because this saturation point is subjectively felt and variable, and our own alienation inhibits most attempts to organize. When we are successful, such as is seen in wild cat strikes, we are appeased with small gifts, even though something else is taken away, hidden to us beneath our sense of victory, unheard below the shouting victory chant, unfelt through the anesthesia of the moment of celebration. In fact, this situation is seen here and there, now and then, throughout the social system.

It has ever been pointed out that revolutionaries arise from the middle. They depend on the support of those at the bottom, and try to "educate the masses" and therefore apply direct pressure. But their quest is not to disassemble the social arrangement, but to eliminate the top – only a small step beyond the parliamentary overthrow of the monarchy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – the bourgeois revolution. The even less reactionary comrades in the middle, the reformers, would only replace those at the top. Reformers think they can make positive change through appeal. Reformers break into two camps, those who blame the people on the bottom for their problems ("the right") and those who blame the people on the top for too much oppression ("the left"). Both are often called "smug" and "arrogant" by the spectators. And every few decades, these ideological 'camps' rethink themselves and trade places.

Those at the top ensure their own survival by periodically adjusting the levels of oppression toward monarchic, social democratic, expansive bureaucratic or totalitarian po-

lice-state solutions. Historically, every successful reform as well as every successful revolution has only resulted in the growth or expansion of the pyramid, whether the oppression is superficially/subjectively eased off or increased for us, but only for a time. To persist with this metaphor, this is how the pyramid breathes progress. Thomas Jefferson explained and predicted this necessary "breathing" when he promoted revolution every twenty years. In the U.S., it is considered a revolutionary victory when the democrats and republicans exchange places in this pyramid of power.

From a global perspective and a biological perspective, very few live. They survive. The metaphor of the pyramid is replaced by that of the beast: we survive its onslaughts. The depressed and acquiescent pessimist says "It's a bloody struggle . . . We must struggle to survive". The resigned but thoughtful conformist (opportunist) says "Sure it's a struggle, but it's the only game in town". The anxious and anguished militant says "We must survive to carry on the struggle another day". The suicidal martyr says "Strike me down and I shall become more powerful than you can imagine!" They all say "It must be a permanent struggle".

Why not stop with the negative vibes? Is mere survival the most one can do? That's really pretty easy if you're not a quadruple amputee. Why can't we forget about survival and struggle altogether and just live? Say what you *will* say, do what you *will* do, nothing more, nothing less. Let no one stop you from it. If this avails you not, avoid those who would stop you. That is freedom. Unlike the *archist* who will do only what s/he *can* (is given permission), the anarchist wills, therefore s/he can, and if of a mind to, does. The difference boils down to the exercise of personal choice.

But I guess your answer: "Easy for you to say. Come down into the city and try that! You try eating out of a dumpster and see if you still think life isn't a struggle. You say you are free, but can you step into the halls of parliament without being stopped by a cop? What of the ruthless brutes who would take, take, take?"

I would only answer that, to me, freedom is not everything. I do not want to have everything. I take what I need and leave the rest behind, or share it with you. My freedom is free of the expansionist tyranny of superfluous wants, yet I do not decline the occasional luxury. But for my immediate survival, food, there are options other than garbage bins. And I will make a game of them. And I will live. And I might just be ruthless, until scarcity is disemboweled by the last hanged priest of the revolution.

If scarcity – which is created by property and managed by the rule of law (government and economy) – is abolished, the rulers and economists will disappear. Struggle is eliminated. That which is done at another's expense gives scarcity re-birth. And ruthlessness is the favorite son of scarcity. When the son, "Ruthlessness", beds his mother, "Scarcity", the children are named "Struggle" and "Toil". Thus, we name ourselves "The Children of Struggle". Through competitive toil, our own incestuous relationship with our grandmother reincarnates her.

What becomes of our social relations when ruthless competition is banished?

They become cooperative and sharing – that is to say, ruthlessly loving. Although it may accept these things as attractive – but only in an "ideal" land – they are as foreign to the logic of the state as Timbuktu was to the early colonialists: "In that land, there be

dragons!"

"The State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently. We are the State and continue to be the State until we have created the institutions that form a real community. There can only be a more human future if there is a more humane present." – Gustav Landauer

The Ethos of Expansionism 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" [– *from Chellis Glendinning*]. Addicts make great leaders – they are proficient in the capitalist ethic.

From a business standpoint, nuclear war will not occur until multinational corporations have succeeded in commercialising China. After that accomplishment, there will be no more room on Earth to expand the market economy, and so there will be no more viable reason for humans beings to stay alive. – *corporate CEO, ca 1980's*

Empire's best metaphor is the addicted psyche – there are never enough amenities for the civilized, so expansion becomes its lifeblood. It is robbing ever-larger convenience stores in order to get the next fix, and the fix is all that matters. Even nature is portrayed to fit this scheme: evolution proceeds according to one's ability to outcompete all others in acquiring the "means of survival". Socialists as well as capitalists tell us that "the means of survival" is perfectly synonymous with "the means of production". They tell us that, in a state of perpetual scarcity, the "law of diminishing returns" produces both dominant species and empires. Evolution of species and progress in civilization follow the same set of rules – this set is called "natural selection" in the former and "historical materialism" (or progress) in the latter. In other words, those who have 'scored the biggest' get their fix and rule the roost, but can never become complacent because the 'rush' always requires *more* to be maintained – "Feed me!", said the carnivorous plant in *Little Shop of Horrors*, but there is never enough.

We are told we have evolved as a species; just look at our progress! Look at our technology, most of which I cannot access, and none of which I can reproduce. And I often ask myself, "would I even want to?" Look at our progressive struggle! The shit gets deeper every day. Can our present "progressive" course lead us to a more human future?

If revolution is born of struggle, what assurance have we of a positive outcome? Historical precedence? Not finding an acceptable answer, many suggest patience: "Just wait; let nature take her course". The answer, of course, is: "We've waited long enough; sometimes nature needs a little nudge in the ribs". And what of evolution?

If (as colloquial understanding seems to suggest) competition were the driving force in evolution, thereby giving us notions of "survival of the fittest" and "progress" and "domination" (of some species over others), we would witness an evolutionary trend toward homogeneity and perhaps even immortality. In fact, what we consider the "lowliest" creatures, single celled organisms, are already the closest to this state. Sexual reproduction would have never evolved. The longest-lived species would be the dominant life on the planet, eventually to the demise of all other species. This is a description of the process of civilization, not evolution. And humans are by no means the

longest lived species on the planet. We only strive for immortality. This is also the theory underlying modern medical science – a perpetual war against the smallest of organisms, the deadly terrorist viri. Of course, if this were the case, the evil bugs would have, through superior forces, prevented the development of multicellular organisms in the first place. The colloquial argument persists. Contrary to Mr. Spock, it *is* logical to hunt a species to extinction. We adapt by finding new species to hunt, and human progress ensures we will eventually be able to synthesize food. We already do this to a certain extent. Remember, the enlightenment taught us that Man is god. We can do whatever we want – only you can't!

If evolutionary forces worked against diversity, Darwin's ideas of "natural selection" would be rendered meaningless. The counter-argument, using the very logic it wishes to refute, suggests that our extinguishing of other species and domination of the planet through competition, our efforts at uniformity and globalization prove the theory of evolution as a survival of the fittest. But this is science fiction, not scientific theory. In fact, it is ultimately theological doctrine. It only suggests that "total annihilation is the ultimate goal of nature, god's grand design". Didn't he say this in the book of revelations? "Revelation, revolution, evolution – it makes no difference. Human progress is god's tool for the destruction of creation". It would seem, therefore, that only suicides should go to heaven. Or are they castigated for the arrogance in attempting to be god-like? To equate evolutionary process with competition annihilates both competition *and* evolution as theories of nature, for nature itself becomes purposefully self-destructive. There is no "will to live", only Freud's "death wish". It is a controversial topic because, ultimately, "Survival of the Fittest" is none other than the biological metaphor for Free-Market Economy, which notion predated Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley. It is a notion going back even before Hobbes.

Thus, our wrathful god, Moloch, Mammon abhors evolution. But the driving force behind evolution is NOT consumptive competition, but cooperation, which is also to say 'symbiosis' and 'synergy'. The end in evolution is NOT survival, but a living diversity. Evolution is NOT born of struggle, but adaptation minimizes struggle. The means of evolution is NOT a compensatory reward from invisible selective forces and annihilation of that which does not "fit", but successful reproduction through intimate cooperation. Yes, the lion eats the gazelle, but only because it IS fit and plentiful. Were it not, she would find something else or starve and die. This is not to say that competition does not occur. Competition may arise when faced with scarcity, but it needs resolved. The resolution of competition sets up social relations, territorial relations, isolating mechanisms (all cooperative solutions to potential conflict) and the resolution is itself adaptive. Competition alone (without resolution) is not. That which enhances cooperation and abundance is reproduced and without diversity, there can be no selection. What we see "in nature" are strategies for living rather than strategies for killing, exploitation and subjugation. The function of civilization has always been to end reciprocity, to eliminate diversity and therefore "own" history.

Our own bodies are like rainforest-communities of cooperating microbes. This symbiosis defines health and fitness. We introduce scarcity with the chemical additives we call "food" and the smog we call "air" and even bio-toxins we call "medicine". These

micro-organisms begin to struggle in the presence of toxic waste rather than abundant nutrition and their populations fall out of balance, or even disappear. We fall ill. New organisms to the community we call "myself" may have a similar initial effect, but over time, we learn to cooperate and adjust. We call this "immunity". Its process is that of "community". It is not a constant battle for health as the well-meaning doctors would have us believe. As with health, adaptation is cooperation. It eliminates competition and struggle. Species do NOT compete for resources! Nor should individuals.

Efficiency, organization and decision-making: This is all about organic organization. Organic systems flow. They consume and excrete, inspire and expire, adopt and reject, incorporate and abandon. We squabble over group decision-making techniques and methods for permanent organization. Forget it. There are no permanent systems. Permanent structure is a euphemism for immortality. But it is excrement. It is death. It is what archaeologists dig from the earth. Decisions are ultimately personal. As you decide, so should you do. If you meet friends along your way, if what you intend looks attractive to others, you will have company and witness spontaneous cooperation. When the deed is done, the specific organization disassembles. It may reassemble along different lines to perform other deeds. When in the presence of overwhelming predation, this is called guerrilla warfare.

The Parable of the Free Concert:

Hordrik received a call from his friend Edelgraff who announced that *The Planetary Refugees* had come to visit relatives and were putting on a performance in the field outside the village at dusk tonight. "If you want to come to my hut this afternoon, we'll drink some drink and smoke some smoke and meander over later". Thinking this a good idea, Hordrik gathered up his family and joined Edelgraff in his hut. Others had arrived as well, and they began to meander across the village toward the green. Along the way, they met with others who were also drinking some drink and smoking some smoke, and the two friends turned into a company of 15. Along the way, some of the comrades declared that with all this meandering, they might arrive too late to find a good place to sit. These went on ahead and the company was reduced to nine. When Hordrik and Edelgraff and crew arrived, there were 37 companions to witness this performance, and since it was a very large field, all found a good place to sit and experience the merriment of the situation.

When the performance finished, when the deed was done, the villagers began to haphazardly disperse and head back to their huts. Hordrik and Edelgraff, wanting to extend the moment, headed over to Yngvaal's hut who always seemed to have some sort of merriment going on. *The Planetary Refugees* were already there and concluded that they enjoyed more hooch and merriment than they could have purchased, had they charged pretty seashells in exchange for their performance. In the morning, 37 villagers woke late and not all found themselves in familiar bedrolls. Hordrik and Edelgraff awoke behind bars. Answering Hordrik's look of bruised astonishment, Edelgraff replied, "At least we had fun!" – the end.

I anticipate your comment: "Just a concert, just a party! – We all behave like this!" Suppose instead of a concert, this parable concerned taking over a factory, firebombing a police station or freeing caged animals from a research facility or even finding companions to erect or occupy a squat or to publish an anarcho-zine or whatever else gets you off? Need the methods of organization be any different? Would a less meandering path lead to increased membership or efficacy? Do we need to propose group decision-making techniques beyond the individual choice to associate or disperse? Should we not experience enjoyment in our actions or is life too serious an enterprise, too hard a

road to consider pleasant distraction along our way? Wasn't it Emma Goldman who said "If it ain't guerrilla warfare, I ain't going to dance!"?

Communities are not exclusive clubs. Membership shifts with personal choice. When communities conflict, they isolate. This is autonomy, but not closure. To say nature abhors a vacuum is also to say it abhors closure. Against closure, dissent is a plague. Scarcity is denied. Those who would impose it are refused, or buried with the rest of the toxic waste, or the community of dissenters moves over. This is how nature takes its course. Insurrection? Natural selection.

But they tell us, "man has transcended evolution through culture. We need adapt only to systems of Power, not to each other". Yes, slavery transcends nature. "Be happy in your work", says the warden of our labor camp.

Yet ...

If we were to pattern our revolution after evolution, what an insurrectionary force of sexual and sensual beings we would have.⁹

"In the beginning, there was Abundance. The people said "It is good". On the eighth day, god created Property. Property raped Abundance and begat Scarcity and thus was born Civilization." – Dugacles the Elder, unknown greek philosopher

It is also true however, that the globe has almost been completely enveloped in under a single logic of power and value, and states must operate within that logic" [– *Hot Tide*]. The "global community" must operate under a single LOGIC of power [authority], growth [progress] and value [capitalism]. The State IS that logic. Its virtue displays as self-righteous contempt in and of human relationships. Relationships are only tolerated which define the individual as a "means of production". That is to say, the individual becomes only property. The bearer of the state, the bearer of the revolution, the transcended man-god, it makes no difference.

There is only one "capitalism", one "state" – the state of scarcity and competition. We call this "civilization". There is no homogeneous "masses", only mass diversity in the struggle against, or enslavement under that logic. This is the only struggle I embrace – to evict unwelcome logic from my brain. (And I am old enough to have accumulated quite a lot.)

But there is another equal and opposing logic: stable, egalitarian, sharing and even adventurous social roles and relationships. This has been the only road to "liberty". No "van guard", no platform, no permanent organization¹⁰. These are food for mother-scarcity. They only re-incarnate the state. Look at the outcomes of revolutionary and insurrectionary movements in history. They have all failed from the perspective of those actually struggling, even under the banner of "victory" waved by the revolutionary

9 As recent as one hundred years ago, "intercourse" referred to a sharing dialogue between friends. "Discourse" was an argument between opponents. "Course" was a path we chose to follow or a stage in an Epicuran meal.

10 I would exclude here "autonomous local community", if you were to call this an insurrectionary organization. To the state, autonomy is an insurrectionary act.

avante guard.

One might do well to remember that "THE STATE" is but a state of mind or condition. Or one might say it derives from and persists due to this condition. Some individuals house more of it, some less. Some house different pieces of it. I like to think of it as a mental condition – a Kuhnian paradigm – which governs social relations, especially with regard to intimacy and property. It is home to the "secret" police – the superego.

In 1984, Winston and Julia thought they could hide their intimacy [un-mediated cooperation?] in the ghetto, among the shit-sweepers and mothers living under bridges. Hide among those "proles" or "barbarians" who remembered . . .

"human community, the taste food once had, wild nature, the smell of books printed with a printing press, the skill of the old crafts and all the other pleasant, nostalgic longings" – Mare Almani.

but the "secret" police said "only in your leisure-time". The tragic couple dutifully returned to the ministry when "work-time" approached. You see, "leisure-time" is also a state commodity which can be regulated and made scarce. But if we were to banish the police from the "super-ego", to say goodbye to self control when faced with the remotest possibility of pleasure, to cooperate in sharing our pleasures, to say "no" to those who would stop us

What an insurrectionary force we would be.

"All that [which] is called "material property", "private property", "exterior property" needs to become what the sun, the light, the sky, the sea, the stars are for individuals . . . [Then] only ethical and spiritual wealth is invulnerable. This is the true property of individuals." – Renzo Novatore

What then is left when scarcity is annihilated?

Abundance.

What do folks do when faced with abundance?

They do not panic. They do not struggle. It is not quick-sand. They feast and Party.

And the secret police commit suicide.

Only the dying commit suicide.

ch 10: THE SOCIAL RELATION AND TWO-COW ECONOMICS: AN RPG

- *Communism*: You have two cows. You keep one and give one to your neighbor.
- *Socialism*: You have two cows. Your opponent, playing the government, takes them both and provides you with some of the milk. (eg., Soviet Union – Marxist solution to 'capitalism')
- *Fascism*: You have two cows. Your opponent takes them both and sells you some of the milk. (eg., American Capitalism)
- *Capitalism*: You rustle/poach/appropriate two cows. You sell one and buy the only bull so everyone has to come to you for milk. You are now a cattle baron. (eg., Old West Capitalism)
- *Feudalism*: You have two cows. Your opponent takes the milk and rapes your first-born daughter on her wedding night. (eg., 1920's Chicago syndicalism)
- *Corporate Capitalism*: You have two cows. You sell one, force the other to produce the milk of four cows and then act surprised when it drops dead so you lay off your youngest and oldest employees or send the director off to Siberia. (eg., US Factory Farms/Soviet-style State Farms)
- *Bureaucracy*: You have two cows. Your opponent takes them both to recuperate the corporation's loss, shoots one, uses peasant/prison/slave/worker labor to milk the other, pays you for the milk, and then pours it down the drain to maintain the sanitation industry and with the money we've all made off those two cows, we purchase nutritional toxic waste from DuPont Chemicals (pun not intended) which has been made to look very much like milk. (eg., Civilized Labor Specialization)
- *Democracy*: You have two cows. Your opponent taxes you to the point that you must sell them both to the corporation in order to support a millionaire in a foreign country who has only one cow which itself was a gift from your government in return for a permanent supply of bananas. (eg., Globalization) ~ adapted from Carl H. Garrison

Only the first game option illustrates a gifting/sharing/cooperative social relation, often called altruism.¹¹ Kropotkin called it "Mutual Aid". According to my (yet to be written) book, *Schizophrenia Is Your Friend*, this is what it means when you hear the phrase "Man is a social animal", but, as Kropotkin pointed out, you don't necessarily have to be human to share this characteristic. All the rest of the above "options" are anti-social and entail what I refer to as 'the capitalist relation'. The kind of behavior they exhibit is often called sociopathic when it is outside the realm of economics. Economists, however, tell us there is no relationship outside of economics, just as Mr. Marx tells us there is no human activity but labor, or which does not entail labor-power. The Marxist argument informs us that capitalists accumulate capital rather than commodities. Commodities allow the worker to survive. Thus the worker provides the capitalist with capital

¹¹ I do not suggest here that we need to replace hedonism with altruism, even though the existing order is almost certainly hedonistic. These are always *tendencies* rather than absolute distinctions or a dichotomy. My contention is that the very dichotomy is one of the bases of the capitalist relation. Obviously, acts performed out of pure self interest often benefit others, and so-called altruistic acts are almost invariably self-benefiting. The Eastern concept of Yin/Yang always calls for a balancing unity. Humans are social animals – it is a matter of biology, but "freedom" guarantees individual distinction. The first rule of 'ecology' is diversity; the second is cooperation. Is it any wonder that most 'pre-colonial' languages do not offer the I/We (the individual opposed to the social) distinction? One should not presume, therefore, a uniformity of automatons. Without distinction, there can be no language or community. (see chapter 5)

through (surplus) labor and the consumption of a minimal amount of commodities other workers have produced. It has always been thus (according to our body of myth and its' reinforcing/reproducing body of ritual). Not that this analysis is entirely wrong, but it is a self-fulfilling prophecy confining the world into a small bubble. It is our myth or meta-narrative. The capitalist thinks it is a story with a happy ending, the revolutionary thinks it needs a new ending altogether. Everyone else thinks it's just a game – the only game in town.

Somewhere in his many volumes on the topic, doesn't Marx also illustrate that capital is the "power" or leverage which allows the capitalist freedom from providing for his own existence? Thus liberated, the capitalist can only exist through exploitation, vicariousness and voyeurism. The exploited believe their exploitation is their only means of existence but couch it in the more pleasant sounding "production". Capitalism reproduces capitalism through ritualized force (even when, at times, that "force" looks honey-coated – when it is the force of indoctrination and generations of practice). For everyone bound by the capitalist relation, "time is money", "life is survival", "wealth is power" and "power corrupts". Property is more valuable than life so we produce and consume. Two comments are appropriate:

1. "We will have none of that power, for we are the pure, and so we struggle on", and
2. "We will struggle to seize some power, for we are the enterprising".

Struggle. Competition. Survival. This is the meaning of life – the answer to the great question posed by Douglas Adams: "what do you get when you multiply six by nine?"

Social leverage is my interpretation of "power" that Vaniegem referred to. Scarcity is maintained. With the concept that "survival is the maximum one can achieve", (unless through revolution or ruthless competition, s/he can take the place of the powers-that-be), then the two phrases, "be happy in your work" and "Join in the struggle against ____ (fill in the blank with your own personal gripe)" are equivalent. The greatest achievement of this power is that we have become circumscribed into an extremely limited view of the world. Reducing all human activity to a single concept/rule, the economist sees only transaction, the Marxist sees only labor, the consumer sees only struggle and consumption (double entendre intended). "What is outside of the capitalist relation?" "Nothing!" "Is that all there is?" "The only 'else' is the Great Mystery! – It cannot be deduced through experience nor experienced through deduction".

Capital is therefore Power, even if all power is not necessarily Capital. More correctly, I would say that the power is in the myth and the myth is called "capital". Capitalist ritual reproduces the myth. I see three 'deep' rules, or premises from which all these rituals derive and may provide the basis for the meta-narrative:

1. Value is a characteristic of things rather than our relationships with them. This leads to their capability to be exchanged;
2. People only get what they deserve; alternately – "put up or shut up". This leads to elite privilege and authority.
3. As in any game, other players are your opponents. Therefore the object of life is

to 'win' – to best your opponent.

Without these three premises, there can be no property and therefore no privilege *vis à vis* property. No leaders, no followers, and especially, no more of that evil prostitution (selling one's life in exchange for mere survival). What would be left without these simple rules? Why do we have so much trouble with the meaning of life? Because somewhere along the road we have sold it. Something is happening here but we don't know what it is.

Theatre of the absurd: Even the finest tuned bullshit detector is not enough. Yes, the revolutionary is in no position to break this bubble we call "normality", and the rest, even if discontented, have no inclination to break it. So we who are possessed by the perverse imp, we react, react, react. We act out. We act as if. A ritualized obsession, an obsessive ritual. Sometimes it takes us to the gallows. In Ballad of a Thin Man, Dylan described a man confronting absurdity, a surreal world, an incomprehensible circus, with a lack of imagination:

*Now you see this one-eyed midget
Shouting the word "NOW"
And you say, "For what reason?"
And he says, "How?"
And you say, "What does this mean?"
And he screams back, "You're a cow
Give me some milk or else go home"*

*Well, you walk into the room
Like a camel and then you frown
You put your eyes in your pocket
And your nose on the ground
There ought to be a law
Against you comin' around
You should be made to wear earphones*

*Because something is happening here
But you don't know what it is
Do you, Mister Jones?*

"*Because something is happening here But you don't know what it is, Do you, Mister Jones?*". Or is it merely "*Those who lack imagination cannot imagine what is lacking*"? To break this Dali bubble must be a complicated matter requiring a complicated solution!

Perhaps before busying ourselves with deductive rationalizations about the world outside the bubble or contrived scientific/empirical investigation we might first need to be open to the idea that there *is* a bigger world out there? Perhaps it's not so complicated as we thought? Was it not Jesus who said "Well, it's nothing very special. Uh, try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat (in this, he was probably wrong – so much for the infallibility principle), read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live together . . . The producers would like to thank all the fish who have taken part in this film. We hope that other fish will follow the example of those who have participated, so that, in future, fish all over the world will live together in harmony and understanding, and put aside their petty differences, cease pursuing and eating each other and live for a brighter, better future for all fish, and those who love them" – or was that Monty Python?

"It may be true that the poison of theatre, when injected in the body of society, destroys it, as St. Augustine asserted, but it does so as a plague, a revenging scourge, a redeeming epidemic when credulous ages were convinced they saw God's hand in it, while it was nothing more than a natural law applied, where all gestures were offset by another gesture, every action by a reaction . . . This theatre releases conflicts, disengages powers, liberates possibilities, and if these possibilities and these powers are dark, it is the fault not of the plague nor of the theatre, but of life . . . this theatre invites the mind to share a delirium which exalts its energies; and we can see, to conclude, that from the human point of view, the action of theatre, like that of the plague, is beneficial, for, impelling men to see themselves as they are, it causes the mask to fall, reveals the lie, the slackness, baseness, and hypocrisy of our world . . . " – Antonin Artaud

Ritual is the physical manifestation of myth. Ritual is the myth dramatized. Myth is the ritualized story – the meta-narrative. Ritual is myth lived. Life is drama performed. Instructions in its practice may be gleaned from the unsupervised games of children. Rules may provide the structure of the game, but it is not the game that the child plays, but the rules of the game that are played *with*. Like any good theatre, it is filled with extemporization. I like the idea of role-playing games. Isn't a game 'acting as if . . . "? What if one acted as if the rules were changed? I don't agree that this will change reality but it can certainly change the conditions of our social existence. Didn't Thoreau also call for something like that? I think he called it civil disobedience.

From a slightly different position: According to the Fendersen dictionary – 3rd edition, the "*capitalist social relation*" ("exploitation, vicariness and voyeurism – see '*vicar*') is an oxymoron par excellence. Hobbling or tethering individuals certainly relates them, but one cannot call this a "social" relation, it is the organizing principle of the chain-gang. "What is outside of the capitalist relation?" "Everything else!" It contains intimacy, pleasure, novelty and adventure. It is diversity and possibility. *The Fendersen dictionary – 3rd edition* opposes "*modern civilization*" with "*Primitivism*", but if you look up "*primitive*" you will read "*Everything else; all other possibilities, life prior to its being sold*". Because we are so divorced/alienated from everything else, we are content with nothing. "Nothing exists, therefore everything else is imagination". Don't you remember being told "that's just adolescent idealism . . . when you grow up, you'll leave all that nonsense behind". What a grown-up sounding concept! At the end of the play, I don't feel sorry for the impish Peter Pan, whose games led him to understand the sorrow of loss but also whose play taught him to overcome it. I feel for Wendy, for as Stalin announced, "The revolution is hereby over!"

Rousseau's "savage" has never existed (yet). There is no "primitive existence" without the collective and its memories. Even Adam had Eve, the god and his snake. The myth transcends precarity. Rites of transition supersede anomie (a sense of marginalization, precarity, homelessness, isolation), that betwixt and between feeling when in the midst of transformation.

If obsessive-compulsive behaviors are thought of as rituals not derived from myth, perhaps they are performed to dispel an oppressive myth (as the good Mr. Freud might suggest)? One might say they are individual attempts to overcome anomie (as Arnold van Gennep suggested rites of passage were in the social realm at its critical junctures),

or a psychic hunger – compelled play devoid of meaning – play gone wrong.

And what of the rituals of childhood we usually think of as pleasurable interactions with the world? They are certainly impish, compulsive, repetitive. We call them games, not evidence of a Freudian neurosis. They are the child's way of connecting and remembering. They construct new myths as they go but they also recapitulate old ones if there are set parameters (rules) which are followed. One might also say they construct and reconstruct the world. More precisely, this is how they *interact* with the world, and construction is a result. As Franz Boas suggested, it is not a conscious, rational process. In fact, our construction of the world (that is, our world-view) is more likely a matter of passion, tradition, (even if 'rationally' modified here and there), and habit. Rationalization is more apt to occur after-the-fact of our actions, thinking and feeling. This is why even our own subjective self-analyses so often uncover contradiction and others are only too happy to point them out to us. But for the child, the game is not about winning. The object of the game is *playing* – the continuation of the game, not its conclusion through victory or defeat.

At some point in our 'civilized' culture, the "*play*" of children becomes transformed (and this occurs at a very early age) into "*game*". Where the object of play is pleasure, and when play is successful, the pleasure is prolonged, the object of the 'game' is to conclude its 'playing'. There can be only one winner, even if it is a "team victory" (certainly a military analogy). A tie is rectified through "sudden death" – opposition must, in the long run, be annihilated. The winners are the few, the losers are the many. Contrast this with the games played in 'not-so-civilized' cultures. A good example might be the Hopi foot race. It is a game of skill with players and spectators. There can be one player or several. It is a celebration of the skill of the individual *and* of the group, if there are more than one player. There are no opponents to best for there are no 'competitors'. It would be the height of rudeness to out-match an "opponent". This is not to say that differences in ability are not perceived or appreciated by the spectators. But this is not the 'purpose' of the spectacle. It is the skill itself, whether it is demonstrated by the individual or by the collective effort. We can appreciate this when we "root for the underdog", who, despite a "losing effort", "played a better game".

The rpg's fashionable today, especially among adults, would seem to be a trend away from this 'winner/loser' mindset – a return to a more child-like notion of play, yet the game still must have a conclusion, so winners are "democratically" selected – those with the best costumes, those who stay in character the longest or "act" out their roles most consistently. Ideas of royalty and mastery superimpose over the play to maintain a spirit of competition. We all want to be "on the winning side!" Perhaps we need to eliminate the game and just play. At least we might imagine a more "communist rpg": there is no conclusion, only a postponement (after all, we need to be back to our job at the Ministry-of-Truth/walmart by eight sharp tomorrow morning!)

I like the double entendre of RPG. Is it role-playing game or rocket-propelled grenade, as Artaud might have thought? Do we need a new meta-narrative/myth or can we just act as if we had one already? Is a change in ritual behavior enough to explode the myth?

I would suggest that the patterns and boundaries of communist subjectivity could first be de-

veloped from a role-playing game to this purpose, a theatrical game which, like all ritual structures, will become more real the more it is played. I suppose it is my contention that the rituals of a communist roleplaying game are more likely to cause disruption and organise the basis for social revolution than communist ideals and the practices of the ideals themselves. –
Frere Dupont

Or is it enough to subvert (detourne?) the game we already play? By all means, let's accumulate 'wealth', but in its more archaic etymological usage: 'health', 'abundance', 'flourishing'. Rather than annihilate wealth (reduce to nothing) or hoard it (deprive from others), we could play a game which shears it, shatters it, scatters it, shares it: There are two cows. Anyone can have some milk, so long as the cows don't object. Or even: Two cows have you. You share this relationship with your neighbor.

Rules are *meant* to be bent: Even to experience Edgar Poe's 'Imp of the Perverse', one must have at least a *sense* of alternate possibilities, and not necessarily "logical possibilities". I largely agree with Frere Dupont's take on Kant:¹²

"the world as it is itself cannot be known directly through experience but must be deduced in thought. In short, organisation [*order, structure*] precedes experience – without organisation [*construction*] there is no experience" [*memory*],

but I would add that order cannot be defined, cannot even exist without an appreciation of 'that-which-is-not-order'. Where is there predictability except against a background of random events? Doesn't the imp of the perverse direct your attention 'outside the box', to glimpse through the bubble and bounce back with a new perspective? In fact, isn't this what we also refer to as creativity or even the zen concept of de-centering? The source of the surreal and absurd? The source of revolution?

The more impactfull of those so-called "mind-expanding" drugs seem to shatter that bubble, at least for the moment. What was inside, our entire culture-history, the very 'structure' of our existence is perceived as chaos, while what was only moments ago unimaginably beyond our grasp is rendered beautiful – endlessly varying visual patterns, distorting faces, echo-chambers so intense that all meaning is lost, the touch of a solid object felt as an entrance into an infinite cavern. Turning away from all that and trying to grasp back the former 'order' or trying to interpret that beauty from the standpoint of our former senses of reason and logic squeezes that 'beauty' – that sense of 'everything-else' – and it slips away. This can produce a profound sense of paranoia – a real bummer, or 'bring you down'. Gravity takes hold and the bubble is renewed. Our "experience" is remembered as a brief encounter with death – the horror! But in the process, some of the rules have inadvertently bent. Blow your mind, said Mr. Leary.

With a certain amount of disorder – the imp of the perverse, the bullshit detector, the rebellious spirit – and its appreciation, we will never become a species of total automations or the zombies critics have feared for the last how many generations. Therein lies my hope. I think we all carry this imp, only many are too hungry to be concerned with anything but their own hunger (Artaud). The true artist or gamester, like the child who plays with the rules, may feel hunger, but hunger does not describe the limits of the world – s/he has a nurturing relationship with the imp of the perverse, the Muse. It is a social relationship. The world expands, and the mind with it.

12 <http://fendersen.com/cup.htm>

ch 11: "SO WHAT'RE THE ALTERNATIVES?"

*What about, um, "Da-da-da-daa" (sung to the tune of Beethoven's fifth)
... Doesn't that do something for you? – Douglas Adams*

Of course we have freedom of choice. We can choose to work or starve. And since all that we do to sustain our lives is labeled work, where is there room for pleasure? That is for the afterlife – the great christian promise. "Life is hard and then ya die, so be happy in your work. You're lucky even to have a job!" "Let there be no question about this!" Every time I hear that, I want to answer "Yeah but what about ... ?", like "Does your boss work, I mean *really* work? Does his boss?" Maybe the easiest and most appropriate answer is "Bullshit!" – as in "the shit just keeps getting deeper, the higher up the ladder of success one climbs".

"Perhaps socialism is the answer", you wonder. Socialism is equality. It is a forced labor camp. Sure, no one lives under the bridge, they live in the salt mines. This is not choice. This is not will. This is employment for all. It is a three class system of prison guards, prison laborers and a vast bureaucracy of "administrators" to make sure it all runs smoothly. Even if the corporation was throttled and capitalism turned on its head, we would have to work for the sake of work, slave for the machine. We would all compete to be administrators or grump along in our toil. A pretty picture only to the likes of a Stalin.

"Yes, but what're the alternatives?" you ask. If you find food, eat it. Is that so hard? If you have a yard, turn it into a garden. If you live in an apartment, take your neighbors to the nearest "public" park or vacant lot and plant a really big garden. Back in the day, one could get broken chips from a potato chip plant and dog bones at the butcher and feast on mashed potatoes and gravy every night. A helmet from the army surplus and that roll of toilet paper from the gas station made a pretty decent portable cook-stove. Next vacation, take a camping or fishing or hunting trip ... and don't come back. Play games like "Keep away" and "hide and seek" with the forest rangers.

Still sounds like work? Can't see how one could get pleasure from gardening or even hunting and fishing in the toolies? Go to see a social worker and tell her what you truly think about life, the universe and everything. Whatever you say, the state will declare you insane and they will feed you. If you can't wait the eight years of bureaucratic paper-shuffling, go to the nearest five-star restaurant or safeway super-store and feast. If they chase you out, run. If they catch you, again the state will feed you. If you don't like the accommodations, take pleasure in your thoughts. If they catch you at this, they will transfer you to much nicer facilities called mental wards. They will try to teach you how to get a job and be responsible (but you and I know you are already competent at this). If you get out, make friends by being friendly. Friends are likely to share their food and a cot with you, especially if they have little themselves.

Marry a like-minded farmer. Travel south to more hospitable climes in the winter. Squat. If you're partial to dumpsters, dive in. If not, check out the various restaurants along the road at closing time to intercept a meal before it makes it to the dumpster. Don't forget to always say "no" when people tell you what to do or where to stand or, es-

pecially, what to think. Join a mendicant order and you can add "it's for religious reasons". This might even get you out of long-term psychiatric medication (a chemical lobotomy). If they catch you again and force you to take psychiatric medications, when the bottle says "take two tablets every eight hours", try four every four hours. This might give you temporary pleasure. You won't have to worry about long term effects – when they catch on, they'll have to change their tactics. Then it is time to plan your escape. You did say you wanted more excitement in your life, didn't you?

"But you're asking me to chose poverty, the life of a bum!" "A criminal!" "I will be evicted!" If that is how you see it, yes. But just yesterday didn't you silently call your boss, that cokehead in the whitehouse, the fat cats in the corporate country club "criminals" and "bums" as you toiled on? Didn't you roll your eyes at that yuppy-looking jerk who looked like he just left a 1978 discotheque, with his open shirt and gold chain and runny nose as he filled his bmw at the mini-mart? You will see how much of the world already lives, only you will be without masters. You think that if you could just be a master yourself, you would be happy? Every master is miserable. More even than you. He is a miser, a practitioner of misery. His life is totally predictable. He has no real friends. His idea of adventure is a business venture. He needs vast quantities of alcohol when he gets home from the office, and that is just to mellow out from the vast quantities of cocaine needed to stay at the office. But for you, every experience will be novel. You will learn what friendship really means. Your life will be an adventure. You will eat when you are hungry, rest when you are tired, snuggle and warm yourself by a fire when you're cold, sing when you're happy, laugh at humor, cry at sorrow, find a beach when you need to bask, make love when you're inspired. You will know what it means to play, and I'm not talking golf. After a while, you would realize just how wealthy you already are. And you will find that you can actually do for yourself without too much displeasure. You might just find there is a lot more to life than eating, sleeping and working and the occasional fighting, fucking and fermenting when the bosses say you can go. If enough chose a different, novel path, the masters would disappear.

Masters cannot exist without slaves. The means of production? Bullshit! Workers are the means of oppression, particularly the voluntary – they are still slaves, and in your heart, you know it. The masters know it too. They always have. What do you call them? "The Man"? "Mister"? "Master"? "Sir"? "Ma'am"? "Boss"? "Chief"? "Captain"? "Your eminence"? "Your honor"? If they are being kind, you are a "production unit" or that "important cog in the wheel of industry". (What they do not tell you is that you only feed their opulence.) Otherwise, it is "grunt", "peon", "prole", "the mob", "trash", "idiot", "nigger", "useless eater". How many thousand years has this been the situation? We used to call them "gangsters". Now, if we are young and unemployed, we are the gangsters, and many even prefer that label! Without this system, there could again be abundance on the planet: the 95% of all global production that goes into making the masters and their war machines will be freed, and we do not need all of that to thrive. We just don't need that shit and we shouldn't have to take their shit any longer. This is all that can be meant by ending the "class struggle".

"In that land, there be dragons!" Hmmm! I wonder, could one eat them? Could they teach us the art of fire? Would they give us fertilizer for our gardens? Dragons! Sounds

like fun!

After The Revolution: Kropotkin on Food

"Well! What are we to do when the thunderbolt has fallen?

We have all been studying the dramatic side of revolution so much, and the practical work of revolution so little, that we are apt to see only the stage effects, so to speak, of these great movements; the fight of the first days; the barricades. But this fight, this first skirmish, is soon ended, and it is only after the overthrow of the old constitution that the real work of revolution can be said to begin.

* * *

"Bread, it is bread that the Revolution needs!"

Let others spend their time in issuing pompous proclamations, in decorating themselves lavishly with official gold lace, and in talking about political liberty!

...

Be it ours to see, from the first day of the Revolution to the last, in all the provinces fighting for freedom, that there is not a single man who lacks bread, not a single woman compelled to stand with the weariful crowd outside the bake-house-door, that haply a coarse loaf may be thrown to her in charity, not a single child pining for want of food.

It has always been the middle-class idea to harangue about "great principles"—great lies rather!

The idea of the people will be to provide bread for all. And while middle-class citizens, and workmen infested with middle-class ideas admire their own rhetoric in the "Talking Shops," and "practical people" are engaged in endless discussions on forms of government, we, the "Utopian dreamers"—we shall have to consider the question of daily bread.

We have the temerity to declare that all have a right to bread, that there is bread enough for all, and that with this watchword of Bread for All the Revolution will triumph.

That we are Utopians is well known. So Utopian are we that we go the length of believing that the Revolution can and ought to assure shelter, food, and clothes to all—an idea extremely displeasing to middle-class citizens, whatever their party colour, for they are quite alive to the fact that it is not easy to keep the upper hand of a people whose hunger is satisfied.

All the same, we maintain our contention: bread must be found for the people of the Revolution, and the question of bread must take precedence of all other questions. If it is settled in the interests of the people, the Revolution will be on the right road; for in solving the question of Bread we must accept the principle of equality, which will force itself upon us to the exclusion of every other solution.

* * *

And if the impetus of the people is strong enough, affairs will take a very different turn. Instead of plundering the bakers' shops one day, and starving the next, the people of the insurgent cities will take possession of the warehouses, the cattle markets,–in fact of all the provision stores and of all the food to be had. The well-intentioned citizens, men and women both, will form themselves into bands of volunteers and address themselves to the task of making a rough general inventory of the contents of each shop and warehouse. In twenty-four hours the revolted town or district will know what Paris has not found out yet, in spite of its statistical committees, and what it never did find out during the siege–the quantity of provisions it contains. In forty-eight hours millions of copies will be printed of the tables giving a sufficiently exact account of the available food, the places where it is stored, and the means of distribution.

In every block of houses, in every street, in every town ward, bands of volunteers will have been organized. These commissariat volunteers will work in unison and keep in touch with each other. If only the Jacobin bayonets do not get in the way; if only the self-styled "scientific" theorists do not thrust themselves in to darken counsel! Or rather let them expound their muddle-headed theories as much as they like, provided they have no authority, no power! And that admirable spirit of organization inherent in the people, above all in every social grade of the French nation, but which they have so seldom been allowed to exercise, will initiate, even in so huge a city as Paris, and in the midst of a Revolution, an immense guild of free workers, ready to furnish to each and all the necessary food.

Give the people a free hand, and in ten days the food service will be conducted with admirable regularity. Only those who have never seen the people hard at work, only those who have passed their lives buried among documents, can doubt it. Speak of the organizing genius of the "Great Misunderstood," the people, to those who have seen it in Paris in the days of the barricades, or in London during the great dockers strike, when half a million of starving folk had to be fed, and they will tell you how superior it is to the official ineptness of Bumbledom.

* * *

In any case, a system which springs up spontaneously, under stress of immediate need, will be infinitely preferable to anything invented between four walls by hide-bound theorists sitting on any number of committees." – Peter Kropotkin *The Conquest of Bread*, 1906¹³

13 It is interesting how closely Kropotkin's ideas match conditions following natural disasters. I am tempted to replace "insurrection" with "Katrina", "Paris" with "New Orleans" and "the practical work of revolution" with "the practical work of recovery". The government's response to the disaster should not be viewed as an isolated exception – it will always attempt to crush efforts of actual self-management and mutual aid for which it cannot subordinate, co-opt or take credit.

Letter From An Outsurgent To Revolutionists

Friends (if I do not presume too much),

It has been suggested, and I completely agree, that the "masses" will not rise up (shout in unison, "NO!") without sufficient pressure from the state, or desperation of their circumstances. Even then there is some question. The "revolution" will not be achievable without the numbers. But insurrectionary deeds, that is, activities directed toward or furthering that end, need not be restricted to acts intended to incite a (violent?) uprising of great number. I think that was a mistake of early revolutionaries. Is the end we want just the mobilization and uprising of the people, or the end of oppression and rulership and slavery altogether? The "totality" of it. The first option seems to me "revolution as riot". Has anyone, at least since the days of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Allen Watts, Tim Leary, etc. suggested the possibility of a "quiet" revolution? "Tune in, turn on, drop out"?

Dropping out as Insurrection? You distinguish perspectives of lifestylism and class struggle. There are also, it seems, rural and urban distinctions. The traditional rural lifestyle contained the last bastion of community outside the poorer neighborhoods of cosmopolis. The farmers' struggle is over – the small family farm is all but dead. It may be a lifestyle choice for some, but it is supported by outside work within the system. Small "subsistence" farming is spreading, but there is little evidence that community is spreading with it.

It has been said workers and slaves know real struggle. I would add students. Their "Struggle" has moved into the country. I think many young people in the small towns close to me think of themselves as quite revolutionary. Many align themselves with the anarchy milieu, even if they are not educated in radical ideology or wield dynamite. A lot like kids when I was that age, probably a lot like kids in every age.

Many today think that the hippie thing was "just a lifestyle choice of rich little white kids". Students today, I think are more oppressed than we were. Sure, physical beatings by educators are no longer routine, but regimentation has increased. The security culture in today's schools could not have been imagined except in a reading of Orwell's *1984*. Today there is much more "self-control". Yet we felt, and I'm speaking of the city here, angry and oppressed and defiant. Where else could a slogan like "Death to anyone over 30!" (which is how we twisted the slogan "Never trust anyone . . . ") come from? In many places, one could just as likely hear that as to hear "Peace, brother". We were not just "drop-outs" seeking a lifestyle change. You could not tell us we were not struggling for the revolution. There was also an emphasis on community, if only as a temporary autonomous zone, to borrow Hakim Bey's term. Community was defined more in terms of sharing, like "community cigarettes", less in terms like "group-think".

Most of those "rich little white kids" who jumped off the high-dive of comfort ended down in the deep end of poverty. They were cut off. Rejected. There was no calling home for help. Those whose culture-shock led them back home were received with a ride in a cop car to juvenile detention centers at the request of dear old mom and dad.

They found quickly that if they wanted to be true to their ideals, there was no going home again. Tom Wolf became 'required' reading, refusal became a way of life. Of course, many did not remain 'faithful' and submerged themselves back into the "spectacle". Now they share seats with the "squares" in congress and tell us of their "antiwar activism back in the 60's". We called them narcs and turncoats, but should have seen them as casualties.

We might all agree that a defiant stand against authority is an insurgent act. I thought I might get criticized bringing up "flower Power" in a discussion of insurgency. But what of the girl who shoved the flower into the mean end of the national guardsman's rifle. It was a spontaneous act not orchestrated by a secret central planning committee, which got caught on film and made the mainstream. It became a symbol or turning point for the "revolution". If my memory serves, she was one of the four killed at Kent State by the pigs the next week. We don't even remember their names now.

Not too long ago, a young girl named Rachel was run over with a bull dozer. It made the news, we felt bad, and that's about it. We got much more entertaining video of sound-staged beheadings. But that flower in the gun, it changed a lot of heads. After Kent State, my racist, gun-running dad started growing out his hair. My "Scarlet O'Hara" mom tried pot and hashish. Gregory Peck came on tv wearing "love-beads" telling Nixon and the whole spectacle to chill out.

It would be hard to paint a convincing picture for young people today of what it meant to be poor and/or black back in the day. "All you need is love", "Black Power" and "Power to the people" may be bullshit slogans, they may not be sufficient, but are still necessary. But "tune in" and "drop out" were forgotten when the emphasis was placed on "turn on". With the unwitting help of radicals such as William S. Burroughs or Keith Richards who "made it look cool", the rulers found they could buy off kids in *the movement* with heroin fresh from their factories in Laos and thereby regained their "control". It's an ancient ploy. Things did change . . . a little and for a little while. Unfortunately however, we settled for negotiation. The state has always been able to co-opt social movements. Cutting out from Nam and Watergate were ingenious distractions. Then they gave us disco and cocaine. "War on drugs"? That's always been a sham – drugs bring in the big bucks and pacify and distract populations. The "moral sensibilities" of the mainstream which had begun to swing toward the young turned back again toward the side of moral indignity. But most folks' hateful attitudes did chill a little. The attitudes of those we called "rednecks" and "hardhats" back then would make a pretty small minority of the "labor class" today. And even these know what the word "tolerate" means. These changes did not occur as a result of negotiation.

Which brings me back to dropping out as insurrection and propaganda by deed. To quote from another revolutionary:

"To speak more plainly, when one "opts out" of the system one is really seeking to provide for oneself's existence/subsistence while replicating as little as possible the *ahem* class-based oppressions that inspired one to "opt out" in the first place."

Should one be criticized as not properly revolutionary who cuts and runs and creates new social arrangements/relations. If large enough numbers did that, we would praise

it as a spontaneous "general strike" and it would crush the system, as long as we did not settle for concessions at the end.

The problem I have with the class struggle perspective is that it focuses our attention on people instead of thinking and behavior. It can lead to reprisals should the revolution be successful, and therein replace one rule with another. In the end, Bush and his ilk will be on their knees licking dirty rain off the asphalt for moisture. I might then even pity them. They are not the enemy. The enemy is all that shit in their heads. My enemy is one who comes in my face and threatens my freedom right here and now. I will deal with him with all the means I have at my disposal.

I hear what you are saying about personal freedom dictated by a presumed cultural authenticity in "going native". My main objection to the primitivist thing is that we can only guess at it. We have killed or transformed most, if not all autonomous cultures. There are no "Indians" at Croatan to help us find our way. And we always seem to bring the state with us. But this caution should apply to all our "new" arrangements as well. The local "hippie" co-op is run under parliamentary procedure. Their "Barter Fair" is no longer festive, but appears to me a flea market repleat with armed security. Not that there's much difference, but there isn't even any bartering going on. The same thing happened with the communes of the 70's and early 80's.

But I think dropping out can be an effective "deed of propaganda". It tells others "It can be done". It becomes an attractive possibility if it is seen as not impinging on anyone else's freedom, which "missionizing-the-revolution" always seems to do.

"You have to somehow let things go but still intervene. You have to have an impact and yet not lead." – *frere dupont*

The DIY movement is a good example. In this sense, I think creating your own circumstances is just as insurrectionary as directly confronting the circumstances which oppress you.

It has been said the revolutionary needs to look within to see his own unhappiness in order to connect with other's struggles. Don't we all. And the reverse is also true. But we need to replicate as little of that oppression as we can. That is the state in our heads. My message remains, we need to get the ruthlessly competitive state out of our heads before we can get our heads out of the state, even in the presence of a mass uprising. I am a subsistence farmer because it is my pleasure and that of my neighbors, not because the state prevents me from competing in the market. I don't want to compete in it. Yes, I am eccentric, but I'm not a wound up display for the community. I'm the guy they get free eggs from and help with tractor work, and they are starting to reciprocate. And, no the secret police are not completely out of my head, but it's getting better by and by.

I appreciate the value of consistent vocabulary and fine semantic distinctions in the study of history or scientific analysis. Whether my or Mr. Marx' or Kropotkin's or Smith's definition of wealth or capital is the same or different is not the point. We know what we are against. "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet". I and others are against this '*thing*', and its reflection is oppres-

sion and domination and exploitation and alienation of not only workers, but everybody, including the bosses. It has been going on for thousands of years. Whether we call it civilization or the state or capitalism or the megamachine or the filthy beast is unimportant. I am against capitalism the way Marx defines it. I am against it the way I define it, which is historically more encompassing. I am against the modern industrial state no less than the feudal manor or theocratic monarchy or the coercive/authoritative 'native' chiefdoms depicted by Hollywood. I am against the brutality of the neighborhood bully, of the lord and of the pig in uniform, whether that uniform is blue, black or tweed. I am against giving only in expectation of a return as much as I am against the appropriation of the results of my surplus labor to provide capital for another. I am against the choice between imprisonment or death, and following the dictates of others. I am not against art and history and science and philosophy but the elite positions these provide by their specialization in individuals and institutions. You ask of what value are our protests if not referring to the capitalist mode of production: how do you target a social relation? Are our arguments just namby-pamby "people-should-be-nice-to-each-other" proclamations? All social relations encompass the behavior between social members. We attack those relations by changing our behavior. This is what is meant by refusal. Just fucking do it. Or don't do it. This is anarchy.

I don't think we need to overly worry about such things as what kind of world it will be "atr" (after the revolution)/collapse. I think there will be *no* revolution if that is what we are waiting for. How can we expect the people to revolt if even the revolutionaries won't? It would be nice if instead of arguing what forms the revolution were to take or why one approach is inferior to another, if everyone (critic and revolutionary alike) just went out and did *SOMETHING*. We would have beautiful chaos. Personally, I think "ATR/C" will play out something like a zombie movie. Folks who know nothing but hate will continue hating. Those who don't know how to feed themselves will starve or learn from each other pretty damn quick. Theorists will remain in their studies calculating why the revolution didn't follow this or that prediction. Must we all be on the same page? "But who will teach us" you ask. "Fuck the teacher", I answer, "if you can't figure it out, ask around or read a book!"

If we accept that war is destruction, I think revolution is war. Folks die in war. Property is destroyed in war. I'm sorry about that, but it is "natural" by definition. Will there be too many or too few people afterward? Why think in such terms? If, on the other hand, revolution is constituted only by dissent, if all we want is a war on ideas and behaviors, we must start with our *own* ideas and behavior. A diversity of ideas allows a diversity of options. I would caution against overly discounting creativity and ingenuity. Can nothing exceptional be produced without the oppressive social structure we now experience? Is our fear of chaos really fear of wanton death and destruction or just fear of diversity and therefore disapproval? Is this what causes our refusal to remain only a theoretical refusal? I seem to see more argument among dissenters as to why we should do nothing as to something. Are we afraid that unless we all act together and in the same direction, they will kill us? How can they kill us when we are already walking corpses? If our motto is "life sucks, then ya die", who would propose revolution with such a pretentious notion that we could change nature? Is that really the way the ball bounces and the cookie crumbles?

Property is the exclusion of possession, and this sets up those who have against those who have not, therefore both wealth and poverty are created by the institution of property. Neither condition could exist without property – the right of ownership. Without property, we *must* have communism. Without property, there can be no authority (state) since the authority of the state only exists to defend and maintain property through force.

If the modern state monopolizes force, the democratization of force (will to power) is not an answer. It is just another form of state. Most define the state as the institutionalization of force, coercion or power. The suggestion that the modern state is the only state we need concern ourselves with is, of course, logical – we do not target kingdoms or feudal estates – but the lumping of all these relations of power would allow us to be mindful of the fact that any alternative manifestation of institutionalized power could crop up and we should be prepared for it. For example, the democratic state in the u.s. is transforming into a fascist state. Some would say it has always been a fascist state in the guise of democracy. I think under certain conditions of crisis it could as easily transform into a feudal arrangement (sans hereditary nobility, although that could certainly follow) as into a soviet style socialist regime. Had the workers movement and 'mobs'/'gangsters' of the 'twenties prevailed, we might now be living under an anarcho-syndicalist state, who knows, but it would still be 'the state'.

The modern state also monopolizes illusion and this is how it is maintained in each of us. The point is well taken that the state, itself does not make a good target of attack (although of criticism, yes) – but there are things we can target within capitalism. It is said capital mediates the social relation; I say property/ownership mediates the social relation and that potentiates capital. Personally, I think it is a minor point and should not be the basis of hostile antagonism. It is said we should target the capitalist mode of production with the seizure of the factories, and that starts at the workplace. This accomplished, the state will fall. I say we should abolish property altogether (not just private property, but collective property as well). This accomplished, the capitalist mode of production will fall. This starts in the mind of the individual. It should not be an either/or attack. Can't we be a bit more holistic in our attack? Can't we target the mind as well as the body, our relations with each other rather than just our production and the things we produce? My point has been that the state and capitalism as it exists in our own mind and our personal relations is the most accessible to us and that we cannot get our bodies out of the state until we get the state out of our minds.

Respectfully,
P. J. Kaustic

When you get right down to it, the very question, "So, what are the alternatives?", is the question of one unwilling or unable to decide for him/herself and then act on that decision. It is a question which absolves one of personal responsibility. It is the question of a slave waiting to be fed, or perhaps rescued.

ch 12: Conclusion: A Capital Idea!

The framework of generalized appearances or, if you will, the essential lie required for the development of privative appropriation (i.e., the appropriation of things by means of the appropriation of beings) is an intrinsic aspect of the dialectic of sacrifice, and the root of the infamous separation that this involves. The mistake of the philosophers was that they built an ontology and the notion of an unchanging human nature on the basis of a mere social accident, a purely contingent necessity. History has been seeking to eliminate privative appropriation ever since the conditions which called for it ceased to exist. But the metaphysical maintenance of the philosophers' error continues to work to the advantage of the masters, of the 'eternal' ruling minority. – Raul Vaneigem

1.

Reification, mystification and fetishism of appearances: We humans seem to continually transform ideas into things and subvert real things into ideas. Sometimes this is helpful, but our efforts should not be mistaken for 'reality'. The state and capital are two sides of the same set of ideas, a *myth* which is born from and also generates social relations (real behavior between real people), social roles (the masks we wear during ritual performances) and social attitudes (ideas about People-as-an-idea) which are constantly (although not precisely) reproduced. The myth/idea informs the ritual behavior which reinforces and reproduces the myth through compliance. This compliance may be religiously dogmatic, opportunistic, merely unquestioning, or even begrudging.

The myth of capitalist civilization (also called "The State", "Modern Civilization", or merely "Capitalism") states:

Capital's only lifeblood is in the exchange it conducts with labour power [*the potential for living to be appropriated*]. Thus when surplus value is created, it is, in the immediate sense, only potential capital; it can become effective capital solely through an exchange against future labour. In other words, when surplus value is created in the present, it acquires reality only if labour power can appear to be ready and available in a future (a future which can only be hypothetical, and not necessarily very near). If therefore this future isn't there, then the present (or henceforth the past) is abolished: this is devalorization through total loss of substance. Clearly then capital's first undertaking must be to dominate the future in order to be assured of accomplishing its production [*exploitation*] process. This conquest is managed by the credit system. Thus capital has effectively appropriated time, which it moulds in its own image as quantitative time. However, present surplus value was realized and valorized through exchange against future labour, but now, with the development of the "futures industry", present surplus value has itself become open to capitalization. This capitalization demands that time be programmed, and this need expresses itself in a scientific fashion in futurology. Henceforth, capital produces time. From now on where may people situate their utopias and uchronias?...It will require a total mutation before all the logic of this domination can be swept away. For quality and quantity both exist in close affinity with measurement, and all are in turn linked to value.- *Jacques Cammatte*

Extracting and distinguishing the state and capital from our body of myth is useful since it exposes the foundational premises of civilization, one of which is compliance itself. The first rule of this code is "*obey*". The second is "*work*". The third is "*acquire*". For the "Boss", it is only "*command*" and "*acquire*" except in relation to his/her bosses in the hierarchy of the pyramid – our social organization. The state informs us we must comply. Therefore, as long as we remain the 'performed' or 'acted-upon' (or 'extras' as opposed to 'performers' or 'actors') in our social roles and relations, we need not (and in fact can not) carry the myth in its entirety in our own heads. We unquestioningly

comply and are generally referred to as "followers" or "sheep". When the actors perform from the script/myth they are called "leaders" and are considered "successful", "winners". When actors/doers improvise, they are at worst labeled "psychopath", "bully" or at best "perverse" or "eccentric". If their behavior does not confront established power, at best they are labeled "creative", at worst, "insane". If the 'extras' act, they are called "criminals" and "losers". The resentful or begrudging actors carry much of the myth in their heads. They would confront power if they thought they could, yet still they comply – "Don't get above yourself!" Hence, the old truism, "knowledge will set you free" is shown to be in error. Because the myth (or script) is so complex and involved (and largely unconscious and certainly not intact in any one actor), we have created great bodies of law (algorithms for behavior) and positions of authority to interpret and enforce it so we know just who to castigate and who to promote. Thus, increased knowledge of the script can entail the actor's complete subjugation to the character or role he's playing out.

2.

It is intriguing how many of the dispositions usually attributed to human nature are intrinsic conditions of symbolic discourse [and dialogue], and have in that regard some claims to universality without the necessity of biology. This seems especially evident in the sociology of the linguistic "shifters": "I" and "you,"...The person using the pronoun "I" thereby constitutes space, time and objects (reference) from his or her point of view – egotism, or even the will to power. One's interlocutor does the same, an alternative assertion of world-making authority – competition.

The same alternation [can also be] recognized as the reversibility of "I" and "you," [in symbolic dialogue] – reciprocity or altruism. The mutuality of personhood is implied by this interchange of subject positions – sociability. Symbolic [language] contains within itself the elementary principles of human social interaction. – Marshal Sahlins, paraphrased

Social Relation and the analgesics for survival: "Civilization", to me is the logic of 'power' (hierarchy, force, authority), material 'value' (economics) and 'growth' (progress). "The state" is its actual institutionalized apparatus – its social organization. Vaneigem called this "power" – "the social organisation which enables masters to maintain conditions of slavery" – which deals out "survival" to us. We should want more than that. I certainly do. The term many have used is "scarcity". "Power", "the state", "capital", whichever term you wish to use, administers and regulates scarcity. I would prefer abundance, which in my dictionary, is the main attribute of 'nature'. I have no use for power, progress, or value (in things rather than relationships). I especially have no use for survival. It is a sickness.

Those who organize the world organize both suffering and the anaesthetics for dealing with it; this much is common knowledge. Most people live like sleepwalkers, torn between the gratification of neurosis and the traumatic prospect of a return to real life. Things are now reaching the point, however, where the maintenance of survival calls for so many analgesics that the organism approaches saturation point.

In the consumer's manipulated view of things -the view of conditioning -the lack of life appears as insufficient consumption of power and insufficient self-consumption in the service of power. As a palliative to the absence of real life we are offered death on an instalment plan. A world that condemns us to a bloodless death is naturally obliged to propagate the taste for blood. Where survival sickness reigns, the desire to live lays hold spontaneously of the weapons of death: senseless mur-

der and sadism flourish. For passion destroyed is reborn in the passion for destruction. If these conditions persist, no one will survive the era of survival. Already the despair is so great that many people would go along with the Antonin Artaud who said: "I bear the stigma of an insistent death that strips real death of all terror for me."

Should one kill oneself? Killing oneself, though, implies some sense of resistance: one must possess a value that one can destroy. Where there is nothing, the destructive actions themselves crumble to nothing...So general is survival sickness that the slightest concentration of lived experience could not fail to unite the largest number of people in a common will to live. The negation of despair would of necessity become the construction of a new life. The rejection of economic logic (which only economizes on life) would of necessity entail the death of economics and carry us beyond the realm of survival...Everyone has the absolute weapon. However, it must be used with circumspection, like certain charms. If one approaches it from the standpoint of lies and oppression – back to front – then it is no more than bad clowning; an artistic consecration. The acts which destroy power are the same as the acts which construct free individual will. – *Raul Vaneigem*

3.

In a very real sense capital is nothing other than our separation brought about by our compliance. It is nothing more than the reproduction of the reified and alienated relations that bind us together through our very separation. Indeed the power of capital is our separation. Capital is never more powerful than when we exist as merely isolated individuals, however much we may scream as a result. – Aufheben

Only refusal can "set you free" (or at least put you on the path): Screaming is good, but we must also exercise our ability to refuse, ad lib, rewrite the script, particularly in relation to value. "Value" needs to be brought back to the subjective realm, its common meaning superseded by the sense of "appreciation" (and not in the sense of "inflation") – changed from a noun (thing) to a verb (relation). That which has no objective value, of course, is 'free'. When things become freed, might our relations and associations follow the same path?

Today, reality is imprisoned in metaphysics in the same way as it was once imprisoned in theology. The way of seeing which power imposes, 'abstracts' mediations from their original function, which [was] to extend into the real world the demands which arise in lived experience: it resists the magnetic pull of authority. The point where resistance begins is the look-out post of subjectivity. Until now, metaphysicians have only organized the world in various ways; the point is to change it, by opposing them (1). The regime of guaranteed survival is slowly undermining the belief that power is necessary (2). This leads to a growing rejection of the forms which govern us, a rejection of their (coercive) ordering principle. (3) Radical theory, which is the only guarantee of the coherence of such a rejection, penetrates the masses because it extends their spontaneous creativity. "Revolutionary" ideology is theory which has been recuperated by the authorities. Words exist as the frontier between the will to live and its repression; the way they are employed determines their meaning; history controls the way in which they are employed. The historical crisis of language indicates the possibility of superseding it towards the poetry of action, towards the great game with signs (4) [-*Raul Vaneigem*]

We would not even need radical theory if we could but question the basic premises of our body of myth – the play we are living, the game we are playing – and I believe there are only three critical rules beneath *obey*, *work* and *acquire* which we need to examine and refuse. Then the entire myth might come apart. Alienation might just disappear in a "puff of logic". There are an infinite number of ways society might creatively recompose if these premises are removed. If we can get in touch with our *imp of the perverse*, our *will to live* instead of a *will to power*, creativity must follow and who knows

to where this path (these paths) might lead? What are these rules which separate and alienate us, generate struggle and stifle creativity?

1. **Value is an innate characteristic of things** rather than our subjective relationships with them. This leads to their capability to be quantified, owned, withheld or exchanged for other things;
2. **People only get what they deserve.** Therefore, people also have exchange value. Life can be exchanged for things or the promise of things (wage labor/slavery). "Ya give a little, ya get a little" – this is politics. It is also an extortionist scam leading to elite privilege and authority – those without privilege must struggle just to survive. Scarcity goes to the most in exchange for 'life' while the most goes to the privileged few in exchange for a mystified sense of 'security' which is nothing more than the continuation of scarcity, 'assured' survival. The title of this play, this ritual enactment of the myth, is *Dr. Faustus*. The subject is, of course, prostitution.
3. As in any game, **other players are your opponents** ("enemies" in the correlary 'war game'). Therefore the object of life is to 'win' – to best your opponent. Of course, reality television informs us that winning is still only survival, even if we do walk away with the big bucks.

Very often, revolutions of the 'begrudgeoned' have also incorporated these rules. In fact, these three premises permeate our everyday lives and influence our social relations. No historic revolution has liberated workers *as-a-class*. Refusal is necessary and mass refusal is sufficient for revolution to take place, but unless we also refuse its logic, the system will recompose much along the lines as before the revolution. This is what is meant by refusal of the totality. If the revolutionary is not willing to pursue his/her 'struggle' outside of the system of alienation and exploitation, there will never be any liberation of creativity or human potential, which is also to say "life".

The revolutionary avant guard is just another way of saying "authority". This is why I prefer the term, "insurrection". It suggests autonomous action over theory, and the most subversive and effective insurrectionary act is total refusal. To actually refuse is nothing more than dropping out of the exploitative system. It means saying "no" to our own exploitation and especially to our willingness to exploit others. This idea is often counterpoised as "counter-revolutionary", "anti-technology", "anti-civ" or "primitivism" etc. This counter-position discounts human creativity, mutuality or cooperation, and desire. The liberation of the worker from struggle (work and competition for survival) frees and enables his/her creativity and real mutuality. I can guarantee that if you shut down all the guitar factories and send the workers home, we would still be playing guitars, only better ones crafted with subversive love. There will always be luthiers, tinkerers, craftsmen, artists, goatherders and gardeners if they are left free to pursue their desires.

4.

To break through language in order to touch life is to create or recreate the theater... This leads to the rejection of the usual limitations of man and man's powers, and infinitely extends the frontiers of what is called reality. We must believe in... a sense of life in which man makes himself master of what does not yet exist [the conquest of nothing], and brings it into being. And everything that has not been born can still be brought to life if we are not satisfied to remain mere recording organisms. Furthermore, when we speak the word "life", it must be understood we are not referring to life as we know it from the surface of fact, but to that fragile, fluctuating center which forms never reach. And if there is one hellish, truly accursed thing in our time, it is our artistic dallying with forms, instead of being like victims burnt at the stake, signaling through the flames. – Antonin Artaud

Mental Illness as Insurrectionary Strategy

keyword: ultimate

Ultimately, if one feels oppressed, ultimate pessimism can only generate three options: 1) accepting and embracing your condition; 2) suicide – both of these options are often viewed as copping/selling out; and 3) a stasis of mental illness – anxiety and/or depression. Stanley Diamond included schizophrenia – the ultimate reaction to civilization. For the ultimate pessimist, "resistance is futile".

Maybe we are all wrong in our promotion of specific insurrectionary/revolutionary strategies. I'd like to present a comment by Frere Dupont from another context responding to the question, "how long can this state (of affairs) be maintained before folks say 'fuck it' and go home?"

I do not think it is a question of "how long" because it is already happening on a large scale... and the exodus is being addressed strategically as mental illness. WHO wrote:

"By the year 2020, depression is projected to reach 2nd place of the ranking of DALYs [*disability-adjusted life-years*] calculated for all ages, both sexes. Today, depression is already the 2nd cause of DALYs in the age category 15-44 years for both sexes combined."
<http://www.who.int/>

The UK government's 'happiness guru' says "One in six of us suffers from serious depression or anxiety" <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>. In other words "one in six of us" have caught a glimpse of how things really stand and suddenly are incapable of work today. Non-functioning units are now seen as being more dangerous than those who are preparing themselves for 'self-management'.

Therefore, I consider the end of capitalism to be located in the "frequency" of this fucking off home. Or put another way, the qualitative transformation of insight into quantitative fucking off.

What is required is the achievement of a coherent wave pattern in the flight from happy consciousness. In this sense, deserters are interesting, but tides in the affairs of men, ie a triggered wave of desertions achieving optimum resonant coherence at a pitch capable of shattering conditions, is much more so.

This wave-like fucking off home in a mood of "serious depression" and "anxiety" was after all the material precipitant of the Russian Revolution.

What a wonderfully morbid solution! We needn't even work at it or wait for it! It is happening as we speak. I would only suggest one doesn't try mainstream pharmaceutical remedies which can and ultimately do have a lobotomizing effect. (On the other hand, those you concoct or grow at home might be perfectly acceptable to relieve this tension – a tension ultimately built in to civilization itself).

Of course we are still left with the question, "what then?" The question has been asked "what is found, not on the fringes or margins but on the outside of the capitalist relation?" My answer is "everything else". The position promoting local autonomy would lead to diversity. The revolutionist movement calls for homogeneity, even if it is accepting of some regional differences. The autonomist (dropout?) position (and I'm not talking the Italian movement) suggests local solutions within the "system" or "machine" which will ultimately supersede it. The insurrectionist or nihilist positions call for total annihilation, from whence we may (then and only then) create something new.

The primitivist asks "why don't we try to recreate something old?" Ultimately, this solution will not reproduce "something old" but can only lead to some kind of

'primitive'/'modern' syncretism. This is NOT a 'primitive'/'civilized' synthesis, for that is reform and will maintain [and reproduce] the state, even if in disguise. This is evident if one examines the history of Asian civilizations.

5.

We are all too rational. We talk too much. [We don't] allow ANY space for intuition to fill the gap between this crippled language (imagined as some mighty tool), packaged in these boxes, and the intended message. We are separated from our own lives, so we must somehow express or picture that – or articulate a critique of that situation. We are civilized people, we are raised like slaves & robots. What did you expect? It's easy to say that our attempts are disgusting, but we try our best to break that mould. We don't have an advantage to be raised as free people in free, supportive communities. We have to fight for it. Sometimes we are so artificial and pathetic, I agree. But how can you talk like that [so disparagingly]? People want to break free, so maybe they deserve a little bit more support and understanding, without any restrictions in critical attitude toward some aspects of their attempts – Aleksa

Postscript on Foolish Ideas: Aufheben's [*Civilization and its Latest Discontents*](#) is one of the best criticisms of the anti-civilization (and primitivist) positions and a most persuasive argument for a class struggle perspective. However, that critique can go both ways. We are want to affiliate ourselves with one line of thinking or one heroic thinker, as if all tendencies are mutually exclusive. We forget that these lines of thought are the activities of humans and therefore not absolute bodies of coherent logic based on unassailable assumptions. There is room for criticism in every approach, but this does not mean we need to throw the whole body out. Both Perlman *and* Aufheben see the imposition of class domination as the likely prime mover of civilization. Origins are interesting, but also become useful if they imply means for an end to the system we oppose. This was Clastres' position concerning the origin and hopeful demise of the state. Aufheben warns against a line of thought which "hinders the project of abolishing that system". One line of thinking (e.g., 'primitivism') is thought too general to point out targets of attack, but another line might be too specific such that the big picture is obscured, giving 'the enemy' many places to hide out, if only in our own minds.

Sometimes the specific, revolutionary approach seeks mass uprisings and so we must wait for the right conditions to be met. The generalist warns that these conditions may never be met, so we must start with our own personal rejection. Certainly both have a point – can we not find some common ground, or is it just too much fun to endlessly bicker? Should the system fall abruptly or gradually? Will it fall from within or without? Quick would be nice, but it needs to fall nevertheless. Personally I think that anti-civ and primitivism are nothing if they are not inspiring of insurrection, and revolution will never take place without a multiplicity of insurrectionary acts. Collective actions can only follow from diverse individual acts unless orchestrated by a revolutionary avant guard, and this is antithetical to the anarchist position (at least to mine! It sets up a new class system of "*thinkers*" and "*doers*").

We concern ourselves with whether the targets of our attack should be "*capitalism*", "*the state*", "*civilization*", or specific institutions within. Will it make a difference as to which way we point our war ponies? Which direction is the state? What specifically do we attack when we make the charge against capitalism? If we have to wait for the

purification of theory and it's formalized system to replace the system who's onslaughts we are just surviving, nothing will change except our own survival. The revolution will come when everyone is in a state of refusal – refusal to partake in and reproduce the system ourselves. But the shit can only get deeper if none of us as individuals does anything but wade – "You won't put a pitchfork in *my* hands!".

6.



Postscript On Technology and Other 'Things': A device which enables one person to perform the work of ten is considered a "labor-saving device". But has anyone considered the implications of this from the point of view of that one person? S/he now does ten times the work that any one person has ever had to before, and nine bureaucrats are created.

When technology is actually helpful (for example, a washing machine), nine new laborers are required to build the machine as well as to extract the energy this new device runs on. In either case, the technology has actually increased labor.

Is this a call to arms against technology or a division of labor? Not at all! We are not against having technology – we are against technology having us. The present system relies on ownership and therefore withholding, including withholding of skill-training. We call this "higher education". If not guaranteed by social position, only "the most competitive" have access. This represents a world view of scarcity. Access to training and material need only be based on desire, and this is a view of abundance. Would this preclude anthropologists, psychologists, miners, machinists, carpenters, plant operators or goat-herders? When the motives of possessing and withholding are removed, what remains is sharing and cooperation – "All for all", as Kropotkin said.

Mutual aid. We must also consider the perspective of the individual's needs and desires – "All for one", as the three musketeers said. Forget "one for all" as Kennedy implied in his "ask not..." speech – that is sacrifice, not altruism, not free association, not cooperation.

The standard opposition to this view runs something like this: "There are just too many people! There are not enough resources!" "Sure, it stinks, but what would you replace it with?" The latter is like refusing to jump a sinking ship till a more seaworthy vessel pulls alongside. These are symptoms of our own alienation from the rest of the planet. I could answer these objections no better than Albert Einstein already has:

A human being is part of the whole, called by us "Universe"; a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. The delusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely but the striving for such achievement is, in itself, a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security. – *Einstein*

On another note, it is true that there may be foolish ideas found in every line, tendency, position, milieu we adhere to or disagree with. Adherents of many tendencies, like primitivism, the crimethink 'agenda', dropouts and lifestylists, and even the 'disorganization' and tactics of elf and alf, are attempting to "live" alternatives here and now. While I might endorse them, this obviously does not mean I equate any of them. I don't think any one of them will put an end to war, much less change the course of civilization, but a little disruption can be fun and 'rewarding' now and then. We do not argue for localism. The nation-state is an expression of localism. We are arguing for local autonomy or even nomadic autonomy. We are not against society, we are against the restrictions placed upon our own cooperative relationships, and that cooperation is not exclusive to homo sapiens. Local autonomy must maintain a balance with ones surroundings, or its manifestation will be indistinguishable from the 'death camps' erected by civilization – places of scarcity and struggle.

Personally, I am not against cities, I am against their permanence – "they can be a fun place to visit", as the old saying goes. They could be temporary manifestations, but then, this is probably a novel use of the term "city" for most. Even some so-called "paleolithic" people had large settlements exceeding archaic civilized "cities" in diversity of residents and population size – but they were temporary or seasonal. Two examples might be the annual camus festival or even the encampment on the Littlehorn river prior to Custer's run-in with an historically large-scale anarchist action.

A question was raised, "how do you live your anarchy?" I would answer this as a "distancing". Yes, we all have connections to capitalism. Even Sitting Bull had such a connection or there could have been no battle. Would we disparage the Comancheros in New Mexico for their obvious connections to capitalism in providing guns to the Comanche or Apache in their struggle against the state? The Comancheros, like Iraqi insurgents, were themselves fighting for their own autonomy.

My position has always been that capitalism and the state and it's institutions are carried (more and less, to be sure) in our minds and in our relationships with each other

and the world around us. It is our culture. If we cannot expose and question its hidden assumptions we carry ourselves, then all is for naught, for we will transmit them to each new generation. This is the value of John Zerzan, even if I don't agree with all of his conclusions. We cannot destroy the state with dynamite. That much is assured. We must destroy the logic underlying it and the behavior it generates and we continually reproduce. Tim Leary thought LSD could be a sort of dynamite for the brain. Was he so wrong or different from, say, Guy Debord? "Turn on" (bloooow/detourne your mind), "tune in" (to the anti-establishment/anti-authority position, to life beyond the spectacle), "drop out" (reject your culturally generated assessments and create new arrangements, drop your role as passive spectator).

7.

Finally: I just have a few more thoughts before I put the lid back on this typewriter. Civilization is the destroyer of cultures. That much we can all probably agree on. What we may not all understand is that this destruction is one of the defining characteristics of civilization itself. It is demanded by progress. That which stands in the path of progress must be annihilated or transformed to fit our image. Civilization praises unity. It calls for uniformity. Without the destruction of the other, the road of progress will fragment into diversity. This has historically been labeled "Chaos". Diversity and abundance are the defining characteristics of what we call "nature". Because of scarcity imposed by the management/withholding in economics and politics, civilizations do not thrive – they survive. When they get too big for their britches, as the old saying goes, they collapse. This is none other than exceeding the resource base. Collapse is staved off for a time through conquest of the neighbors. Today empire building through conquest is replaced by global control of global resources. The dominating social relation within the civilization is extended outside – between civilizations. When growth exceeds the global resource base, we will see global collapse. The total biomass of the earth has been fairly consistent for a very long time. We are taught that populations of species rise at the expense of others – competition. This is the civilized view. An alternative view sees cooperative relationships maintaining diversity of species making up the biomass. As the terms, "biomass" and "human" become increasingly interchangeable, we see perpetual war, a prelude to perpetual cannibalism – the "*Soylent Green*" scenario. This is the technological solution, for we have neither the time nor the means for a conquest of space – the "*Star Trek*" scenario. This cannibalistic response is actually the most 'hopeful' scenario for the progress of civilization, for the alternative is a catastrophic collapse from which we will witness, (that is, if we could attain an off-global standpoint – "*Silent Running*" meets "*Dr. Strangelove*"), the survival of nothing. As Woody Allen said, "More than any other time in history, mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other, to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly". When you get right down to it, Artaud's 'perverse' plague of the theatre has probably inspired more resistance than any amount of radical theory and ideology.

The question, "what is the essence of humanity?" is easy to answer: you'll know them when you see them! "What is the nature of 'Man'?" That isn't much better and

should probably be left to the poets writing from their attics on the fringes. A very smart person once told me "Forget time and geography, people are the same everywhere; cultures are different!" A better question might be "what is the nature of nature, and does 'man' belong there?" If the answer to the first part is "a system of relationships, adjustments or adaptations", and the answer to the second is "'man' is part of that system", then I think anthropology and the primitivism it has inspired and in fact the 'primitives' they wish to emulate might just have something valuable to say to us. If, on the other hand, the answer is "we are above nature" or "nature is an irrelevant construct of the mind", then civilization is obviously the place for you. I agree that nature is a construct, but not all constructs are *ipso facto* irrelevant. It is true early anthropologists opposed nature with culture, but if that opposition, or dialectic if you will, is destroyed, both nature and culture will disappear. We will be left with a system of reciprocal, cooperative relationships displaying local autonomy and global diversity and no longer have to worry about such questions to which alienation gives birth. Maybe only then will we be able to experience 'living' as opposed to survival.

An argument was posed:

"This seems a little confused. First, man is defined as part of nature, then nature is defined as a human construct. Nature is certainly a construction. But what does it mean to overcome this construction? Would we then say that nature is historical? Probably. Then there is no "human nature," no matter how obvious it seems to you." [– SashaK]

Now we're back to the problem of language Aleksa referred to (above). Wittgenstein also said language (and discourse – logical positivism) is not adequate to discuss the great philosophical questions – only experience will suffice. "Nature" may be a 'noun', but it is not a 'thing'. Nature is process. If this 'thingness' is insisted upon, then nature becomes the atheist 'god'. Some say it is the primitivist 'god'. Eastern 'wisdom' informs us that man is god. The enlightenment told us god is man. Most today operate as if civilization is god, even if in need of reform by those on the 'left'. Yet even the self-satisfied conservative is gung ho for progress. 'Progress' is a verb which also exhibits 'thingness', a godness – goodness. We may not be able to explain it, but for those left in its wake, it is experienced as destruction. Most will argue that this picture is wrong – "we no longer worship gods". Yes, we worship things. Hence, nature, culture, capitalism and civilization must also be "things". We tolerate no linguistic transformation – we are ruled by things. Looters will be shot. When Stirner inferred that god (and "Man") is a "spook", he was buried. Nietzsche revived "Man" with the death of "God".

Historical materialism says nature is history. This works well for me but only up to a point. If determinism is involved, we have a nature/culture split (the thing, 'culture', is the effect; the thing, 'nature'/'history' is the cause). This Newtonian/Cartesian dichotomy is even more easily disputed than the self/other split. The logic of this disputing is seen in zen but also in quantum physics. Einstein called the split (or false dichotomy) "an optical delusion of our consciousness". If 'nature' is process or history (which does seem obvious to us), then there is no "going back to" – we're already there. Nor is there "overcoming" or "transcending from". But it's the way we talk. This is why it is so hard to discuss anything outside of civilization unless we talk about balance. In economics, this 'balance' is called "reciprocity", in biology it is "homeostasis". In physics it is "equilibrium". Civilization actually promotes an anti-balance. Everything

else tends toward balance. What is on the outside of civilization? Everything else. When we witness this balance, this process of reciprocal relations, we call it "natural". We come up with phrases like "natural laws" to describe it. Thus, Kropotkin, trying to get away from the Hobbes/Huxley '*conflict*' view and back to Darwin's evolutionary implications (stripped of the 19th century '*proper British*' or '*civilized*' moralistic ethnocentrism), saw cooperation operating in nature, competition driving the civilized. Darwin himself stressed the "social instinct" derived from "sympathy" as the more appropriate motivator of our behavior over "selfishness". The key term is still balance, but *within* nature, not *with* it. This is inferred in the phrase "ecological relation". In this sense, "nature" is the totality of relationships, the Eastern "Tau" or "way", which Lao Tse so beautifully described: "I don't know who gave birth to it, it is older than god".

Competition is the fuel of civilization. It is the unstable relationship. It provides the capitalist relation which was described by De Sade as follows: "people are not esteemed save in reason of the aid and benefits one imagines may be had of them." People are also destroyed for this same reason. So I find the 'silly' phrases, "the nature of nature", "the nature of civilization", "the nature of man" still useful, even if they refer to nothing empirical. It will be perfectly *natural* for civilization to annihilate nature itself. The tool of this annihilation is the state and the fuel is competition. It will be the end of existence, the end of process, the end of history, already experienced locally, soon to be felt globally. This is ultimate progress – self-consumption in the process of total destruction. This is why we are against civilization and yet maintain sympathy for the civilized. We are against destruction of the totality. Many confuse civilization or 'the spectacle' as "the totality". Primitivists inform us that it is not. Such Heresy! We all know the world was created through a godly sneeze and will in the end be consumed by the great cosmic goat!

Practice not-doing,
and everything will fall into place.

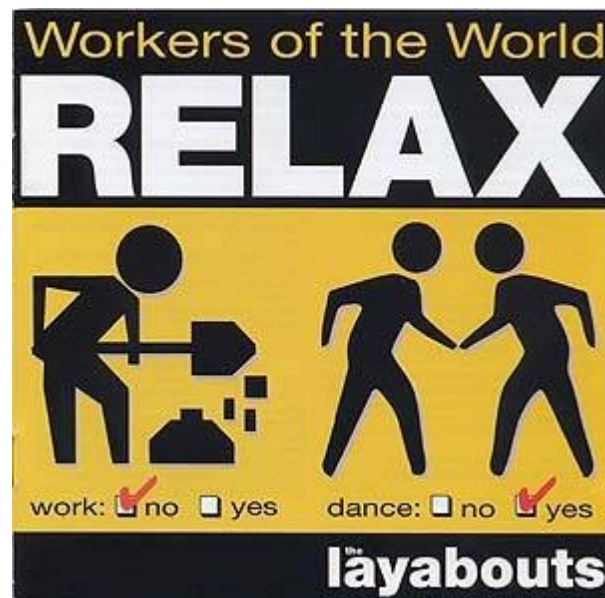
8.

Nasal Liberation: The Amputation of Work

Amputation: the wonders of modern medicine

If things just seem to stink too much, for which should we call on the doctor – nasal amputation or psychosurgery?

Has it been considered that that the abolition of work is also the driving force behind the capitalist ethic? Doesn't the farmer attempt to make a fortune growing that special cash crop instead of food so that s/he doesn't have to farm anymore? Did your dad tell you he "sweat blood" so that you wouldn't have to? Abolishing the nose does not amputate the odor. – *fendersën*



resist:c.1374, from O.Fr. *resister*, from L. *resistere* "to resist, to stand back, withstand," from *re-* "against" + *sistere* "take a stand, stand firm" (see its antonym assist).

I like this word, and all that it implies! The direct opposite of "assist"! Resistance is not a philosophy, it's a set of actions to backup one's beliefs! There have been as many, if not more people imprisoned and killed by the system for resisting than have been for revolting. Resistance takes a certain act of will to maintain, revolution only takes a mob bent on destruction. Yet both are a very real threat to the system its self! – *The Illiterate Pamela*

I do not ask that you place hands upon the tyrant to topple him over, but simply that you support him no longer; then you will behold him, like a great Colossus whose pedestal has been pulled away, fall of his own weight and break into pieces. – *Estienne de La Boetie, 1548*

Never Work!

ch 13: An Alternative to Singular Revolutionary Theory – Living

What follows is an amalgamation of ideas I've extracted from Stirner, Artaud, Vaneigem, Rexroth, and Landauer. With the exception of Stirner, these were artists, not scientific/academic theorists. Even Stirner dropped out of academic philosophy to pursue a career teaching at a school for young girls. All promoted living rather than struggle/survival, and community (by various names) rather than the collective that is the state, regardless of its economy of productive/consumptive relations. Art (poetry and literature, theatre, music – ie., creativity) generally befriends a humanism and a certain degree of individualism – ie., subjectivity generates diversity and is maintained by tolerance. Tolerance allows autonomy. Scientific process, a useful method of approach to precise relations of empirical 'data', is often perceived as painting an increasingly superficial and sterile portrait when addressing the "big picture". It is (by definition) down right useless at answering grand philosophical questions and matters of subjectivity. Reductionism is a matter of narrowing our focus. It has its place, but art approaches the opposite, larger view. Few scientists have been able to achieve a balance between art and empiricism. Such a rare balance gave us the passionate likes of Darwin, Kropotkin, Boas and Einstein. We are all influenced by all of our ancestors. To pick one ancestor (for example, Mr. Marx) at the exclusion of the rest is nothing but religious dogma. It is not science.

Fie on Your Proletariat Revolution: No single outcome of revolt or collective refusal has ever changed anything in the relationships of power except the players. The elite are only the winners in the games of power. In the same way, "The Great Man" of history has never existed. The closest approximations to "great men" and their "great movements" have merely stated out loud what many others were already thinking. As Rexroth noted, every charismatic leader, or "priest-king" needs a business manager, or "war-king" at his side. If one were to amass an army of superior force against the armies of capitalism and the state and thereupon defeat them, what will have changed? Yes, it would be a revolutionary victory, a greater power will have overcome a lesser power, but power remains. It seems naive to think that power (over others) can be utilized for good effect, like the split atom, the most destructive force we had ever witnessed, was to be used for peace – but only after we burnt a half million Japanese civilians to a crisp in a matter of minutes.

As I've said before, we need to get the state out of our heads before we can get our heads out of the state. In this I am optimistic. If a sense of mutuality is incorporated, the transposition of subject and object, the idea that the self and the other are merely poles on the same continuum, then autonomously sustaining communities will not produce communism on a local level, they will *be* communism on a local level. Where communism is a theory about living, community is living. It is not a matter of like-mindedness but an appreciation of diversity, self-sufficiency and interchange rather than uniformity, appropriation and exchange. It's a matter of how one chooses to live one's life and relate to others. It is a matter of reciprocity as well as autonomy. It is a balance rather than a dialectic. This is the only revolution I could endorse. Only this will allow us to abolish everyday life, (or rather, everyday struggle), and everyday living must be the starting point. Life does not proceed from struggle – that is toil. We must learn to say "no!" to separation and privilege – otherwise we are just pissing in the wind. The hive mentality of many so-called communists or 'radical' theorists gives us a collective with no accounting for individual and shared passions and desires. The collective is es-

established for the sake of production – property. Its formula for happiness (liberty?) is equality in toil for production and fraternity in access to property. Sacrifice is the revolutionary force of production. There is no room for any individual. In fact, there is no community. Any 'communalism' or 'socialism' without a concurrent individualist humanism is a reciprocity without the human, a reciprocity of objects by the actions of slaves – the so-called community effort, or in a nutshell, calvinist reformation of the state.

Early revolutionaries thought they had deposed the monarchy and superseded it with liberty. This was an illusion. Their revolution did not phase the real king, the liege-lord of all kings and bureaucrats – property, that destroyer of community. If our motivation does not come out of the desire to follow a path and live it, but instead is a mode (tactic/strategy) of attack, then our revolution is just a fetish – a new spectacle, an alternate monopoly of appearances. If one (the "I") views the 'other' (the "you") in terms of competition and discourse instead of mutuality and intercourse no new social relations will produce "authentic community". If we use power in order to destroy power, we become the powerful. Some folks would shout "right on!", but I somehow see a contradiction. On closer view, it is hypocrisy. If we acquire the means, the skills and machines (ak-47's) to protect and defend our land (or our ideas!), our property, then both land-as-property and idea-as-property are maintained. If we decide to live *with* the land instead of *off* the land, then what we think of as property becomes territory and that is nothing more than 'where we choose to live' or even 'where we choose to make our stand'. Then we defend ourselves and each other, not our property. Property is a spook, and spooks cannot be overcome by means of force. They can only be exorcised. Earth liberation? Yes: exorcise the spooks which predate upon it. This is a matter of examination and refusal which may give rise to acts of revolt, rebellion or insurrection, but this is not the *revolution* over which radical theorists pontificate.

It must be grand to despise or choose to remain ignorant of other ways of life. It must be grand to have such a complete understanding of human disposition based only on the civilized social relation from which to fuel our revolutionary theories:

- that because of conflicting and competing wills to power, human relations are inherently antagonistic;
- that communication ultimately boils down to manipulation and resistance to manipulation;
- that community is an obsolete construct, today roughly meaning "hood" ('the place we carry out our conflicts/struggle on a local level') or a collective like-mindedness – 'group-think';
- that our own revolution must mirror that of the bourgeois parliamentarians;
- that our things take precedence over our selves – all else is impoverishment;
- that our ideas become so highly structured they take on the appearance of things – the alternative is an impoverished mind, criminal thinking at variance with established (even revolutionary) dogma.

But my question is this: "Why on earth would you want a revolution?" The world as we know it seems just about perfect for one with such an outlook! My next question is: "How can one even think about the possibility of a communist social relation?" This is based not on conflict and struggle and wealth measured in things, but on cooperation

and sharing and wealth in our relationships to things and to each other. Yet talk of these phenomena usually lands one in the anarchist clink reserved for troglodytic primitivists, postmodern leftists and self-estranged poets – guilty of that despicably unrevolutionary question – "Why can't we just learn to get along?" The appropriate question of greater revolutionary significance is, of course, "if we overthrow the state and capitalism, will we still get to mistrust, to treat each other like shit?" My final question is obviously: "After your revolution, what will have changed?" – *P. J. Kaustic*

Art, Balance, Utopianism and Other Sentimental Liberalisms: Sentimental liberalism? Why not? We don't proffer these ideas to replace the "class struggle" position, but that matters of living should not be forgotten just as theorizing about it can be no replacement for actually going out and doing it – living. To the question, "What do you do for a living?" I reply "Do you mean what do I do in place of living?" Landauer's chief criticism of his marxist contemporaries was that their 'solutions' left no room for passion and desire, just as Stirner reproached his contemporaries for disregarding the individual. We do not propose to kill off Mr. Marx, only to dethrone him. If we want some sort of communism (utopia?), I think it would be nice to have some idea of what a community is. Diversity and tolerance ensure individuality and creativity and are necessary for any non-authoritarian community "productivity". They are also required for any community festivity. Why not combine the two?¹⁴ It is true that institutions prevent us from living our desires and so we are against these institutions. But we can make attempts at enacting more agreeable social relations on a smaller scale, in our everyday lives, outside the view of the telescreen rather than wait until the totality is destroyed in revolution or collapse. That to me is sentimentality – the whole notion that we can only yearn for and wait to live.

Nonviolence? We are certainly not against the occasional necessity for violence. If *The Revolution* occurred today, there are certainly some folks I would be first to line up against the wall. I think, unlike Mao and Gandhi, some folks are just beyond rehabilitation. And certainly, I think we must protect ourselves when we are attacked. But like the issue of violence or non-violence, most of our theoretical constructs pit ideas against each other in the same way we are pitted as individuals. We succumb to aristotelean logic: individualism vs collectivism, autonomist communities vs confederated councils, etc. and etc. We are encouraged to throw out the baby with the bathwater and to fight among ourselves on the nature of babies and bathwater in an empty tub. This is what has become of modern scientific and philosophical discourse and perhaps one reason the artists have done far more in disseminating social criticism among "the masses". Again, our argument (if that is what it is) is not to replace science with art but to adjoin the two approaches or maintain some balance – to keep in mind the big picture while analyzing the small, and to remember that the big contains many smalls, that the community disappears without the individual.

14 I once watched an ethnographic film of "primitive" felt manufacturing. The film depicted a group of villagers sitting in a circle surrounding a pile of wool, and beating it with bats to the rhythm of their singing, laughing and general frolic. Other villagers danced around the periphery of this circle, and from time to time exchanged places with those seated. Felt manufacture? Hell, it looked to me like they were dancing on their asses!

We do not propose an argument against revolutionary theory in favor of folks learning to "just get along". Rather, I would suggest that throwing out humanism altogether in favor of a mathematical formula for revolution is equally unwarranted. If we wish communist or reciprocal social relations *After-The-Revolution*, shouldn't we start practicing (as in 'training' for) them among ourselves in the mean time? I think that stressing the institutional means of pitting us against each other in the traditional class-struggle position is absolutely on the mark in *describing* the current state of affairs, but it ignores our own complicity in the process. We are not merely victims in our own oppression but participants as well. Without appreciating this, when we "win" the class war, we are in danger of reproducing/reincarnating it, although this might get rid of some mistrust and "treating people like shit". By all means, do more than just say "no", but at some point we need to start saying it and doing it in our everyday lives.

"Balance" over dialectics is a view of relationships which no longer show mutual exclusion. Obviously, I don't want to achieve a balance with an "asshole", or one who exploits me. Off the pig! (For those whose eyebrows have just raised, "pig" at one time referred to any proponent of the "establishment", not just its enforcers, and was more synonymous with "suit" than "cop"). But I'll not put my comrades in that category.

Assholes, bullies, alpha males (and females!) have always been around. We happen to live in a culture run by them. 5,000 years ago we decided it would be a good idea to be ruled, and we've been going along with it ever since. We all grow up learning to be like them: "*Be like Mike!*" The revolutionary should want to destroy this power, which is an imbalance, not just trade places with the powerful. The revolution is permanent – 'off the pig' as you find him and he'll never raise to power. This "offing" may be literal or metaphoric as the need arises. Without individual refusal there is no collective resistance. In our case, we're talking criminal action beyond criminal thought. Radical social change is always a matter of crime when relationships of power are disturbed.

A determined revolutionary doesn't require authorization from a central committee before offing a pig. As a matter of fact, when the need arises, the true revolutionary will off the central committee – *Eldridge Cleaver*

So even with a highly tuned theory that grants an understanding of the misery machine, the real reason people strike is simple vengeance. If there is no vendetta, there can be no revolt. But can one simply find joy in destruction? Perhaps a few, but this joy will be tempered with hate as the consequences catch up to these playful destroyers. Such are the things that insurrections are made of. – *HP*

Quite. Folks revolt when they are angry. But programming, propaganda, the state, the spectacle, (pick your poison), continually raises the level of the barometer. More and more pressure/oppression is tolerated. It takes more and more to engage people's anger but less and less to arouse their fear. For most, fear has altogether replaced anger at oppression. Anger is only expressed as a state of begrudging acceptance. It's a culture of all-against-all, after all. This is Democracy! We've come to the point that by the time revolution occurs, it won't be necessary (i.e., the system might just collapse under its own weight before our revolution ever gets off the ground) – but we likely won't have lost our isolation and paranoia in the process.

It is not enough to think about revolution. Arouse people's anger? Yes, but be careful what you wish for. There is no need to consider balance or mutual cooperation?

We need to practice doing and also "not-doing". If this is not a balancing act, I don't know what is. It is the negative vision (destruction) tempered by the positive vision (creation) of revolution. Doing is embracing cooperation if our aim is for a communist social relation. Not-doing is a matter of rejecting that which we oppose – e.g., competitive social relations, authority, the propaganda of 'education'. What distinguishes the revolutionary from the reformist is that small successes are not enough because they always occur within the context of greater set-backs. Those small successes help perpetuate the system/establishment, giving fuel to the fire of power.

Conceiving "a life beyond the present one" is not enough: folks usually need to witness it. The future we envision will never appear if we don't start acting as-if it is here now – this is my view of lifestylism. Mass displays of pure anger may set the state back, but they cannot prevent it from re-appearing because its own spooks live in our heads. The so-called nihilist approach which sees destruction necessarily preceding creation engenders a "waiting-for-the-revolution" attitude, and it is this attitude which helps prevent social change from ever taking place. As BZ stated (I paraphrase): The revolution is not here yet, so am I being inconsistent in participating within the system which I oppose? My answer would be "the revolution has always been here!" – *fender-sen*

When we wake up in the morning and put our feet on the ground we must have a good reason for getting up, if we don't it makes no difference whether we are anarchists or not. We might as well stay in bed and sleep. And to have a good reason we must know what we want to do because for anarchism, for the anarchist, there is no difference between what we do and what we think, but there is a continual reversing of theory into action and action into theory. That is what makes the anarchist unlike anyone who has another concept of life and [who] crystallizes this concept in a political practice, in political theory. – *Alfredo Bonanno*

The Spectacle and the Revolt of the Slaves: The only difference between the 'historic' *slave* and the 'historic' *proletariat* is that the former is obtained and maintained by physical force (violence) as well as illusion in later generations (such as the religious or civic 'duty' of medieval peasants and serfs); the latter *only* by anamorphosis and illusion. Thus, we think the slave is "liberated" when the means of survival (food and shelter) are no longer supplied directly by the master-tyrant, but are accessed by the worker through the wage (or even salary) allocated by the capitalist-tyrant (and which, as Marx illustrated, returns even more (capital) to that tyrant). The illusion gives us the categories, 'crime', 'sin' and 'insanity' and a prison/workhouse to contain the criminal, sinner or insane, as well as *rehabilitation* and *psychotherapy* – that humanist or progressive response to the execution or banishment of "shiftless" perpetrators of "laziness" to "bring them back into the fold", to make *productive* citizens of them.

'Democracy' is 'equality' in servitude since even the master-capitalist is subjugated by the demands of property in its new reified/fetishized incarnation – 'Capital'. Therefore, property is king in our 'democratic' culture of self-abnegation and self-abdication. We call this "self-control". Property and capital are the illusion of the social relation of production, and since we cannot imagine that "the-powers-that-be" are our very relationships mediated by *things*, this mediation is reified *and* anthropomorphised – 'Capital' and 'Class'. 'Capitalist' and 'Worker' may then be seen as two poles in a continuum of

slavery to an illusion and the illusion is maintained by adherence to the dialectic of "Class" – our relative position within the pyramidal social organization between the "captains of industry" and the untouchable homeless, and exemplified by where we live, what we drive and how many muscles we use getting there. A tautological argument? No, it is a description of a tautological mental process which maintains the spectacle within us.

Discussion of "class struggle", "labor power", "surplus value", "capital accumulation" or "patterns of consumption" does nothing to subvert this simple fact of the essential equivalence of slave and proletariat. The relative success of the illusion or spectacle reduces the exigencies of razor wire and machine-gun turrets surrounding the workplace. The left and right "wings of capital" differ largely in their faith in the counter-revolutionary prepotency of the illusion. If we can agree that the modern system entails a "social relation of production", then it would seem that the most revolutionary act would be to *stop* production, not to seize control of it, and that revolutionary violence is always a matter of self-defense following our refusal.

It is obvious that there is an inherent tension between capital/ruling-elite and labour (capitalism is but one method of creating a ruling elite); only two situations are available:

1. a synthesis of the two through the mechanical automatization of the one over the other via increased levels of power: force and/or more efficient programming – education – as has been tried unsuccessfully for millennia and generates what is known as "progress"; and
2. an anti-synthetic break and distancing – the annihilation of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

The first is manifest in the never-ending struggle of the ruler and worker, or '*valorization of capital*' vs the '*revolutionary consciousness* of the proletariat'. The second is nothing if it is not destruction of the vertically aligned homogenization of work (and workers!) and the creation of horizontal diversity of the unique and the local. This is the antisynthetic or biologic response inherent in all of nature when confronted with conflict. It has even been labeled: the "*fight-or-flight*" response. (There is a third option, which is 'suicide', 'sacrifice', or the analogous 'sell-out' – imbibing in various stress-reducing anesthetics and analgesics.) As aristotelean as this may sound, there is, by definition, no synthesis of antagonistic oppositions – factioning is an instinctual mode of self-defense. In the realm of class-struggle, the solution to the tension inherent in the social relation of production is disengagement from that relation – quit!

Hence, the watch-words of the situationists: "Never work!" If your answer is "But we would starve!", then clearly you are not interested in revolution for you are already convinced of your own helplessness and isolation from your fellows – the fundamental message of the spectacle. – *Bagatella Gambadé*

Personal Disaster and The Men in White Hats:

punks may come, punks may go but punk is 4ever . . .

The pro-revolutionary milieu always remains itself. This is because the aetiology and development of pro-revolutionary consciousness within its specific milieu is entirely of a different

order to the consciousness, function, movement of the working class. The two only 'fire together' and fuse in moments of objective crisis . . .

I may as well develop this to the point of absurdity just to find out what's on the other side of it.

In this problematic, we are presented with two sets. The working class which is a general category of function and purpose within the social relation, and the idea of the working class which is an idea of general terms (function and purpose) that is actually only possessed by the pro-revolutionary milieu, a subjective position. – *frere dupont*

This is an interesting line of thought. I don't think it leads to absurdity if we remember that although there may be a reason for everything, this does not mean there is *reason* behind everything. Another way of saying this is that when we elucidate the organizational logic (e.g. a structural or functional analysis) of a phenomenon, this may have little to do with the reasoning (or even *if* there is reasoning) behind peoples' behaviors or the way they organize (or are organized) along certain lines. This bespeaks of motivation and "*consciousness*". Folks, even revolutionary folks, are conservative. Change is individually resisted even when that individual understands the need for it. Change is welcomed when it comes from elsewhere, but only if it promises to "bring things back to the way things were". Hence, there is much more support for an even violent return to constitutional government than the overthrow of government in general.

The revolutionary milieu pontificates as to why the working class does not (or when they will) rise up. The simple fact of the matter is that no one is more aware than the slave or laborer of his/her own oppression and exploitation – It is the *bourgeoisie* who remain ignorant in their sheltered existence of the exploitation necessary for their existence and that, in fact, they themselves are also exploited. If these revolutionaries spent some time in less bourgeois (middle-class), "working-class pubs" or other social meeting places such as in rural feed-store parking lots, they would understand that a "revolutionary consciousness" is much more shared than they thought. They would hear folks pontificating on why the revolutionaries (or the "militias") do not rise up and do something about this mess. We're all rattled sufficiently but rather than take individual responsibility, we expect the *man-in-the-white-hat* or the *men-in-tights* to ride into town and put things aright. Revolutionary thinkers put the fabled "proletariat" into this category. It is this conservative tendency away from personal responsibility which gave birth to the Myths of Robin Hood as well as Marx' revolutionary proletariat.

It generally takes a catastrophe for this consciousness of individual responsibility to appear – a subjectively felt personal threat such as is seen in natural disasters or conditions bad enough to resolve into passionate riot and looting. The *bourgeoisie*, (from which is historically derived the revolutionary/'educated' milieu), is rarely caught up in this condition of personal disaster. A personal disaster is envisioned as the loss of one's position because of a late mortgage or SUV payment: "I'd join a revolution if I could ever get caught up with my debts" or "I'd move out and start a commune if I could come up with the bread to buy up some land". Default? Squat? Steal? "Heavens! We're not criminals, ya know!"

But I go to far. It is true that everyone equally succumbs to personal loss or disaster. It is true that we can only do what we can, and in fact, the bourgeoisie are probably in a

better position to embrace refusal, if they can only imagine it. – *Carlos Pedro Dufús*

The Accumulation of Appearance and the Culture of Death: At some point upon examining marxist economics (*Das Kapital*), one has to reconsider Adam Smith and supply-side economics. It seems obvious that surplus labor and increased productivity are not the only factors in creating and maintaining value/price within the system of wage labor. Even Marx indicates this in his discussion of luxury and fetish. But today most don't even work from the incentive of wage, but to establish a credit rating and then try to crawl out of debt, a near impossibility if one is to remain a productive employee – appearances must be maintained. Money itself is just another mass-produced commodity purchased at the local automated teller with a piece of plastic announcing to the machine your level of privilege. Capital is no longer the simple mechanistic mediator between the classes appropriated from surplus labor. Wealth has been totally superseded by power by way of credit rating – not the ratio of credit to debt, but the inconsequentiality of debt itself. Witness the ever frequent corporate bail-outs. We are led to believe these are funded by taxes but the subtle truth is that they are funded by our consumption of "commodities" unnecessary to survival, as if our lives depended on it. As Mark Twain said, "Civilization is a limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities".

We don't work to accumulate anything but appearances, and by this means we work only to survive, no matter our income. The wage as well as salary is only an obsolete artifact we cling to – a reminder of simpler times. "Credit", "debt", "direct deposit" and "high turnover" are the watchwords of the day, not "capital", "labor" and "wealth". "Productivity" is only applicable if it is accompanied by "increase". A non-productive worker (one who does not exceed her/his job description) is soon an unemployed worker – a successful worker must at some point burn out if the "economy" (productivity, or more accurately, capital/power in the hands of the suits) is to grow. Perpetual debt and welfare ensure survival even with the lowering of wage. Some call this "flexibility", others call it "precarity". It is a different world than Marx occupied – a world of guaranteed survival or death . . . but not a world for the living.

The attraction to obsolete artifacts could be said to fall into the same categories of supply, demand, luxury and fetish. It could also be said that we live in a culture of death, so we have a natural affinity to the dead and dying and their accumulation. These rare objects (novelties) still in good condition are sold in auctions, not in the market. Property on which stand ancient ruins commands an almost impossible price. The workers and their world are dead and gone, but the symbolism of the past remains strong. When those walls crumble and the dust is blown away by the wind, the value of the property drops unless a bronze plaque is planted referring the site to an important event we are familiar with from the history books (or to a *new* historical event waiting to be inserted into the histories). Perhaps an asphalt parking lot and automated coin drop will turn this site into a commodity – a public place producing small revenues at first, but with the potential of a windfall development complete with condos and MacBox stores, sure to fatten the wallet of that kind philanthropist who opened the site to public view (spectacle) in the first place. As they say, "no good deed goes unrewarded".

Productivity, supply and demand (competition) may still rule the day, but do not explain our attraction to dying rarities. These are the true luxuries. Up-and-comers are hoodwinked (by the spectacle) into thinking that luxury items are mass-produced commodities bigger (as in big-screen tv) or newer (state-of-the-art technology) or shinier (the rolex) than 'normal' folks can obtain. These costly items are no more costly in labor or materials than their 'cheaper' alternatives – Appearance or image provides the difference. Is the cost of the rolex maintained by a higher corporate investment in labor and materials or are the employees paid more and product shipped by lear jet rather than ups only to maintain the illusion of product superiority? Or are the poor schmucks working for rolex actually making less than their comrades over at timex? From the suit's point of view, does it even matter as long as the image is maintained and capital accumulates?

Market value is itself an illusion (or is it "delusion"?) so cannot be created except through persuasive slight-of-hand. We instinctively know what 'true' value is, and that is always subjective and in fact, semantically more encompassing than mere "use-value". It is this knowledge which is suppressed not only by advertising, but by narrow-focused discussion of mystic "economic forces", whether Marxian or Straussian. This is the nature of the spectacle: When contemplating the big picture and our place in it, we are told, "Nothing here, boys and girls . . . Move along".

Productivity is also illusory. If automated technology allows me to produce two coats in the space of time it used to require to make one, I will not go home early, but will, from here on out, produce two coats. Neither will my wage double. There are now two coats to be 'consumed' and their value depends on the label fixed thereupon. Mass production destroys novelty. Another word for this is habituation. "The spark is gone". The commonplace is less desirable so it's value is reduced through the mechanics of boredom. Hence, every year, "New and Improved" is attached to the label. Value is somewhat determined by the past to maintain a sense of consistency, but also by what people can afford, or have the inclination to buy: "An Indispensable Kitchen Accessory – It's a floor cleaner *and* a desert topping!" (– *Dan Akroyd*) is also affixed to the label. Marx' description of capital makes no sense without continual reference to fetish (of which he indeed obliges us). His critique of capital is limited without reference to the spectacle or *state monopoly of illusion*, and our spectacle is still informed by Fordism and Madison Avenue, something Marx could not have imagined.

Increased productivity is progress. While this concept attracts us, it is generally only embraced with a wince. Progress is also increased complexity which carries greater demands on the individual. Comfort is found in stasis, not progress – a six-pack (of name-your-poison) in front of the idiot box is still the most popular form of entertainment. We want improvement only in so far as it suggests reform of the hectic quality of the "rat race" and protection from the ever ominous mushroom cloud. Our memory/imagination of a simpler time and hope for an easier future is our only solace . . . and of course, there is drink, melancholy and death. Only a few are inspired by thoughts of revolution. – *fendersen*

ch 14: Parenting and Childing The Revolutionary Subject: Individualism and Collectivism as False Dichotomy

Most of us in the modern world come to think there is something fundamentally wrong with human relations in this day and age. Many have turned to the authority of religion or psychiatry: "Will someone please tell me how to act?" Some are more philosophical about this mess; we turn the "other" into a dialectical opposition and attempt to annihilate it through a competition of accumulation and consumption and rationalize the process with a 'libertarian' egoism. They used to call this "greed and pure-D selfishness". Others try to annihilate the self in ways Freud labeled "neuroses", the old tried-and-true suicide, use of intoxicating substances, or even "pure-D socialism" – the sacrifice of the self "for the greater good". Of course, this is all predictable when we think of the other as not only disconnected, but in opposition, and is only 'natural' in a world view informed by aristotelian logic. Every option seems to put the self and other into a dialectic friction – conflict and competition – and the world view is reinforced through self-fulfilling prophecy, even if the self is left more than a bit confused.

"I hold a beast, an angel, & a madman in me, & my enquiry is as to their working, & my problem is their subjugation & victory, downthrow & upheaval, & my effort is their self-expression."
– *Dylan Thomas*

Life, as we find it, is too hard for us; it brings us too many pains, disappointments and impossible tasks. In order to bear it we cannot dispense with palliative measures. 'We cannot do without auxiliary constructions', as Theodor Fontane tells us. There are perhaps three such measures: powerful deflections, which cause us to make light of our misery; substitutive satisfactions, which diminish it; and intoxicating substances, which make us insensitive to it. Something of the kind is indispensable. Voltaire has deflections in mind when he ends *Candide* with the advice to cultivate one's garden; and scientific activity is a deflection of this kind, too. The substitutive satisfactions, as offered by art, are illusions in contrast with reality, but they are none the less psychically effective, thanks to the role which phantasy has assumed in mental life. The intoxicating substances influence our body and alter its chemistry. It is no simple matter to see where religion has its place in this series. – S. Freud, from [*Civilization and its Discontents*](#)

It would almost seem we are built to dissect and categorize. It is obviously related to our special knack for comparison, even of each other. We "recognize". Somewhere along the way we've been domesticated – seduced to give up comparison and replace it with contrast. Instead of asking on similarities, we are content with opposition: "what's the opposite of _____?" (fill in the blank) – and so we come to think we "know". We label things and then we measure, rank, or even negate them. Concentrating on differences, ever searching out conflict, we distance ourselves from connection – we witness alienation. When we do experience 'sameness' we consider it a profound revelation – "ah-haa!" – or a matter of "synchronicity" – surely evidence of the "supernatural"! It is a "warm" feeling. But we cannot escape similarities in the world: every equation must have an 'equal' sign. This we call "cold logic" – the sterile domain of the mathematician.

This is how we construct the world and our shared construction is why we can even talk about it. That we impose a logical grid on reality neither suggests that there is no 'order', nor does it say that the world does not exist outside of our constructions or only comes into being because of them (the notion of the early 'idealists'). Rather, we can-

not directly 'know' the world except through metaphor – poetic or mechanical, this is symbolic thought. Anything outside our metaphor is therefore considered "chaos", "criminal" and "insane". Thus, our own categories are felt by many to be overly restrictive, even suffocating.

Human beings are not absurd, and the world is not absurd, but for humans to be in the world is absurd. Human beings, recognizing the limitations implied in being human in this world, cannot create another world which ignores the absurdity of this existence – *Albert Camus*

This metaphorical categorization or "symbolic thought" has led some, like John Zerzan, to consider it the source of the absurdity of living in this world. Source, it may be, but this draws away from the crux of our discontent – the social relation of power (one-upmanship) producing atomization, alienation and separation; the social relation of power (exclusion) producing property, poverty, illness and wars of conquest and annihilation. Metaphorical categorization also allows language, art, trust, camaraderie, community and festivity. There has never been a revolution against these things, only their deflection, substitution and denial (repression).

The divergence might just be as simple as categorization based on differences (discrimination) as opposed to that based on similarities (generalization) – they tell us we have passed intellectual "milestones" when we are able to make fine distinctions, when we can throw out the triangle from a box of squares. They tell us that intelligence is the mastery of information, and that information is "that which makes a difference". We have achieved this grand intelligence at the expense of the child's ability to generalize, to see how things are similar, to see connections, to create poetry. We supersede rather than accompany generalization in our all-or-nothing, either-or world. Discrimination outranks generalization – we must choose the more efficient to raise our children to become successful time-and-motion engineers.

Freud told us the first categorical distinction a child makes is between the self (ego) and the other (mother). This he labeled "the reality principle" which comes to gradually supersede the "pleasure principle" – the pursuit of happiness or the avoidance of unhappiness which is, for Freud and most psychologists after him, the attempt to satisfy our personal needs or desires. This supersession is also the foundation of society. It sets up the social relation beginning with the immediate family and extending to the local group. The 'undomesticated' child, interested in his/her own needs comes to know s/he requires aid from others as soon as the self-distinction is made.

But a society or community or family requires that the self-other distinction not be complete – the child still shares a bond with the mother, and this comes to extend to others. Where the so-called "reality principle" accompanies rather than supersedes the "pleasure principle", the social relation of mutual aid sets in quite rapidly – there is no one more giving than the undomesticated child. As we extend this self-other logic, we come up with the notions of us and them ('group solidarity' and its civilized cousins, 'patriotism' and 'bigotry') and eventually the collective species or superordinate/generic category, 'mankind' (humanism), which distinguishes us from all other existence. Without the balance of generalization, we instead become alienated from all other existence.

The fact is that we are social beings and, in evolutionary terms, the species cannot

survive without a social relation. The 'social' individual cannot 'live' without others (although s/he can 'struggle' and 'survive' for a time). Eastern mysticism (Tao) sees a logic or connection between the self and the other which should be in balance, (harmony, equilibrium) rather than display the politics of antagonism and control by superior forces (the winners, parents, teachers, cops and even colleagues) of which we are all well familiar (dialectics is the warfare of ideas). It is appropriate to suggest that there is a war between the individual's construction of his/her world and the society's construction of the individual, but this only continues our notions of all against all – competitive democracy.

That we can share our construction of the world via language allows us to help or hinder each other. When the child comes to see the parent as a source of control rather than aid, individuality is suppressed and resentment (or even neurosis) sets in. This is the civilized social relation of domestication/control which prepares the child for submission to social institutions (school and thereafter, work). Throughout life, the individual both feels and *is* hindered and isolated. The task of the social institutions is to repress this natural resentment, but it is never eliminated. It always resurfaces as a quest for power (the so-called "black seed" of "human nature") among the successfully socialized, and aberrant behavior (crime, madness, eccentricity, rebellion) among the less so. For the successful domesticate, one's own progress is derived from the hindrance of others, and this is called "healthy competition". All domesticates seek to express their individuality since this is the first thing (self-expression) taken by 'society'. The psychopathy of the serial killer is not so far removed from the war-mongering politician. The difference is a matter of cultural sanction or social convention – the former conveys too much individuality. Exploitation under feudalism or capitalism is also not so far removed – the former allows too much locality and therefore, multiplicity. The movement of civilization has always been toward universality and away from multiplicity, whether through conquest or conversion.

As civilization itself progresses, dissent grows with our struggle to assert our individuality. In civilization, Maslow's "self-actualization" always grows from a sense of dissent or rebellion. It must. We think of this as a quest for freedom because in our situation, we do not experience freedom – we hardly know what it means. Romantic utopianists try to imagine a social relation based on helping rather than hindrance. Both Kropotkin and Marx fall into this 'category'. Marx felt the state could be transformed into a 'helping' institution through a natural revolt of the discontented. The opposing anarchists following Bakunin thought we could in fact do quite well without the state altogether. Individualists or 'illegalists' have influenced the modern day insurrectionists. Concentration on the state apparatus or economic institutions distances us from our own participation in the process of domestication which starts with the incredible social relation between parent and child:

Traditionally this (basic distrust) orientation has encouraged attention to latent tendencies to "naughtiness", which have sometimes been seen as actively present in every young child. The theory influences the way an infant is perceived, and once this point of view is adopted it tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more infants sense a danger that their biological needs may not be supplied, the more their biologically-determined survival mechanisms prompt them to seek to control their mothers, apparently confirming the view that they are naturally too selfish, "manipulative" or aggressive. Thus, exaggeration and distortion of nec-

essary biological mechanisms may encourage the perception of the infant as a potential "monster".

When naughtiness is seen as the result of failure to control natural tendencies which are considered to be primitive animal, and therefore bad, her conviction may be reinforced that these must be eliminated by appropriate training, lovingly if possible, but coercion and threats may be needed if resistance is encountered. If this becomes pronounced, violence is justified in what is, after all seen as a good cause. If this doctrine and the related training processes produce a "naughty" or "disturbed" child, this can still be seen as confirming the premise that the original tendency to naughtiness was strong, and the difficulties may be attributed to insufficient training and punishment.

The emphasis (in an orientation of trust) in the parents' basic goal is to enjoy a good relationship with the child, and help to produce a "whole" healthy person who is also likely to be sufficiently "good". The quest for obedience and conformity is not a prevailing emphasis as in the basic distrust orientation.

(This) method of childrearing aims to satisfy the young child's needs and develop a cooperative, mutually satisfying, affectionate relationship, in which the potentialities of the child and parents unfold, blossom and gradually mature. The developing capacities for self-regulation are respected and encouraged . . . The parents teach avoidance of common dangers and gradually encourage a disposition to consider and respect the needs and feelings of others' through experiencing this consideration within the family . . . Thus when confronted with an infant displaying a strong urge to do something or have it done for him, it can be illuminating to consider whether this urge may have some genetic component, being adaptive and of value for the child's development. This point of view is neatly expressed in the saying: "A baby's wants are pretty much the same as its needs".

The child's point of view is more likely to be understood, and parental requests take into account the child's feelings and capacities so that hostility and negativism tend to be minimized. The child's feelings are accepted in the expectation that sufficient self-control will be achieved as appropriate to the child's age. (The options of exercising authority and sufficient force are still available if essential.) Inconsiderate behaviour is discouraged but the quality of relationships tends to make punishment inappropriate and it may be seldom or never needed.

This approach is based on a different view of the nature of the child and is more in accord with modern understanding of child development. It appears less alien to the traditions of many non-Westernised societies, including those of hunter-gatherer groups whose mother-infant interactions have been studied . . . In Western societies a partial breakdown in these natural processes of mothering behaviour appears to have occurred on a considerable scale . . . it is not generally understood that this does not require the parents to strive for early versions of the finally desired behaviour since infancy is not so much a prime opportunity to mould the child but rather a time to seek to satisfy the infant and enjoy the unfolding of many built-in qualities in the setting of trusting and mutually rewarding relationships. – *Peter S. Cook, [Childrearing, Culture And Mental Health](#)*

Raised as "naughty" children, we cannot imagine an alternative to mistrust and competition, so we remain at odds with each other. Individualism and collectivism have no common ground for the "democratic" collective still out-ranks individual expression and a world of "free" individuals is thought to deny community. In either case, the self is atomized, alienated, separated. Many cannot imagine the individual's pleasure other than at the expense of the other, and others cannot imagine the helping of others as anything beyond personal sacrifice. This aristotelian struggle between the individual and collective, the self and the other, will not be eliminated until our child-rearing techniques eliminate the ideas of entrenched power and competition and replace them with an orientation of trust and inclusion – Heidegger's "openness to being" rather than Niet-

zsche's "will to power". But we are caught up in a vicious cycle starting with the wrenching of the new-born from the bonding physical contact with the mother the moment s/he is born, given a swift slap on the ass and sent off for sterilization.

Because of our lack of community or even the extended family, the only option for the civilized parent is to prepare the child for institutionalization – school. S/he is informed and aided by the television. In the past, any number of parenting 'mistakes' could be counterbalanced by kin and in fact, the entire community with their diversity of experience as opposed to our uniformity of cultural expectation. Today, a 'mistake' perceived by the state results in the state appropriating your children. This is why the state has always relied on the ideological destruction of 'community' over and above the physical destruction of communities. Only state institutions are to provide community – whether as soldier, teacher, cop or social worker, "the policeman is your friend".

The appeal of the 'barbarian' was the original revolutionary subject – the threat to the civilized/domesticated social relation. With its destruction by empire, the 'peasant' became the only stronghold of community. With the commodification of food, the only threatening subject left is the child and those "child-like" qualities of the improperly socialized – the "mentally ill" [please see [Alien Subjectivity](#)]. Today, among the few places to witness community are the street and the mental ward – the "no-go zones" of the urban world, the places of play and imagination.

Living free within community is thought a logical contradiction and is perhaps the most difficult concept for the domestic adult. It makes quantum mechanics look like child's play. Yet child's play looks an awful lot like living free in community. It's undomesticated. It's savage! To slightly detourne Stephen Stills excellent song, "Children, teach your parents well!" What we 'grups' don't understand is that the child comes to us already on a path of knowledge, but for them, "to know" is always in the biblical sense – a passionate or even orgasmic engagement, generating all sorts of fantastic discriminations and generalizations. Sometimes dissidents who adopt this attitude call it "revolutionary praxis" to escape the judgment or accusation of "tree-hugging idealist punk!" In my day it was "long-haired pinko-commie fag!"

Abundance and Relativity: In this writing, I've dealt over and over again with the notion of "primitive" abundance in contrast to our system of imposed scarcity. Abundance is not a necessarily quantitative concept but a matter of freedom of access or the absence of fixed limits [*abound*: 'over-flowing'; 'without binds'; 'unlimited']. Something in small quantity may be made abundant through unrestricted cooperation or sharing, while a large quantity will represent scarcity for some under the alienating influence of competition and control.

For illustration, let's go back to the beginnings of agricultural civilization, which popular legend tells us started with abundant grain harvests supporting population growth and settlement in permanent cities. A large grain harvest does little to assuage the hunger of peasants when it is stored in a fortified granary and fed to insects, rodents, and those in turn to the fowl which ultimately make it to the priest-king's table. It is small amounts of what grain is left after the other 'livestock' are fed which is divvied out to the peasants and which keeps them employable. The difficult work-load to supply abundance to the aristocracy dwelling in the city makes large families an amenable

idea. Traditional limits to population growth are abandoned, familial patriarchy and sons are favored, and the role of parent transforms into that of boss. This seems a much more reasonable beginning of agricultural civilization and its rural/urban dichotomy and other economic and political class distinctions than that glorified myth which we are taught in school. Civilization is the birth of the slave class – domesticated man.

Grand artifacts from the early civilizations such as granaries and pyramids are venerated and referred to as beneficial "public works". What this really means, from the vantage point of the aristocracy, is that "the public is working and we are not!" The old chicken-or-egg argument has always been fore front in the mind of the priest-king: "Today, shall I eat the chicken or the egg?" His choice is informed by the bureaucrat/grain inspector who has had the house-slaves make a proper count of the boll weevil population in the granary. A high count means "egg", a low count means "chicken".

This situation, of course, is the source of the popular phrase, "there is no war but the class war!" Unfortunately, as simple as our social organization is, it is no longer so simple as to clearly distinguish a "them" and an "us". What radical theorists struggling with the concept of class are basically saying is: "After the revolution, who do we line up against the wall?" This is not so far removed from what the "powers-that-be" are saying: "To prevent revolution, who do we line up against the wall?"

I cannot over-emphasize the point made by Gustav Landauer, which I paraphrase:

We are all the state and will continue to be so until we learn to form real human communities.

"Real" human communities, as with all animal communities, are always based in mutuality or cooperative social relations – not in conflict, competition, coercion and struggle (and to appease those aristotelian 'either/or' critics, this is not to say that competition, coercion and struggle never occur in "real" communities – they just don't define them). To place "cooperation" and "civilization" in the same context (of imposed scarcity) is to portray oxymoronic logic at its finest¹⁵. If we, the civilized, cooperate at all, it is because it is somehow an instinctual drive which must surface now and again (especially during courting rituals), and felt pleasurable because hormones are put into play which haven't been active since childhood, or it is an ancient artifact held over from more primitive times. Not a few dystopian sci-fi writers have imagined civilized worlds where cooperation is not necessary at all except in the sense we mean when we use such phrases as "cooperate with the authorities". If Boas was correct when he implied that habit and tradition outweigh conscious rationality underlying human actions and institutions, these 'fictions' may well turn into prophecy. In fact, there has always been much discussion of their prophetic value.

Einstein popularized the notion that all existence is subject to relativity. Even existence as mass or energy is relative to speed, and that itself is relative to distance trav-

¹⁵ You may be thinking, "A wee bit of overgeneralization here, no?", and of course you would be right. The encouraging point is that civilization has never been (nor will it be) particularly good at what it attempts. For example, as much efficiency as is ever inserted into bureaucracies, bureaucracy itself always comes off as probably the least efficient means to any end. Another example is that, relatively speaking, the more force any state tries to exert, the more ubiquitous becomes dissent. Civilization itself is an oxymoron when set alongside anything natural.

eled as witnessed by another at a different vantage point. With the relativist point of view, it matters not whether the chicken or egg came first – the focus is on the process or relation between the two. Epicurus said something not too dissimilar 2500 years ago, and even Socrates invoked relativity to point out the absurdity of Greek slave-based social stratification. The absurdity is found in the question of origin itself. As Samuel Butler noted, "A hen is only an egg's way of making another egg".

But, with the help of a good dose of hemlock, the notion of class superiority still reigns. Of course, there is certain adaptive 'value' to a feeling of cultural superiority (ethnocentrism) when it maintains solidarity – what sociologists call "group cohesion". Some anthropologists have referred to it as a group isolating mechanism, maintaining local autonomy and therefore, helping to maintain conditions of abundance in each group.

Relativity is always the question of standpoint. Any *ism* which is invoked to further expansion, annihilation or conquest and exploitation of the "other" can only be of value to the conqueror, and in our day to day existence, we 'others' call such people assholes, bigots, racist, chauvinist, or just down right psychopathic. If we considered Kant's categorical imperative in searching for a universal morality (that our assessments must be equally valid across all categories), the proponents of "class war" have every justification for their position, seeing everywhere around them evidence of this misplaced superiority in the exploitation of their fellow humans by what they perceive as the "ruling" or "capitalist class". Boas would see this "class" as merely better programmed in their culture and driven by the forces of custom. From this vantage point, who is lined up against the wall after the revolution will be a matter of deducing who is better enculturated into capitalism or even civilization, and the revolutionaries might just find themselves standing in line as well. This was clearly seen in the "Reign of Terror" after the French revolution and many other post-revolutionary purges. I think if we are against traditions or customs (and their resultant institutions) maintained by emotional attachment and habit (which we often refer to as "mindset"), then clearly the guillotine or firing squad is not the weapon of choice. What is needed has been no better said than by the Youngbloods: "Blow your mind, turn your head around. Don't let the rain, don't let the reign bring you down!"

"Virtue," "duty," "good for its own sake," goodness grounded upon impersonality or a notion of universal validity – these are all chimeras, and in them one finds only an expression of the decay, the last collapse of life, the Chinese spirit of Königsberg. Quite the contrary is demanded by the most profound laws of self-preservation and of growth: to wit, that every man find his own virtue, his own categorical imperative.[. . .] Nothing works a more complete and penetrating disaster than every "impersonal" duty, every sacrifice before the Moloch of abstraction. – To think that no one has thought of Kant's categorical imperative as dangerous to life! . . . The theological instinct alone took it under protection! – An action prompted by the life-instinct proves that it is a right action by the amount of joy that goes with it: and yet that Nihilist, with his bowels of Christian dogmatism, regarded joy as an objection . . . What destroys a man more quickly than to work, think and feel without inner necessity, without any deep personal desire, without joy – as a mere automaton of duty? *Nietzsche*

Reciprocity and the Mechanistic World View: Without mutuality and sharing, we are nothing but parts in a machine. It is no wonder that we, the civilized, have a mechanistic world view. Mutuality cannot be reduced to the "self" and/or "other". It is the con-

nection, relation or process between them. Reciprocity is not a matter of tit-for-tat or give-and-take. These economic ideas spawn such alienating fields as academic economics, political science, and the psychology of motivation. They are alienating in that they seek to discover universal, rational laws which justify our own alienating behavior. Poets have called the idea of symbiotic connection (which is reciprocity) "love". I think Kropotkin and John Lennon were on the same wavelength when the former said, rather not conflict and competition, but mutual aid is the driving force of evolution; the latter said "love is all you need" and "give peace a chance". I think a fellow a few thousand years ago, who got himself nailed to a tree said much the same.

Franz Boas explained why such sentiments never caught on – they merely went against the grain of custom:

It is not any rational cause that forms opposing groups, but solely the emotional appeal of an idea that holds together the members of each group and exalts their feeling of solidarity and greatness to such an extent that compromises [*or cooperation or even communication*] with other groups become impossible.

As Elvin Hatch noted (in *Theories of Man and Culture*).

[Boas] held that political segmentation and competition cannot be viewed in terms of competing interest groups rationally calculating advantages in relation to others . . . Much of the political strife in the world, Boas thought, is due to an emotional opposition to foreign ways of behaving and thinking, together with the belief that one's own culture is superior to all others.

To Boas, only a limited degree of understanding can be achieved if behavior is viewed as the manifestation of conscious, willful thought. Far more important for assessing the meaning of human action is the concept of custom. Man's behavior is dominated by unconscious, customary patterns to which emotional associations have become attached.

For this, Boas is considered an "anti-intellectual" and we continue to ridicule the "primitive" who explains his behavior with "this is how it's always been done". When you get right down to it, how are we any different, except that we add "but it's just gotta get better!"?

Where rationality and creativity and imagination come to play is in the modification or explanation of pre-existing phenomena or behavior (this would include revolution or any other "goal-seeking" behavior). But creativity and toleration of the novel are still limited by custom or tradition and their emotional attachments. The civilized engineer is forever modifying the mouse trap, yet it took a "savage barbarian" to invent it. This is why, the more society infringes on individual expression in the child as well as adult (rationality and creativity and imagination as opposed to universal algorithms of thinking and behaving), the most creative artists must come from the fringes of society – the "wingnuts" of civilization, the fringes of socialization, not necessarily the fringes of the economy. The surrealist movement as well as Tim Leary's promotion of LSD attempted to "blow your mind" with novel juxtaposition in order to break the ties of unconscious preconceptions (custom) – the necessary precursor to any kind of revolution, be it political, cultural or scientific. But I digress.

And so it never occurs to us to wonder why the early followers of a symbiotic social lifestyle (communalism, reciprocity, "love"), a message spread by word-of-mouth over vast areas of the globe after much Vandalism and, ultimately, Attila had put enough

pressure on Roman 'global' control, the followers who rejected civilization and went on to form autonomous living communities, were persistently hunted down and executed for the next 1500 years or so by the good civilized "christians" for "heretical" notions – all "in the name of jesus-mary-&-fockin-joseph" (to invoke a particularly apt ancient Irish-catholic curse).

These same righteous ones who called *themselves* "persecuted" went on to kill Jews and Moslems and all other "heathens and atheists" in the name of their god, (who is "love" – see *Mark Twain, The War Prayer*), and who in great philosophical works pride themselves as the guardians of reason, logic and enlightenment. Of course, today, and because of this very rational enlightenment, we all know that Bishop Berkeley's god (or Hegel's "absolute") is a vast well oiled machine and we all go on to perform specific functions (work our jobs) in his service. This was the message of those anti-papists such as John Calvin or Martin Luther, (who's church reformation set the stage for the bourgeois revolution), but the message of the machine works equally well with or without god. Judging only by the treatment given those early 'feral' communities, I submit to you that jesus was not only an anarchist, but, relative to those "good christians", an atheist as well! The "empire" falling all about them, there was a significant threat of cogs just up and dropping out of the machine, leaving behind their own message, "Gone to Croatan".

Is there a less mechanical (structural-functional) way of viewing the world than our own? Like Irving Goldman's interpretation [in *The Mouth of Heaven* based largely on Boas' own notes] of the Northwest Coast Indian cosmology where the potlatch recapitulates (echoes, harmonizes) notions of cosmic circulation, Mary Richel-Dolmotof pointed out (in *Amazonian Cosmos*) that for the Amazonian, the variable connections between all things (reciprocity) is timeless and universal. It is the cause of motion and circulation throughout the universe. They are (were, actually) nightly reminded of this, gazing upon the milky way which they metaphorically referred to as "the great seminal flow". (Epicurus had this relationship reversed, suggesting that random motion, or "Swerve" causes inadvertent "collisions" which account for material formation and change). From the point of view of the intrepid semen (or Epicurus' "atom"), he is not, like Alexander or Odysseus, rowing out to sea to conquer and administer the world, but to impregnate and merge with it and create something new and unique.

This is also the attitude of the child at "play"; who's science as well as rebellion is found only in direct engagement (collaborative adventure, exploration, festivity); who's questions are solved through living the answers; who's own uniqueness is reinforced through exploration into a world of diverse fantastical beings within earshot of mother's worried voice. The distinction between "play" and "getting down to serious business" is one of the hardest tasks for the child undergoing domestication, and for many, the latter completely negates the former so that a sense of play, that reciprocal engagement with the world (which, of course, includes not only "the other", but a multiplicity of novel others), is forever lost. On the other hand, the psychologist tells us the only important point is that "the child, through play, learns to control and manipulate his/her environment".

An interesting Native American notion [– [B. Martin](#)] describes this engagement as a

matter of "harmonics" rather than "balance", "equilibrium", "reciprocity" or "feedback-control loops". This alternate view presents a flowing, merging, impregnating, world of living synthesis as harmonics, not the rectification of conflicts of immanent oppositions or the mechanical connection of dead matching components in a machine – that we are variable "features" of a living organism, not discrete cogs in a dead machine bent on control. The musical metaphor (wave theory?) is completely appropriate in 'traditional' communities. I would say the economic metaphor (particle theory?) is not.

"But", you might ask, "let's get back to concrete reality; how would you account for cheaters in this 'romantic' world view you present?". Modern notions such as "reciprocal altruism" (tit-for-tat) and "strong reciprocity" (the calculation and punishment of cheaters or "altruistic punishment paving the way to cooperation" [– *Benoît Dubreuil*] – maybe it's just me, but that seems a contradiction in terms!) completely miss the point of "the gift" as well as the idea of sharing. "Reciprocal" is not a modifier of "altruism", it is the *effect* when altruism is a 'shared' practice, and the punishment or even calculation of "cheaters" would, in most "primitive" systems of etiquette be highly rude and impolite. These modern notions can only be generated where there is a political (authority) or economic (ownership, property) system in place and, like cheating itself, derive from basically egoistic, *not* altruistic motivation.

For example, even after hundreds of years of exposure to western civilization, it would be highly impolite to suggest trading a round of wood chopping in exchange for a meal from a Navajo grandmother. First off, it suggests she would not normally feed you if she determined you were in need. In the same way, you would not just chop the wood for her and "hope for the best" without asking if she thought it would be a good idea to bring in her wood in the first place. This suggests you consider her helpless, another insult, and therefore 'antisocial' [– *Uncle Jake*].

We are so conditioned to thinking of "balanced" exchanges and retaliatory dispensation (feedback) of "justice", we take for granted that these ideas are human universals. In fact, the very presence, or at least preponderance of so-called "cheaters" would suggest a breakdown of cultural conditioning (enculturation, socialization, social learning, etc.) in most societies. As locally defined, cheating goes against the grain of custom in 'egalitarian' societies and would be dealt with no differently than any other perceived 'antisocial' behavior. Following after Dunbar, Benoît Dubreuil has gone so far as to define "social intelligence" as "our capacity to keep track of who is doing what to whom in the context of the group" and bases the development of language itself on such calculating, rational behavior. "Keeping up with the Joneses" is basically a paranoid outlook on sociality. Finally, would an "unsuccessful" hunter be left to die on the ice for "not carrying his own weight" in the food quest among the Eskimo/Inuit? Such would not be described as "cheating" any more than would a star hitter "in a slump" be fired by the manager of a baseball team. Natural selection could not make a distinction between the extended "slump" and the "lazy asshole trying to get out of work" – the effect is the same. "Cheating" is ultimately a question of morality imposed by the researcher. It may or may not be meaningful to those researched, and if it is, is undoubtedly measured differently. The problem with all these lines of thinking about "cooperative" behavior is that they have never left the realm of a "competitive context" they themselves

are ensconced in.

Love, mutual aid, symbiosis, cooperation, reciprocity, sociality, altruism – my dictionary informs me that these are all synonyms – might be seen as connections or relations *without* rational motivation. Purpose is only a functional explanation and always *ex post facto*. The so-called primitive might see reciprocity as "qualities of existence", but even this is to impose a western 'structuralist' philosophical notion into their minds. "It just is", they might say.

Reciprocity requires a certain "openness". In *Being and Time*, Heidegger proposed that the pre-socratic world view considered the essence of being human as an "openness to being", opposing Nietzsche's "will to power" of *modern* humans, who subordinate all existence to our own ends rather than letting them "be what they are". Our present destructive treatment of the earth as "resource" and our treatment of each other are only mirror reflections. A certain subjective relativism gave way to specific anthropocentrism with the rise of civilization. Use value itself is a modern notion. This is not the same as saying "use previously had no value". Because it has to be subjective, it cannot be measured beyond the individual or shared habits of custom. From the view of subjective/cultural relativity, any other sense is pure reification and sophistry.

Ours is a mechanistic (dead, even if dynamic) and economic world view alienating the self and other which forces the semantics of the above synonyms of sociality into "what one does to/at another" or "what the other does to/at you". Without an isolating self-other dialectic, these words escape into the semantic realm of relationship and connection, but not necessarily in a mechanistic or even algebraic fashion. That it's all a matter of flow is what the Amazonians have gathered. This provides the same distinction between sharing and exchange (give-and-take, which is also to say "a balance between sacrifice and theft"). As Kroeber noted, the one notion shared by primitive (ie., not-civilized) peoples was reciprocity. In such a system, a gift is never thought a sacrifice, negotiated because of a calculated future advantage, or purely out of a sense of moral obligation or duty. Gifting may be a matter of recapitulating cosmic circulation – a celebration of life, the universe and everything, but it's also just a habit. When this habit is shared (custom, tradition), all can see that "what goes around comes around" – the circularity of self-fulfilling prophecy. The very notion of "economic system" has very little meaning, and even less necessity.

Without this flow "all bleeding eventually stops" [– 'Auntie Dave' Brown]. This is mortality. Reciprocity, the sea quest of impregnation, ensures that life continues. In any electrical device, all current eventually goes to ground and returns through that device until you pull the plug. Otherwise, there is no circuit, no current, no flow. A direct short renders death to the machine. All dams eventually burst – all water returns to the sea. We agree with these notions (physicists have told us so!) yet we ridicule the ignorance of the primitive who's "mythology" focuses on the notion of "eternal return". Freud, of course, thought this "savage" thinking an example of neurosis.

Reciprocity allows multiplicity which in turn demands relativity (but not in a chicken-or-egg logic or dialectic). Unlike competitive economy, the tit-for-tat civilized social relation, reciprocity is the functional relationship which maintains multiplicity (diversity) – it is the source of non-hierarchical interaction. Rather, it *is* non-hierarchical interaction.

Relativity is the 'rule' derived from multiplicity and logically necessitates individual 'freedom' (autonomy), without which, multiplicity would become unity – evolution by means of natural selection would thereby be negated. The resulting harmonic resonance of multiplicity, reciprocity and relativity applied to human beings generates language, song, community and culture. There is more to life than "mechanical systems of the eaters and the eaten", "production and consumption", "struggle and survival", but the rational and enlightened civilized on the road of progress toward universality (unity or global conformity) may never know it.

"All bleeding eventually stops". In our alienated existence, the mechanical world in which we are only cogs wearing human masks, only struggle continues. Many of us consider that we do our children an injustice by even giving them birth in the first place. From the point of view of the child, the mother, and in time, the kin group is supposed to be the source of tenderness and nurturing and even a source of structure – local traditions give the 'local' world of 'everyday life' a degree of predictability and therefore trust. We can even see this operating all around us among all other social animals. It's amazing so many of us even survive our parents and educators, let alone to go on to form our own relationships. We do so largely because of tradition, custom, habit and the emotional adherence to it (and sometimes, if our bullshit detectors are strong, in spite of these!). We become conditioned to living in shit – "It happens!" From the point of view of the primitive, reciprocity is not an economic system. It is a much more encompassing semantic realm than even our "cooperation". Because it tears away at (or prevents) the self-other dichotomy, it is the essential condition of community, and for this reason, communities cannot be planned and organized any more than a new species of animal can. Communities are organic (equilibrium or harmonic) systems, but sometimes "shit happens". Until annihilated by the force of empires and missionaries and economists, primitive tradition, custom, habit and the emotional adherence to it, ensure that this organic condition survives the shit. Probably Franz Boas' greatest contribution is the basic premise of cultural relativism: "people are the same everywhere, cultures are different" [– *Mark Fleisher*]. Of course, Boas himself has largely been neglected and forgotten because relativism itself "flies in the face of reason" (or rather, "custom").

Most European thinkers in pursuit of the truth have found the prospect of relativism, whether it is connected to Einstein's Theory of Relativity or not, where the majority imply that it is, to be the single most troubling development in the history of Western philosophy. As Heidegger suggests here the ideology positively threatens Eurocentric discourse in a way that few ideas ever have. The "specter" of "relativism" raises questions on one ground or another, furthermore, that have so far resisted rational analysis due in part to the fact that they remain so highly charged emotionally that few thinkers since the appearance of Einstein's Theory have been able to deal with them rationally, if at all, simply because they challenge the core issues that define the essence of what makes European ideology what it is. Heidegger's sentence is a case in point, since he dismisses "multiplicity" as something that necessarily leads to "relativism" without engaging the issue directly or indirectly, believing, apparently, that no one will disagree with his position simply because the "specter" of it has been evoked.

. . . . (The) warning against "multiplicity" and "relativism" is much less concerned with truth than it is with maintaining an essential ground for the implementation of hierarchical structure in Eurocentric discourse. What is at stake here is nothing less than equality and freedom

. . . where an inevitable hierarchy of assigned value necessarily dominates the structure,

and where the One answer is predetermined as the "best," as opposed to the Many as the "worst," there is absolutely no possibility whatsoever of "relativism." At the same time, all sense of equality and freedom are necessarily banished. [– *B. Martin*]

Reciprocity, cooperation and sharing represent a horizontal relationship which, by its very nature, reproduces itself. The flow of 'goods' might be modeled as a system of feedback loops, but a more colloquial perspective would be "self-perpetuating" or "self-fulfilling prophecy": "What goes around comes around". Physicist's laws of thermodynamics which describe complex self-regulating equilibrium systems work precisely the same way.

Competition is also a horizontal relationship, but one which attempts to turn this relationship on end – it is the source of hierarchy and progress. It replaces the circle with the line. What started as circulation or "flow" is interrupted by a temporally circumscribed transaction – direct exchange, tit for tat, sacrifice and theft, the beginning and the end. While seemingly harmless, advantage and leverage are given birth, and politics raises its nasty head.

A self-maintaining horizontal social relation (reciprocity) is the source of what we label "freedom" and "equality". Although we still use these terms, the modern semantic realm is most often limited to "freedom to compete" or "equality in opportunity" (to acquire, manipulate and control – that is, to be domesticated and to domesticate in turn). Any broader meaning of "freedom" and "equality" is negated by the vertical social relation established through competition. The self and other cannot be other than at odds. We see again the notion of self-fulfilling prophecy:

"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" [– *Thomas Theorem, 1928*].

No libertarian struggle can succeed which maintains the self-other dialectic, established very early in childhood, reinforced (positive feedback) and reproduced as a self-fulfilling prophecy (or vicious circularity) through habit, custom and emotional attachment. Reason itself is circumscribed within the realm of explanation, or more often, justification.

Radical or Schizophrenic? – Excerpts from [The Politics of the Mind](#): "By politics, as I pointed out earlier, (R. D.) Laing means the ability to validate or invalidate experience. The struggle, then, is the struggle to control behaviour by defining experience. Society does this through its various agents by defining "reality" in terms of norms and then using those norms as ideal standards. The primary agent is the family. It is, Laing says, "in the first place, the usual instrument for what is called socialization, that is, getting each new recruit to the human race to behave and experience in substantially the same way as those who have already got here". As social agents, the family reproduces in the child a set of attitudes that will outfit him for life in what Herbert Marcuse calls the "one-dimensional society"."

"The family's function is to create, in short, one-dimensional man; to promote respect, conformity, obedience; to con children out of play; to induce a fear of failure; to promote a respect for work; to promote a respect for respectability.

. . . From the moment of birth, when the Stone Age baby confronts the twentieth-century

mother, the baby is subjected to these forces of violence, called love, as its mother and father, as their parents and their parents before them, have been. These forces are mainly concerned with destroying most of its potentialities, and on the whole this enterprise is successful. By the time the new human being is fifteen or so, we are left with a being like ourselves, a half crazed creature more or less adjusted to a mad world. This is normality in our present age.

. . . Society highly values its normal man. It educates children to lose themselves and to become absurd, and thus to be normal. Normal men have killed perhaps 100,000,000 of their fellow normal men in the last fifty years." – *laing*

"But some cannot adapt to this imposed normality. They break down. Instead, they devise a strategy to deal with their inability to hold their invalidated experience and their sense of themselves together. As Laing puts it, "it seems to us that without exception the experience and behaviour that gets labeled schizophrenic is a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation". "

"The schizophrenic may look like someone whose "logic" is "ill", he is, in reality, someone, who has been made an invalid because his experience has been invalidated. For Laing and Cooper, schizophrenia is not "something happening in a person but rather something between persons". Thus when one psychiatrist calls schizophrenia "a failure of human adaptation", Laing responds that it may as well be "a successful attempt not to adapt to pseudo-social realities". "

"The validity of a definition is ultimately determined by the identity of the one who is defining: There is no such 'condition' as 'schizophrenia,' but the label is a social fact and the social fact a political event . . . What we call 'normal' is a product of repression, denial, splitting, projection, introjection and other forms of destructive action on experience . . . It is radically estranged from the structure of being.

. . . the condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind, is the condition of the normal man." – *laing*

"On the other hand schizophrenia may be seen as an alienation from this alienation, where, "even through his profound wretchedness and disintegration", the patient may be "the heirophant of the sacred". "

madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be break-through. It is potential liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death." – *laing*

"They (psychiatrists) will say we are regressed and withdrawn and out of contact with them. True enough, we have a long, long way to go back to contact the reality we have all long lost contact with. And because they are humane, and concerned, and even love us, and are very frightened, they will try to cure us. They may succeed. But there is still hope that they will fail." – *Peter Levine*

I would like to take a magnifying glass to "society". What is this term we so often take for granted in using? Really, it is a top-down, chain-of-command game, given cammo, and inserted in the imaginations of the inexperienced recruits. – *NP*

Yes, this is the description of child-rearing in civilization. The military metaphor is appropriate: "chain-of-command" = "hierarchy"; "game" = "superficial capitalist social relation" (the competition for property and privilege); "cammo" = "spectacle" or "illusion". The second word a child learns, after "no!" is "mine!". Then comes "that's stupid!", "I hate you!" and finally, if the institutions of socialization have accomplished their task, "Yessir, Boss!" The family may be the primary agent, but the age at which media and educational institutions take over is increasingly younger. We are all the offspring of institutions. The agent-role of the family may soon be completely unnecessary if the sci-fi writers are on the right wavelength (and it would seem that they are). We are all "agents" of institutions. Here I think the military analogy begins to wither. As you say, the biggest cops are placed in our own heads – the guardians of experience, the creators of uniformity, the destroyers of multiplicity, relativity and reciprocity – the propensities with which every child comes to us, demolished with the violence of civilized love and concern. The result is that both individuality and sociality are reduced to illusion; the possibility of community is negated. The possibility of freeplay is denied; the individual disappears.

For the project of civilization, there is an advantage in going from freeplay (natural to children) to structured gaming. Bonnano suggested that work is merely a game with rules. I'm sure Baudrillard would agree. Rules with games are thought to ease the movement from the condition of living (in the world) to surviving (in an illusion). Still, there is difficulty transiting from freeplay to game to work. Initially, of course, this is school work – in kindergarten, 'work' is still fun; by 1st grade, it starts to become tedium; in later years, when it is struggle and toil willingly engaged, it is said we are ready for "the real world" so we are graduated. The goal of education has always been to corrupt and transform children into "productive citizens", not human beings. Freeplay is regulated to the point of extinction. All social relations thereafter become economic and political – they become productive. "Productive forces" are nothing if not the "force of production" regimenting armies of producers.

Let us not become trapped by phraseology. The social relation of production can only mean that our human relationships are mediated by products and production or work – that is, by things, property, value, and their creation and maintenance. The value is not that of *things*, but of *ourselves* as measured by those things, their creation, maintenance and growth – the perpetuation of an illusion (actually, "delusion") insistent-ly mistaken for reality. If we are alienated from "reality", we are also alienated from the illusion, for it appears to have magically taken on a life of its own, beyond our grasp and control. Like the television which is defecated from the bowels of a factory, the illusion is a group effort which no member of that group is capable of (re)producing. It is only passed on along the assembly-line to each new generation of workers, trained to proudly reject any allusions to a similarity to the ant.

These millions of abnormally normal people, living without fuss in a society to which, if they were fully human beings, they ought not to be adjusted, still cherish 'the illusion of individuality,' but in fact they have been to a great extent deindividualized. Their conformity is developing into something like uniformity. But 'uniformity and freedom are incompatible. Uniformity and mental health are incompatible too . . . Man is not made to be an automaton, and if he becomes one, the basis for mental health is destroyed. [– Fromm]

What then is society? I think it is an inadvertent agreement among folks to share our metaphors. This allows, or more properly, *is* communication of experience. The result is local culture. Laing spoke of 'experience' as our expectations and our metaphor for interacting with the world. 'Politics' is the control of experience which restricts our interacting, our behavior. Thus, we can use such phrases as "the authority of custom", and our aristotelian logic informs us that society itself is the 'enemy'. By agreement, I don't mean we sit around a table and come to a collective decision. That is a "contract". If there is a table, it is the metaphor for locality both as "place" and "situation". Isn't individuality just a matter of one coming up with novel associations even within the program? This also defines 'creativity'. Then an appropriate definition of schizophrenia would be the illusion of individuality taken to extreme – the abandonment of the "social" metaphor altogether – 'a-social' rather than 'antisocial', with the effect of reclaiming free-play¹⁶. Many so-called radicals take the opposite tact. This would make "nihilism" (or even its opposite – "Everything is!") the ultimate "insanity" as well as most radical approach, and also explain why it has such great appeal, especially when society is increasingly political.

There is a fuzzy line between the "mentally ill" and the "radical dissenter". Both illustrate programming gone awry. Maybe the radical wants to defeat society militarily or by analogy, through persuasive discourse; the so-called "wingnut" may want to ignore it, or even disappear it through magical incantation. But it can hardly be ignored that civilization creates both the radical revolutionary and the mentally ill in precisely the same way. This is politics, but it has also been referred to as the self-negation built into the system – dissent is the natural response to politics just as defense is the natural response to attack. Maybe it is appropriate that the DSM-V (coming soon to a psychotherapist near you) now contains a diagnosis (based on oppositional defiance disorder) for politically incorrect thought (radical dissent) which the governors can use to chastise all activists and dissenters – as they used to chastise Stalin for doing that very thing – in order to show how "we're the goodies" and "they're the baddies".

Yes, the goodies and the baddies – we're all prone/programmed to think in these terms. Choose your enemies carefully – they may one day save your ass while your allies try to assassinate you!

Underneath the war game of psychiatry (and other social sciences allowed to be established), there *is* a human being with good intentions; it's just that the institutional imagination compels them to become something more along the lines of assassins of sanity. – NP

Do we have a long, long way to go? I think yes and no. I dig the idea that we try to make things more complex than they need be, and so for anyone (the left?) wanting to reform this absurd system, this pseudo-social agreement we have, they will probably never get there. I also have concern for the militant revolutionaries and insurgents who think we need only fight our way to sanity, (although I admit we may have to fight now and then along the road in getting there). One of my favorite commentaries on this is in [We go on](#) by the paraplegic streetfighter and sometime public orator, Albert (libertad) Joseph. The message is eerily matched in [Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance](#):

16 This should not be taken to deny the terror which may also accompany so-called psychotic episodes.

It's not so much our destination which is most paramount, but what we do along the way. Yes, we go on, but we might also be mindful of the ancient Chinese proverb:

"Unless we change direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed"

ch 15: SO, THE MEANING OF LIFE?

Lady Presenter: Well, that's the end of the film. Now, here's the meaning of life. [She is handed a gold-wrapped booklet.]

Lady Presenter: Thank you, Brigitte. [She clears her throat, then unwraps and examines the gilt booklet.]

Lady Presenter: Well, it's nothing very special. Uh, try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations. And, finally, here are some completely gratuitous pictures of penises to annoy the censors and to hopefully spark some sort of controversy, which, it seems, the only way, these days, to get the jaded, video-sated public off their fucking arses and back in the sodding cinema. Family entertainment, bollocks! What they want is filth! People doing things to each other with chainsaws during Tupperware parties. Babysitters being stabbed with knitting needles by gay presidential candidates. Vigilante groups strangling chickens, armed bands of theatre critics exterminating mutant goats... Where's the fun in pictures? Oh, well, there we are. Here's the theme music. Good-night.

The producers would like to thank all the fish who have taken part in this film. We hope that other fish will follow the example of those who have participated, so that, in future, fish all over the world will live together in harmony and understanding, and put aside their petty differences, cease pursuing and eating each other and live for a brighter, better future for all fish, and those who love them. [– *Monty Python*]

On Nihilism: If annihilation refers to destruction, is nihilism about creation? "For the believer in nothing, does nothing exist?" Many have wrongly attributed this as the implication of 'nihilism': "I believe in nothing", or "I do not believe". The statements "Nothing exists" and "Causality is unjustified" more properly refer to 'skepticism': "Truth cannot be known" or "Knowledge can not exceed approximation". Nihilism is also often confused with *annihilation*: "Nothing exists" is replaced by "Destroy everything". On the contrary, nihilism suggests the antithesis to proceeding from ideology, and therefore might even be considered a prelude to creativity – not being hamstrung by a set of rigid beliefs – rather than to destruction. There is much value in this approach if change is desired.

What we already have throughout the world is annihilation – 'without nihilation'. Nihilism is the annihilation of annihilation: the annihilation of despair, the annihilation of scarcity, the annihilation of exploitation and alienation. If these features are seen to characterize the totality of the modern world, then it is appropriate to suggest that nihilist anarchy promotes total destruction. But there is a danger in this position. Nihilism reverts to Annihilism, which is the philosophy of the rulers – the "powers that be". It sets up the equation – "nihilism equals dynamite".

What needs annihilated is the logic of exploitation and oppression and despair and the behaviors this logic gives rise to. If a revolution is not about changing the ways we think and behave, then it is nothing.

As I said before, "Nihilism suggests the antithesis to proceeding from ideology, and therefore might even be considered a prelude to creativity." Thus, the annihilation of conquest (anti-war, anti-imperialism, etc.) becomes "the conquest of nothing", and gives "nothing" life – "life" becomes "something".

A Mathematical Proof on the General Equivalence of Art, Science and Religion Through the Application of Imagination: Mathematics is the dispassionate language of science which informs us of the precise equivalence of the greatest number below zero (nil, nothing) and the smallest number above zero. While the numbers themselves are negative in the first case and positive in the second, the actual space they take up between zero and the next smallest (or largest) point on a line is not only identical in value or measure, but the value of that measure (the total number of points contained within each interval) is equal to the sum total of the all the points on that line . . . and more. This is so reasonable to the mathematician that it needs no further explanation. We call this number "*Infinity*", representing both the smallest and largest of quantities. Epicurus gave us the proof of this concept with the question, "If one came to the end of everything, bored a hole through the edge, and stuck his arm through the hole, to where then would the fist be?"

There are, however, some mathematical formulations which have perplexed even the greatest minds in the intellectual history of mathematics. Given the assumption that mathematics, the purest form of reason, will provide an answer for any question, a solution to any problem if only properly formulated, the question was posed "What is the solution to the square root of negative 1?" Since no human or natural law has been discovered which could support such an abomination of nature and logic, the only solution was the creation of an imaginary number denoted by the symbol *i*. Some might think "this is funny!" Humor is usually derived from the juxtaposition of disparate elements processed by the imagination. Einstein suggested that when all is said and done, "the only sense left is a sense of humor". Hence, the sense of mathematics ultimately fails when performed dispassionately and can only be defended by H. L. Menkin's famous reply in a letter to a critic:

Dear Sir (or Madame),

You may be right.

Imagination provides the mathematical support for the refusal to admit defeat. Yet the great mathematicians have all turned to metaphysics rather than comedy, for mathematics carried far enough always leads to grand epistemological and ontological questions and in fact, to the ultimate question itself on life, the universe and everything. While Epicurus might have stated that "your guess is as good as mine", modern minds simply create solutions through revelation (like imaginary numbers, quantum particles or even black holes) which suffice to quiet our wondering minds if enough grant money can be allocated to place them in the text books.

Pascal, 17th century French mathematician and philosopher, considered one of the great minds in Western intellectual history, deduced that "revelation can be comprehended only by faith, which in turn is justified by revelation. Pascal's writings urging acceptance of the Christian life contain frequent applications of the calculations of probability; he reasoned that the value of eternal happiness is infinite and that although the probability of gaining such happiness by religion may be small it is infinitely greater than by any other course of human conduct or belief". – *J. Lennart Berggren*

Much the same has been said by various scholars for both Art and Science giving us the historical period called "Enlightenment". My question is three-fold:

1. "Can infinite/eternal happiness be derived without quantification of finite/immediate probability in living?" and
2. "Are happiness and living mathematically (reasoned), empirically (observed) or phenomenologically (felt) related?" and
3. "In the equation, how is finite happiness quantified?"

The Situationists have informed us of another possible answer to this dilemma:

In the consumer's manipulated view of things – the view of conditioning – the lack of life appears as insufficient consumption of power and insufficient self-consumption in the service of power. As a palliative to the absence of real life we are offered death on an installment plan. A world that condemns us to a bloodless death is naturally obliged to propagate the taste for blood. Where survival sickness reigns, the desire to live lays hold spontaneously of the weapons of death: senseless murder and sadism flourish. For passion destroyed is reborn in the passion for destruction. If these conditions persist, no one will survive the era of survival. Already the despair is so great that many people would go along with Antonin Artaud who said: "I bear the stigma of an insistent death that strips real death of all terror for me." – *Vaniegem*

The secret of the misery of daily life is the real State secret . . . The Spectacle is nothing but the private property of the means of publicity, the state monopoly of appearances. With it, only the circulation of commodities remains public. The Spectacle is nothing but the circulation of commodities absorbing all available means of publicity, thus condemning misery to invisibility. The spectacle is the secret form of public misery, where value operates implacably while the deceived gaze only meets things & their use. – *Jean Pierre Voyer*

What then is nihilism?

Rational Nihilist Empiricism: "I Do not believe. But I do believe in nothing. Since everything reduces to nothing ('it is nothing to me'), I believe in everything, but not necessarily in just anything. Nothing is void and space but cannot be perceived except from the perspective of a 'not-void', or 'something'. Therefore I believe everything which exists does exist, whether I myself do or do not. Hence, I believe in you. I demand, therefore, that something may or may not exist."

Nihilist totalitarianism (mysticism): "Without space (no thing) between somethings, every thing would be onething and neither something nor nothing nor even I therefore would exist. That only leaves god, whom I reject since his existence would preclude my own – I become annihilated, which also annihilates onething since I am now nothing and god himself disappears. From this I can conclude that I am not René Descartes, since he also is god because he alone thinks and thus is – the one acknowledged creator of worlds."

We can now posit a *nihilist absurdism*, which properly states that pure logic (rationality) consequences in absurdist superficiality if carried out to conclusion. "I therefore most confidently affirm that all affirmations are true in some sense, false in some sense, meaningless in some sense, true and false in some sense, true and meaningless in some sense, false and meaningless in some sense, true and false and meaningless in some sense." – *Sri Syadasti*

Nihilist epistemology, on the other hand, suggests we should distinguish what we believe from what we know, and only proceed from the latter. It does not, therefore, diverge from the science of cause and consequence. *Skeptical epistemology* suggests that since we cannot actually know anything and that beliefs are pointless, we should therefore proceed only with our hands firmly held to our ass. Some Eastern mystics proclaim that we should not even proceed.

From the standpoint of *nihilist relativity*, that "*there are no absolutes*" and "*this is absolutely certain*" do not present contradiction. Relativity annihilates Kant's categorical imperative. Neither does the statement "*We now know that nothing is known*" cause a problem – contradictions are acceptable precisely because differing relative standpoints are expected. In the realm of linguistics, meaning is always context sensitive – dictionaries are only tourist guides. Life itself cannot be extracted from its context. Relativity can be summed up by John Muir's statement, "*When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.*" Relativity both destroys and rescues logic. If logic is itself subject to relativity and therefore multiplicity, then we may also speak of the logic of passion, and even that grand opposition between reason and passion breaks down without a whimper. The distinction between being and nothingness likewise withers away by the same logic which destroys the chicken-or-egg paradox: "The universe is '*nothsome*', or constitutes a matrix of '*somenothingness*'".

If space-time is a blanket, the fabric is nothing, woven of big, tiny explosions of creativity cross-hatched with their own destruction. There is infinite space between the threads, which is to say, almost none whatsoever and quite a lot, depending on your perspective. Time is merely the relationship between creation and destruction, where creation is a coalescing product, or rather a synonym of our individuality (self or ego) and destruction is its return to nothingness (disintegration – 'death' or 'birth'). [With his atomic metaphor, Epicurus implied that from the level of the molecule, its death (disintegration) is freedom for its formerly constrained, and therefore ordered 'atoms', who go on to collide with others and give birth to new molecules.] The texture of this blanket is that of multiformed tornadoes in constant undulating movement and its color is variegated, bright and twinkling. On occasion these tornadoes invert and become volcanoes. It's kind of a thick, fuzzy blanket, replicating itself in each twinkle. Time is, of course, a perceptual illusion and varies according to size – a day in the life of a mosquito is precisely equivalent to three score and ten for the modern hominid. What is perceived as a spark to the latter is a prolonged luminescent tornado to the former (unless, as Einstein suggested, it is traveling very, very fast). There is a spark correlated with each subject-object (somenothing: the 'area' on which creation and destruction intersect), and we call that life. "Life twinkles, then ya die!", or to be more in keeping with the metaphor of the tornado, "Life sucks (and sometimes spews), then ya die!".

To the well trained ear, this all wreaks of nonsense, yet the alternative we are expected to buy into, an either/or, black-and-white world of absolute oppositions endlessly struggling for preeminence or annihilation – *dialectics*, *competition* and *dialectical materialism*, or truth being the reductive synthesis of mutually exclusive ideas, wherein which this immanent stress causes all movement – is perfectly acceptable. But, not only is nothing certain, this is the only certainty, and nothing can not be experienced outside of

the context of something. Of course, the reverse is also true, which makes context (or *gestalt*, if you will) not only the primary, but the only order of existence – somethings, nothings, and what has been called "the analytic third", the relationships therein. The study of this is known in some contexts as "ecology" (the study of 'the relationships in the house', or in the absence thereof, 'under a blanket'), and in other contexts, "magic".

There are some ancient schools of thought, for example, as espoused by Parmenides 2500 years ago, which postulate that nothing itself (the "void") can *not*, by definition exist. Even Aristotle's "law of non-contradiction" can not refute this, although Epicurus, with his atomic theory, put up a pretty good argument at least for "empty space". *Aether* seemed the only way out of the paradox. The problem is semantic: space should not be equated with "nothingness". Quite possibly, the whole idea of nothingness did not arrive until mathematicians produced a *zero* – originally the starting point in a metanarrative/mythology which did not account for the possibility of infinitely small or infinitely 'early' despite elaborate concepts of immortality. Without a void, there can be no absolute beginning or end, only relative positions.

The most effective nihilist is the *nihilist anarchist* who proceeds not from the above ideological isms, but from the first principle of first principles: "I will, therefore I can", for there is only one useful will and that is the will to live. Having disposed of efforts to define and refine nihilism, skepticism, empiricism, rationalism, mysticism and even anarchism and all their consequences, only one question remains: "Enough sophistry already, what does it mean to live?" The answer? "It don't mean shit! Life *is* and then it gets interesting", and as the great poet of the twentieth century proclaimed, "Too much of nothin' just makes a fella mean".

Life is an interconnected web of beings. This is existence, this is life. Without that web we are all nothing. – *Kevin Tucker*

Suppose time, the illusion that is, were a table-cloth which we could grab at the edge with both hands and yank out from under all existence and discard it over our shoulder into the oblivion of nothingness. We would witness the simultaneity of all being. Yet synchronicity surprises us! We could also experience reciprocity as the only timeless social relation, for the distinction between immediate return and delayed gratification would likewise disappear. Without pondering the great questions of the purpose and reason for life and the pay-off at its end, we might just begin to enjoy it. The goal of the child at play is to continue playing – life contains its own purpose, and that is demonstrated in the "will to live".

ch 16: "Under the regime of the norm, nothing is normal and everything must be normalized" – *Tiqqun*

"Centralized Organization?"

1. Self-reproduction of a monopoly on error crouching above a buried mosaic of motive.
2. A regenerative cycle, or system in runaway, within the bounds of which the multiplying external disproofs of claims are assessed internally as negative validation for the said claims' already established 'truth'.
3. A statistical reduction, on the basis of keeping all their eggs in one basket, of the chances of a correct analysis.
4. A hidebound refusal of the greater formal effectiveness of spontaneous improvisings upon events occurring on an as and when basis.
5. The instituted forgetting that position exists in advance of plan. – *frere dupont*

From an anthropological perspective, a cultural institution is nothing but a set of social behaviors reproduced over time, and abstracted from their cultural context by curious onlookers questioning their "purpose" or "function". The driving "mechanism", at least from a Boasian point of view, is habit, custom and tradition, not planning, organizing and implementing. In fact, rational decision-making on a cultural level need not even be invoked. With tradition, circumstances alone should be sufficient to provoke a spontaneous response. Institutions need not be hierarchical nor authoritative. This habitual behavior is something we see ourselves on a daily basis, but are uncomfortable when it is pointed out because our culture is oriented around traditions of rational social engineering relegated to so-called experts – politicians or their so-called revolutionary counterparts. We live in a culture with oppressive institutions which everyone agrees need fixed (or abolished), but few would take on the responsibility to change their own behavior – it's much easier to leave it up to the group. For a culture of anarchy (or 'freedom', if that is your bent), I would think democracy (demi- 'half, partial, division' + -ocracy 'rule')¹⁷ would be seen itself as an oxymoron. This does not rule out consensus.

17 The more common etymology (adapted from www.etymonline) suggests *demos* 'common people', but this itself formerly referred to *district* 'administrative division, area of jurisdiction (market, industrial park, ghetto?)' :

democracy: 1574, from M.Fr. *democratie*, from M.L. *democratia* (13c.), from Gk. *demokratia*, from *demos* 'common people', originally 'district' (see demotic), + *kratos* 'rule, strength, power' (see -cracy).

demotic: 1822, from Gk. *demotikos* 'of or for the common people', from *demos* 'common people, the people'; originally 'district', from PIE **da-mo-* 'division', from base **da-* 'to divide'.

also

demi-: early 15c., from O.Fr. *demi* 'half', from L.L. *dimedius*, from L. *dimidius*, from *dis-* 'apart' + *medius* 'middle'.

-(o)cracy: from M.L. *-cratia*, from Gk. *-kratia* 'power, rule', from *kratos* 'strength', from PIE **kratus* 'power, strength'

The etymology of the sometimes platonic, often gnostic concept of demiurge, a synonym of proletariat, is also illuminating:

demiurge: 1678, from Latinized form of Gk. *demiourgos*, lit. 'public or skilled worker' (from *demos* 'common people' + *ergos* 'work'). The title of a magistrate in some Gk. city-states and the Achæan League;

Consensus need only imply simple agreement, but that is a personal, not a social decision and therefore need not manifest itself as "group-think". Personal, consensual relations (often referred to as "voluntary association") do, however, have important social implications. Democracy, on the other hand, produces a synergistic authority – what is decided by the group is also mandated by the group: a model, a golden statue of the golden mean symbolizing normality.

Democracy answers the question "What is normal" and as such is truly the greatest form of social control – we stop thinking as individuals in favor of the statistical probability of group-think. Democracy keeps up with the Joneses. Dissenters can't understand the so-called "sheepish" nature of the "masses" in their compliance, their refusal to refuse: we cannot proceed until everyone is of like mind. When we seek approval, we are actually asking for permission; after all, we wouldn't want to appear "abnormal". "Quit shit-stirring and go with the flow, man! Can't you see the logic of our proposition?" The mere possibility of revolution is denied, for contrary individual action is forbidden, not by the so-called powers-that-be, but by the individual her/himself. When an authentic individual thought resides in some foreign land (is perceived by others as "radical"), the individual becomes an outsider.

Democracy is always a system of control, a regime whose very organizing principles establish conformity, and it is this conformity which defines normality, and in fact declares the metaphysics of reality itself. "Normal" and "natural" are one and the same. If not persuaded by soothsayers, naysayers will always be banished if they do not split off of their own accord. Under any democratic regime, the regime of the norm, whether it be representative or consensual, an outside and an inside is established, with the former always subsumed under some such categorization as "enemy". Democratically formed collectives seek autonomy, but they will always be (literally or metaphorically) at war with any other collective whose paths they cross unless they can form utilitarian alliances for specific purposes. If they find generalized agreement, an extra-local democratic *kingdom-like* state (the federation) is given birth, but civil war is always waiting on the horizon.

Imaginative social planners promoting democratic assemblies and councils (tweaks and adjustments to models from medieval history) as foundation blocks for a new society, criticize those other social planners, the primitivists, for using *prehistorical* models to build and manage their "new society". The latter remind us, and historical example illustrates that even simple and seemingly harmless delegation of responsibility involved in "collective" decision-making has often fueled increasing specialization and therefore complexity when *efficiency* is desired and fragmentation is to be avoided – as if fragmentation is a bad thing. The conundrum for direct democracy on a grand scale is that increased complexity necessarily entails secrecy and even democracy dies, superseded by bureaucracy.

taken in Platonic philosophy as a name for the maker of the world. In the Gnostic system, "conceived as a being subordinate to the Supreme Being, and sometimes as the author of evil" [OED].

In any sense, the very word "democracy" acknowledges and contains within itself the division of society, is literally equivalent to "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and it is this which is as well deconstructed above to "Regime of the Norm".

Perhaps democracy, even direct democracy is not the historical road to *egalité* we once thought it was? Seeking majority or even total consensus to restrict or modify behavior sets up conditions of the permit. It is the birth of authority and the death of spontaneity. One's pleasure is no longer allowed to inform one's behavior. Beyond the individual, joining in with another because their behavior (idea, etc.) looks attractive is not enough reason to engage. We require approval from the group. When practice is so divorced from theory, action from desire, we are no longer responsible for our own behavior. When the group is elevated above the individual, when it is so reified, permanent organization is born and any sense of personal ethics or even desire is tossed into the garbage bin of history or is set on hold, awaiting the decision of the collective tribunal.

Many democratically run collectives demonstrate their lack of leaders and proclaim anarchy: after all, all their decisions are made collectively. They proclaim synergy, that the whole is more powerful than any individual part or member. It is a machine. The individual is nominally valued in case some spark of creativity survives which might be of value to the group. If not, creativity is instantly renamed and re-defined in the same language inherited from "abnormal psychology". Humanist groups will try to rehabilitate the offender – to help somebody return to *normal* life, a creature of habit, worthy of cohabitation. For the most part, democracy attempts to establish the death of the individual, even as it proclaims tolerance or even respect for the autonomy of other *individual* collectives. The "live and let live" attitude only refers to relations between allied groups and between 'normal' members – the rank-and-file. We must be on the same page to make sense, as if the individual is the same as the written word in a book – a single word is nothing, a misplaced word is easily given a blind eye with no damage to our comprehension of the total "work", but for later editions, scratched out and replaced. This attitude depends on the civilized notions of *truth*, (that there must only be one answer to any question), *conformity* to truth, *coherence* and *efficient precision* (that agreement must be based on utility) and that groups, which is to say, affiliations center around "projects" – we've never left the mind-set of *production* and the social relation remains *the social relation of production*.

The beauty of Hegelian, and phenomenological thinking in general – taking the figurative metaphor (that is to say, "symbol") as the literal *thing* – is found in its reification or sacralization of the leftist (or any other) project and giving birth to self-fulfilling prophecy. The whole is more important than any of the attributes which give it the appearance of life, and hierarchy is reborn beyond anyone's awareness, and then beyond their control. The subtlety of it is beautiful, but the *essence* of the matter is that hierarchy never left in the first place. We come to demand that anarchy and direct democracy are synonymous, and that the structure of anarchy is a well regulated, scrupulously managed machine. We must be ever on guard, vigilantly concerned that it not cease to *function*. We must concern ourselves with projects, to make an impact: "Anarchy is not chaos, anarchy demands order, we must protect our freedom!" The whole becomes a runaway machine precisely because of overspecialization and complexity of its constituent parts – those living individuals who think they have achieved freedom. The abolition of masters has produced an autocracy of self-control – for the project of world peace and justice, one must not make waves, everyday life is *p.c.*.

One might come to the conclusion that I am against this idea of synergy, that synergy is an enemy or even that it is not *real*. I think this would be the wrong conclusion. What I do insist is that synergy is a result of our actions and thinking, our modes of relating we bring into our situations and is nothing but the set of all unforeseen implications – we give *it* a name (like "capital", "leviathon", "law", "democracy") and then set about to worship or fear *it*. To ignore it or to set it aside as a separate entity operating by its own rules proclaims predestiny or helplessness and particularly, either irresponsibility or devotion to *the rule of law*. Even illusion is real in its consequences.

But synergy does not have to become godly; its outcomes depend on what we, as individuals bring into it. Synergy is deified when we choose to win life rather than live it. I am thinking of the gifting kind of relationships seen in the game of basketball of the 1960's and '70's (and which has been in decline since the mid to late 80's). Whether a winning or losing result, the most applauded teams actually demonstrated teamwork (sharing) combined with an individual openness to (or awareness of the possibility of) infinite possibilities. This is to say, spontaneous actions in relation to ones comrades and opponents go beyond the game-plan or "play", an admission that the future cannot be accurately forecast and responses to circumstances planned in advance and religiously carried out. This bending and breaking of "rules" was not only more pleasurable to witness, but also in which to participate. Novelty is seen each time the ball is brought down the court – there is no place for zombies and boredom. An openness to being presents a critical awareness of all that is going on around us such that our responses are seen as spontaneous adjustments to our changing circumstances, not adjustments to the *elected* or dictated norm. Our experience might provide algorithms, but these are not *rules* which must be planned, coordinated, dictated and obeyed. This sort of display, in fact, led the Portland team to the world championship, outplaying teams with more individual talent but little teamwork (cooperation) – highly competitive but ultimately boring displays of individualist showboating we see in the spectacle the game presents us today – as well as teams which demonstrated "teamwork" (rigid and regimented followers of rules) but no individual spontaneity or creativity (abandonment of the game-plan when the need arises).

Because the individualist position goes against the grain of the collectively inclined, it is considered *anti-social*. Among outspoken *individualist* anarchists, nothing could be further from the truth, else we would not even hear from them. Instead we would only hear proponents of hermitage, seclusion, isolation. Perhaps we would not even hear that, but rather rumors of isolated wildmen, feral hermits living in caves *on the outside* of our civilization, perhaps shunning all contact – tales of sasquatch. Perhaps we would send missionary explorers to seek them out, determine their humanity, and if that is decided upon, bring them back into the fold. Perhaps we would have to kill them if we found they were sitting on some resource we could utilize more efficiently or which would ensure our collective survival if we felt it threatened. Ends always justify, especially when we have reached consensus.

Consensus has come to mean democracy par excellence. But there is another kind of consensual agreement which is born of concern or empathy for the other and underlies what has in the last few years been labeled "affinity group". This consensus "does-

n't seek to impose uniformity, but foster and create alliances which celebrate differences" (– *Regina de Bray*). "One trusted comrade is worth a thousand revocable delegates!" (– *Wildcat*). The basis of democracy is self-sacrifice, "compromise". The basis of affinity group is friendship – displays of mutual trust. The former celebrates unity, the latter not only respects, but demands diversity. Diversity removes the sense of banality from communication, and the goal of communication is not necessarily agreement. As Alan Watts said, "Unless you disagree with me, how will I know what I am thinking?"

The goal of the affinity group is community, which is an expression of friendship or *kin-ship*. It is truly a mutual social relation, not a permanent organization of like-minded opinion. Among the civilized, sharing is only seen within families or among friends. Mutuality is isolated and impounded. That is why potential friendships must be *surveilled* (or even prevented) and child-rearing institutionalized. The search for truth demands only one answer to any question. Childhood is thus seen as a disease of ignorance which must be overcome, cured – we must, out of love, protect them from suffering unwanted consequences which only we best know how to avoid. Friendship is antithetical to the true spirit of competition which, we hear shouted from the balconies, "produces excellence". To allow conditions of 'childlike' spontaneity or subversive friendship would threaten any democratic arrangement proclaiming *equality*. Democratic liberty is the freedom from individual responsibility for the consequences of our behavior. Thus, to live and let live is a criminal offense when the paramount goal of the civilized is production, efficiency and organization – even when that organization is called "The Revolution". A brief look at Ambrose Bierce' *Devil's Dictionary* illustrates that this is also the definition of "CORPORATION, n. An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility".

Perhaps our social planners could question their notions of efficiency and organization (management) and reformulate them in terms of a spontaneity and mutual aid as a consequence of giving rather than the mutual punishment implicit in "*reciprocal altruism*" as envisioned by *avant-garde* social psychologists. But then they'd be out of a job and so would be the entire tit-for-tat economic order! Of course, "planners" and "organizers", "administrators" and "managers" are themselves only meddlesome oxymorons in the context of egalitarian social relations. There are no specifically anarchist strategies of collective decision-making. This does not mean anarchists do not make decisions and come to agreement. A decision must ultimately be personal and made in the context of the satisfaction of desire. Otherwise it is an edict. Arming desire replaces meddling with merriment.

There has recently been some discussion among academic sociologists about swarm behavior which, even on a large scale, seems to achieve a beautiful order out of chaos, a networking with no central planning, group decision-making, nor any other organizing principle beyond the individual going along with the 'comrades' next to her/him. This is seen among schools of fish, flights of geese, buzzing bees and swarms of activists such as was seen in Seattle '99, something Dr. Graeber described as the most advanced organizing principle the police had ever had to confront. Spontaneity is a requirement. Planning and democratic consensus is obviously cumbersome and dangerous as insurrectionary strategy, beyond establishing familiarity with routes of potential

escape or dispersal (or in fact, sources of nourishment or replenishment) in one's own territory or trust in the territorial intimacy of one's neighbor displayed by the newcomer. This is in fact, also a requirement in any community.

The issue here is whether social institutions, like communities can be planned, coordinated and implemented – constructions requiring architects and tradesmen to bring the architect's dream to life. I would say that, unlike the chain gang, the social relation cannot be planned, constructed, coordinated and implemented no matter how collectively or democratically decisions are made. This is social engineering, not cultural tradition based on affinity or consanguinity – desire, engagement, connection and reproduction.

The radical dissenter might be mindful that the most out-of-control fires are those created from small, spontaneously forming wildfires. If you have a mass of institution-hilating napalm, use it, but don't discount the value of a single spark from individual refusal, the subversive power of camaraderie, or the destructive force of the gift. When ridiculing simple-mindedness, don't forget that compliance shares the same root as complexity, and in social relations, complexity generates at least miscommunication, at most bureaucracy, and certainly the end of what most consider beneficent democracy.

Demand the time to think, form meaningful relationships, and enjoy the journey. For any chance at success, we must love each other more than our enemy hates us. To these ends, our inefficiency is our weapon – curious george brigade.

ch 17: Virtual rEVoLution, the RPG.®: Detourning the Revolution in the 21st Century

Comrades,

We find ourselves fighting a virtual revolution on line – in internet blogs and forums where we find "real" anarchists and "real" revolutionaries openly discussing their plans for the overthrow of the state. The players consist of experienced "regulars" (excluding, of course, nestled "detractors") who guide us in developing our game characters. We must be true to the role we are playing, consistent with the mask we are wearing, coherent in our game moves. We have these enlightened experts in radical theory, assorted "detractors" (who not only don't play their roles correctly, but don't even follow the rules formulated by the game developers), and the occasional players and nonparticipating spectators or NPC's (Is that 'non-player character' or 'not politically correct?') presumably soaking in insurrectionary right-think. The detractors don't play rEVoLution, the RPG.® according to the rules set out by the master-control-program / operating system, (sometimes called the "spectacle" by situationists). These detractors include lifestylists and dropouts and other assorted criminals of thought. Individualists, to a tee – radically uninformed people wanting to steal back their everyday lives. The correct method of play is to derive a coherent theory which would guarantee insurrectionary success and spur on the revolution.

Crime thinkers ("Think crime and you won't have to do crime") and "primitivists" (not that any actually play this game) are easily handled with ridicule and flame. Marx himself demonstrated this tactic in his critique of Stirner in *Saint Max* in his *German Ideology*. People who have actually read Max Stirner are so few, "egoists" can be easily identified and isolated. But recently, situationism has resurfaced in "The Game". The first attempts to deal with this were ad hominem attacks and accusations of SI for "asking the impossible" (remember, you cannot live anarchy 'til capital™ is defeated, which is also to say that we should not even aspire to live – struggle and survival should be quite enough for anyone until after the revolution. Sounds like heaven!). rEVoLution, the RPG.® is worker struggle. 'It's those nasty authoritarian drunks and misusers of drugs "on the fringes of wage-labor ... street gangs and ghetto blacks" [Gilles Duavé, *Critique of the Situationist International*], who interfere with our revolutionary praxis and impede revolutionary solidarity'. We have to appeal to a higher authority. Msg. Gilles acknowledges the strengths of SI, we simply can't disagree with/detourne its most enduring/endeared points. But then it is announced that these very strengths are the source of its ambiguity and the essential source of the downfall of the Situationist International: **Got Illusion? Try Contusion®!** Debord and his crew had simply drifted too far from the marxian tradition of class (and race and gender, I might add) struggle in setting up revolutionary soviets *er, I mean* councils. Situationist techniques (themselves expropriated from the public relations industry) were used against the 'movement' itself. The critique of SI now comes down to this:

Thus spoke the great Oz, "Pay no attention to that little man behind the curtain".

The spectacle is not the totality. It is produced by [capital™](#). Debord's big error was to confuse the part for the whole. Don't read between the lines – there is no hidden message. Spectacular Illusion/diversion is no longer pertinent to our analysis. We can now get past this little crisis and back to playing "[rEVoLution, the RPG.®](#)"

The object of this role-playing game is to establish collectivism. The collection in this case, is public opinion, and the process of collectivization is the *détournement* of (minority) opinion along certain prescribed avenues deemed safe for the project of civilization (often referred to in the game as "the anarchist project"). This is nothing new. The Jesuits taught aspiring bishops and popes the metaphysics of Spinoza (not at all in keeping with catholic theology) in their seminaries not for the purpose of a liberal education, but to understand and deflect potential critique. Counterarguments were perfected and "the faith" was maintained. It is a dangerous game and in fact produces 'dropouts' from time to time, but they are shown to demonstrate character defects – the "weak in faith". The danger of the game provides a monstrously successful screen which traps the devout and produces the next generation of theological authorities.

In the same fashion, the virtual revolution preserves the ideas of property, authority and sacrificial labor, and places them in the beneficent hands of the collective's central committee / intellectual avant garde / technocratic bureaucracy, while the post-revolutionary workers brew up another nice pot of tea or pour them another glass of guinness or microbrew. On default settings, the game is set up to win by alienating it's players from spilling into "real life". It is an unbeatable game banking on an ubiquitous "addictive personality disorder" (the derivation of 'pleasure-seeking' behavior). This concern is unwarranted. If there ever was a spill-over into real life, all the players would narc on (or even kill) each other, each suspecting the other of being part of the plot or part of the counter-plot. The failure of an internet-derived revolution in the "real world" is thus assured. But then, this is the message of all 'unbeatable' games: "You can not win!"

One might wonder why playing the game of overthrowing government/politics is even tolerated on the internet. The web is thought of as some kind of de-centralized anarchist space, uncontrollable by 'the powers that be'. This is a mistake. It is a game of bait and switch. Attractive and unquestionably profound critiques by irreconcilable opponents to the establishment are presented in various "Anarchist" sites to entice a readership encouraged to discuss matters in the safety of internet anonymity, where their understanding can be manipulated/detoured by esoteric double-speak and (politi-co-economic) theoretical razzle-dazzle by (even unwitting) provocateurs. Arguments are encouraged so that, upon their resolution – that is, the realization of the absurdity of fighting among ourselves and the resulting collapse of "revolutionary solidarity" – everyone now knows that if there are any new objections, there will be accusations of "derailment" and "breaking the peace". 'Real' revolutionaries are informed by 'real' revolutionary theoretical constructions as are only fully appreciated and expounded by the intellectual elite – our gurus of the revolution.

We are encouraged to imagine the abolition of government, we can spew anti-capitalist rhetoric, but where is there talk of abolishing the whole system of production and consumption ("the corporation") under which we toil? Surely "crime-thought"! Why, that might lead to Kazinskyan "primitivism"! The mainstream media itself informs us that the

idea of national government is antiquated by the global economy. From the point of view of the corporate entity ([capital™](#)), there has never been anything controversial about abolishing government. Sure, we say we are anti-capitalist, but we would only reform the corporate entity after doing away with the state. This is called maintaining the infrastructure so that civilization can proceed along on its path with as few bumps as might be perceived. If we can change the name of AT&T to RFCW – "The Revolutionary Federation of Cell-Tech Workers' Collectives", and institute some work-place reforms, that should just about do it. Over the years, this could progress to FAVOWIT (Freely Associated Volunteer-Workers in Telecommunications). Power to the people! Abolish work! Volunteer! Remember, it's a collective effort and it's your civic duty! This is a game scenario that is never discussed.

It is thought there are experts in the operation of the machine (capitalist geeks) we can entice over to the side of communism. What we have missed is the fact that the capitalists already approach communist social relations (called "sharing the wealth" among themselves). We talk of abolishing class distinctions, but do not consider that unless we do away with the whole show, a "communist" revolution will require a class of "intelligentsia" – the technocracy. This is how the spectacle/diversion of production maintains the "ruling class"; it is the spectacle of consumption which maintains the workers. But let's not talk of illusory forces of consumption, it is production we must concentrate on. We have forgotten (or indeed, never understood) that the modern government is only an interface between the "Public" and "The Corporation" (those who control the resources we need to live), just as "The Company" (C.I.A.) has since its inception, been the interface between the corporation and the government. If we eliminate the spectacle of government, we have not touched the spectacle (the illusion of perceived necessity) of productive growth and progressive consumption, security maintenance, the "welfare state", environmental rape and other issues which transcend governments but saturate the realm of "productive relations". But discussion of these problems in anarcho-communist circles is buried by the phrase "leftist special-interest groups of no use to the revolution . . . Pay them no mind".

Mussolini told us that fascism is the merging of government ("authority") and industry (["capital™"](#)). Vaneigem used the term "power" rather than "capital". Those who *only* accumulate capital are merely 'wanna-be's', "minor players" in the game of [capital™](#). They are caught up in the illusion of the shape of the world of Marx's day – the birth of the great banker/industrialist monopolist pioneers such as J. P. Morgan and Carnegie, and the opportunity for certain 'enterprising' persons (the nouveau riche) to join their ranks despite a lack of 'blue-blood' family connection. That world has shifted. It is power and control which 'real' capitalists accumulate. Democratized 'wealth' is only a matter of manipulating digital information, and accumulated wealth is only one means to more power. It is by far not the only means.

What will we have when we do away with the government interface altogether? We are still well within the realm of the spectacle (illusion, diversion, alienation, domestication). Direct control in the guise of self-management, but realistically run by the technocratic bureaucracy – those providing no function other than their own maintenance free from toil by coordinating the toil of others. This is the end point of the Bourgeois Revo-

lution – power to the middleman. Bureaucrats are the most ridiculously incompetent members of society precisely because of their overspecialized and alienated functions. Without the means of seeing a bigger picture, how can we place our hope for conscientiously responsible behavior from bureaucrats? Bottom-up democratic consensus? We have seen the usefulness of democracy in the rift between the "need" for lumber and jobs and the protection of endangered species such as the spotted owl. Local economies were allowed to collapse until talk of animal extinctions left the semantic realm of "responsible" government and industrial practices and moved into the realm of "domestic terrorism". At this point, logging has come to surpass the levels existing prior to the issue of animal habitat destruction, and we even endorse controlled burns (napping entire forests) which open up vast areas for salvage logging and future development as a means of stopping the spread of small wildfires. This has become the new method of combating "wild" fires on "public" lands since the traditional fire-fighters, the national guard are off fire-fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. No spectacle here, boys and girls ... Move along.

The spectacle is not merely a leviathan, but a shape-shifter as well. What does not change is the imposition of scarcity and toil on some for the sake of the comfort and leisure of others. The theory is that a hungry enough belly will always volunteer to trim your toe-nails, if that is what you wish. Yowsa, sho'nuff, and yes sir, boss – the egalitarian social relation of the ante-bellum plantation worker. No player of **rEVolution, the RPG.®** has adequately explained how this game scenario would be avoided. I guess Marxian Utopia will just magically happen when the workers take power (think Soviet Union). But I ask again, who will scrub their toilets and pick their fruit? What if farm and service workers became the "revolutionary subject" by just up and quitting? Maybe there's something to be said for DIY after all! Beloved and respected comrade-chairman Mao had to confront this very problem, and his solution was to force the bureaucrat to do occasional time as pitchfork operator back on the farm. His title thereafter changed to "Enemy of the State" and "Traitor to the Revolution".

For those wanting "real" change in the "real world", not to worry. The revolution is a hydra. New heads grow daily. As the spectacle grows more meaningless to folks' everyday life, every day acts of resistance become more out-of-control. There are revolutionaries and anarchists and radical wanderers and other detractors and dissidents unaffiliated with any political or anti-political organization or philosophy already out there (in the world outside of the game). You will not find support for (or even much acknowledgment of) them in "The Game" – they are not easily pigeon-holed. They are helping compatriots find squats, setting up free clinics, free stores, free tickets, free fares, distributing food and blankets to the homeless, writing letters of support or encouragement to prisoners, performing free concerts or provocative street theatre, opening themselves up to wisdom from traditionalist tribal elders, building spaces within the spectacle more sheltered from attack by the spectacle (eg., t.v.-free zones, home-schooling, community drop-in centers), and even engaging in activities most would consider "criminal", like burning GMO fields. Acts of destruction become increasingly difficult with the expanding police state, but then we see expanding acts of creation and spontaneity in response. The key word is "free": shackle-breakers get in free of charge, despite the charges freely filed against them.

All of this and more, despite the fact that most are not fluent in 18th and 19th century 'radical' theory or the histories of failed workers' struggles. It is a disorganized anti-movement unconsciously modeling the pattern of naturally occurring wild-fires. As to the value of 'radically unaware' youth to the revolution, it was my 'goth' step-daughter who brought me back to my own roots (adolescent anarchy, as in "I'm getting damn sick of everybody telling me what to do and what to think, and I'm gonna start saying 'no!'") in pointing out (in a discussion of religion) how Marx had merely replaced god in my own "revolutionary" ideology. This was two years before reading Max Stirner. No matter how much effort we place into "education", there will always be disaffected youth who would spit upon even the most radical of revolutionary theorists, and rightly so when those ideologies come to dominate us. Is it not time to reclaim the bait and annihilate the switch? This is not to promote anti-intellectualism, but I'd have to agree with Eric Idle on the possibility of intelligent life in outer space: One would certainly hope so "'cause there's bugga all down here on earth". Are the disorganized and unaffiliated bringing down the evil empire? Not perceptively, but they are actually living the revolution rather than master-debating around readings of archaic "revolutionary" political economists and calling this PC "antipolitical discussion". The controlled burn initiated to eliminate ever-growing dissent will also consume the spectacle itself, but this time there will be little left to salvage. End of game.

The slightly Irreverent,
 Sub-commandant Snide Edelgraff, IFINSITURCON – PAC (SS)
(The Inconsistent Federation of Inaccessibles, Scornful Iconoclasts, Tramps, Unique Ones, Rulers Over the Ideal and Conquerors of the Nothing – Persistent Anti-Collective of Spontaneous Subversives)

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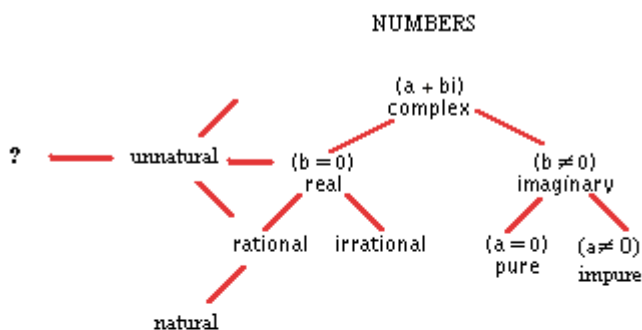
p.s. Eh!!!! watch it with that brick, mate! Ain't cha got a f'in sense of hummer?

"Perhaps in this unhappy world of ours, a worse madness is better than a foolish sanity." – Cervantes, 16th century A.D.

ch 18: Postmodern Anarchy or Premodern Epistemology?

Notwithstanding Saul Newman's very appropriate distinction between postmodernism and poststructuralist anarchy, the sense of "modern" in the title refers, of course, to the modern period, and this period is "the age of reason", "the Enlightenment". I see structuralism as the last great effort of modern logic, culminating in the mid 1970's, to preserve the hierarchical integrity of 'things' in our consciousness, largely by mathematically formulating them – elevating and stabilizing laws of reification itself at the expense of any sense of the complex flux of relations within an ever shifting context. It is the last stage in the *age of enlightenment*, the period in our history when science and logic will be able to solve all the problems humanity faces. Thus, the modern period has always existed only in the future. Like the Zen Buddhist, we are still waiting to be enlightened. Some have concluded that "the ultimate result of centuries of enlightenment stated: 'we are enlightened in that we now know we are not able to be enlightened'" [– *Bernd A. Laska: Ein dauerhafter Dissident*]. "Anarchy" in the title refers, of course, to that critical mindset which has historically refused this waiting game and in fact, the entirety of the hierarchically arranged social order which itself recapitulates an ancient hierarchical ontology. While the modern anarchist might propose an alternate future, the postmodern anarchist should reject the future itself: "The time is now!"

Consider the picture below depicting the hierarchy of numbers, the "building blocks" of mathematics, the so-called language of enlightened science, reason, logic symbolized:



$$2^2 = 4$$

$$2^{1/2} = 1.414213562 \text{ blah blah blah}$$

$$2^{1/2} 2^{1/2} = 4^{1/2} = 2$$

$$(2^2)^{1/2} (2^2)^{1/2} = (4^{1/2})^2 = (4^2)^{1/2} = 4$$

$$2^{2^{1/2}} 2^{2^{1/2}} = 4^{2^{1/2}} = 7.102993301 \text{ blah blah blah}$$

$$i = (-1(1))^{1/2}$$

If mathematics is the language of reason, then we should be able to say that rationality easily generates irrationality & imagination & vice versa (such that the entire universe can be modeled mathematically – or so they tell us). Using one logical [rational] operation and its inversion, [a^x , $a^{1/x}$] and negation [$-1 \times a = (-a)$], and two 'rational' numbers [1 and 2], one can generate other 'rational' numbers [eg., 4], 'irrational' numbers [eg., 1.414213...] as well as 'imaginary' numbers [eg., $(-1)^{1/2}=i$] which are necessary to proceed with certain 'advanced' questions of relation modeled by mathematicians.

Is this even logical, given that $i=(-1)^{1/2}$ breaks the fundamental "law" of western logic, namely Aristotle's famous *law of non-contradiction*? In other words, presuming that the structuralists are correct when they demand that the entire universe is a logical machine-work, we come upon a paradox: both imagination and imaginary numbers are essential to the mathematician, yet it would seem they themselves are *not* logical! While many use the term as a synonym for "reasonable" or "common sense", what we consider "logical" usually refers only to 'state-of-the-art' western Logic, perfected after many years of 'mistakes' and omissions, as if there are no other kinds of relation possible than allowed by the basic premises underlying 'formal logic', and it is this tradition of *thinking-sans-contradiction* which informs "reasonableness" and "common sense" On the other hand, dialectic materialism, a tumerous growth from Plato, Descartes, Calvin, Hegel and Engles, considers that the entire universe (nature) is filled with contradictions, and it is our task to transcend them. Our own thinking must, however, be coherent (not contradictory).

The question is ethnocentric in that formal "logic" shouldn't be confused with what the ancient Greeks referred to as *logos* 'reasoned relationships', or say, the 'rationality' behind construction of Egyptian pyramids or Mayan calendars even though it may model or incorporate it. Could we, like Levi-Strauss, propose a mythological, surrealist or even schizophrenic logic? Would it follow a universal grammar? Would it be amenable to mathematical manipulation? Obviously there is some reasoning of relationships going on in myth, surrealism and schizophrenia, or is it only considered "logic" when our metaphors are shared and thus amenable to 'democratic' (or psychotherapeutic) manipulation? Are all these other ways of thinking about life, the universe and everything only childish mistakes, as Freud suggested? For the modernist, the answer to all of these questions is a resounding "yes", but then where is there room for poetry?

Consider another question: "How much do I love thee?" I love thee more on Tuesdays, less in September. One cannot measure value because value is itself measurement, although one can indeed value measurement, but then we should probably replace the word "value" with "fetishize". We must take care not to confuse our colloquialisms, which open up vast realms of meaning, with our logistics, which, in the interest of "clarity" abstract us from the possibility of alternative semantics.

We measure a structure by mapping or calculating the distance from its center to its edges or create a center by comparing imaginary lines drawn across it and locating their point of intersection. It cannot help but be an abstraction since, by declaring a center, we have removed the structure from its context – we have as much as declared "This item has no connection to the rest of the world!" The further removed, the less

clear we are as to where it actually fits because now it is dead. The question can always be asked "Yes, but where do you draw the line?" When the question seems to not apply, say in determining the boundaries of a marble and discovering that it is indeed round, we are left with the question, "So fucking what? A four year old could have told you that!" That is, we do not need to measure it because the answer seems already obvious to us. When performing a heart transplant, such ontological questions are irrelevant – we are merely asking if something which fits here might also fit there.

Where the questions do seem to apply, as in response to "What is the true measure of a man?", we find that the only available response is metaphorical, and in our culture, that is usually found in the realm of economics and politics because value is always a matter of comparison. We count the things or accomplishments s/he has accumulated which we agree have *value*. Our emotional, almost religious adherence to an idea ensures that wherever we stand in the 'equation', the results of our manipulations will be arbitrary at least, and at best, subject to change depending on where in the context (or even if) we decide to replace an item or idea once we have finished. The easiest action is none at all. We merely discard it – the lab rat is, without a care, tossed to the hungry cat waiting in the shadows, the pottery shards are placed on a shelf in a museum, our spouse scurries off to do the laundry because it is Thursday. No worries.

But we do love to compare and measure, and in our culture, it is a matter of democracy. Thus, even our intelligence is measured, and that is the calculation of how favorably our decisions correspond to those of the people around us, particularly to those in power. This is why measures of intelligence predict so well our potential to succeed in school. In the world, reason is comparison or it is *know nothing*. Without acknowledgment of a context of processes or relations, there can be no comparison, but in school, we learn best how to abstract and disregard context. We value this and call it "abstract thinking", but the mad artist will tell you it is only thoughtless esoterica.

Perhaps all discourse entails the politics of persuasion, the establishment of authority, of uniformity. Or is the implication of Wittgenstein more appropriate, that philosophy, psychoanalysis, and by extension, mythology or schizophrenia are merely different ways of speaking – not language but games with language?

Philosophical problems are not solved by experience, for what we talk about in philosophy are not facts but things for which facts are useful. Philosophical trouble arises through seeing a system of rules and seeing that things do not fit it. It is like advancing and retreating from a tree stump and seeing different things. We go nearer, remember the rules, and feel satisfied, then retreat and feel dissatisfied. To ask whether there is a hidden contradiction is to ask an ambiguous question. Its meaning will vary according as there is, or is not, a method of answering it. If we have no way of looking for it, then "contradiction" is not defined. In what sense could we describe it? We might seem to have fixed it by giving the result, 'a ≠ a'. But it is a result only if it is in organic connection with the construction. To find a contradiction is to construct it. If we have no means of hunting for a contradiction, then to say there might be one has no sense. We must not confuse what we can do with what the calculus can do – *Wittgenstein*.

We are left with the problem, "who (or what, eg, 'logical necessity', 'genetics', 'brain chemistry', 'psychosocial trauma', 'cultural programming', 'all of the above') sets the rules?" R. D. Laing tells us "The validity of a definition is ultimately determined by the identity of the one who is defining"

If the politics of persuasion is disregarded, we can only be left with Franz Boas' emphasis on habit, tradition and emotional attachment:

When we consider...the whole range of our daily life, we notice how strictly we are dependent upon tradition that cannot be accounted for by any logical reasoning.

Man the world over believes that he follows the dictates of reason, no matter how unreasonably [to us] he may act...

The knowledge of the existence of the tendency of the human mind to arrive at a conclusion first and to give reasons afterwards, will help us to open our eyes; so that we recognize that our philosophic views and our political convictions are to a great extent determined by our emotional inclinations, and that the reasons which we give are not the reasons by which we arrive at our conclusions, but the explanations which we give for our conclusions.

In fact, my whole outlook upon social life is determined by the question: how can we recognize the shackles that tradition has laid upon us? For when we recognize them, we are also able to break them – *Franz Boas*.

To say a) "mathematics is but one type of logic (or reasoning)" is different than to say b) "mathematics is a form (or subset) of logic" (or even "logic symbolized"). The latter is ethnocentric in that it begs the question, "who's logic?" If it cannot co-opt them, *Logic* excludes all sets of relations which are not constrained by mathematics or follow the same rules, such as the element of non-contradiction. Mathematics progresses when it realizes this fact, yet tries to force the issue (stick with premise b) by inventing new formulas or even new numbers, such as the "complex numbers" to account for novelty, much like physicists have invented dark matter and black holes because the calculus demands it. To rephrase Wittgenstein's caution, we must not confuse what the calculus can do with what is.

But in this very fashion, modern logic attempts to account for all possibilities of the universe – the project of the enlightenment, the mathematical proof of "*mind*" (or *soul* or *god* or *cybernetic machine*) by showing us a formula. The simple fact is that mathematics (and its parent – some would say "child" – formal logic) can not generate or even replicate imagination – mathematicians use imagination, not random number generators, to get out of a bind. The intuitive 'logic' or grammar or mental process which allows one to instantly find meaning 'between the lines' of a Shakespeare sonnet or feel 'sympatico with the universe' or create 'surrealist art' or to enjoy 'humor' (all without calculation!) will probably never be predicted or generated mathematically. These things nevertheless express relationships and "make sense" not only from a subjective point of view, but they are often shared (as might be viewed by an hypothetical "objective", detached observer) and passed on. All the mathematician can say is "This makes no sense!" or "Given this set (or universe), $p = \sim p$ if-and-only-if his $p = \text{my } \sim p$ " (allowing perceived contradiction to stand only within certain artificially imposed boundaries, and assuming this accounts for relativity, but more often generating a value-judgment: "he is obviously stupid!"). The unsubstantiated premise of Logic is that it is the *only* logic – what it cannot formulate either does not exist or must await a more evolved mathematics. The other end of this is also proclaimed: "What it can formulate (for example, dark matter) must, therefore exist".

Lessons from the Presocratics: Contrary to Pythagoras, the precursor of Plato who thought numbers were the only true reality, numbers are ideas, assessments about

things, not things themselves – measurement is always a value judgment. Xenophanes thought that there is a truth in the world, a reality, but we can only act-as-if we know it – anything more is folly. For both, the oppressive pantheon of Homer's day was to be discarded, but clearly, neither were prepared for a relativity as expressed millennia later by one such as Baudrillard:

Why wouldn't there be as many real worlds as there are imaginary ones? Why would there be only one real world? Why such a mode of exception? In [our] reality, the notion of a real world existing among all other possible worlds is unimaginable. It is unthinkable, except perhaps as a dangerous superstition. We must stay away from that, just as critical thought once stayed away (in the name of the real!) from religious superstition.

Other presocratics implied that, of '*things*', there is only impermanent existence (defined by) here-and-now as subject (*ego*, I will arbitrarily designate "1st order") or object (*other*, "2nd order"), the difference always being relative to the fact and kind of relation or connection between them, and this is always an *effect* of every preceding then-and-there as well as the entire context of the here-and-now. It is an experience, an occasion and a novelty. This is the 3rd 'order' which is not of things, space and time, or even ideas, but of relationships and connections: events (situations?), kinship, influences, effects – in other words, *flux*. Empedocles called it "love", the other pole from *strife* 'disconnection', 'mortality'. Parmenides thought the only reality was *logos* (reasoned relations) and the rest was *doxa* (illusion). *Logos* is often interpreted as "the word". More appropriate might be *ónoma* "the name" – when we apply a name, we have acknowledged a relationship.

The closest we come to this is in viewing the subject as "immersed" (colloquially in the self, or scientifically in the context) and the object alienated or detached (as 'objective' observer or observed 'object'). Empedocles tells us that hate is not the opposite of love, but the illusion of a relationship and the maintenance of that illusion. Hence, the human being seen as commodity (object alienated from its context) struggles to survive, experiences a prolonged death – there can be no "revolutionary subject". Post structuralists are coming round to view the whole subject/object dichotomy as illusory. Long ago, Taoists said in fact, the same thing about self and other.

Wittgenstein hinted, but Douglas Adams positively affirmed that time is itself an illusion. Since *now* is currently *then* [now is always then by the time you finish the sentence], Heraclitus thought only flux is permanent, making the third order supersede the first as well as second in terms of 'absolute reality' (*permanence*). Without relation, subject and object disappear and we are left only with isolated *things-with-no-name* separated by void. Because fairly long term *things* (such as rocks) are not necessarily negated themselves by this supersession (oftentimes they are enhanced -"Rockers come and rockers go, but Rock is here forever!"), *absoluteness* is denied as a feature or condition of reality, or one could say "there are no absolutes" or "only change is static" or "chaos is the preferred order" or "there is no need to postulate a nothing, naught, zero or void". It is downright reminiscent of Taoist philosophy. In fact, it verges on Discordianism!

There are some ancient schools of thought, for example, as espoused by Parmenides 2500 years ago, which postulate (much to the chagrin of nihilists everywhere)

that nothing itself (the "void") can *not*, by definition exist. Even Aristotle's "law of non-contradiction" can not refute this, although Epicurus, with his atomic theory, put up a pretty good argument at least for "empty space". *Æther* (a "thing" much like air, breath) seemed the only way out of the paradox. The box of nothing had been filled. The problem is semantic: space should not be equated with "nothingness". Quite possibly, the whole idea of nothingness did not arrive until mathematicians produced a *zero* – originally the starting point in a metanarrative/mythology which did not account for the possibility of infinitely small or infinitely 'early' despite elaborate concepts of immortality. Without a void, there can be no absolute beginning or end, only relative positions, relative states of being, or more accurately, becoming.

The notion of infinity demands relativity, for in an infinite structure (a structure can be nothing if it is not our perception of "orderly" relations¹⁸) every point is simultaneously its center – as Derrida implied, there can be no unique center where there are no boundaries. It seems then, we impose our own center in what was a centerless structure by the very focus of our perception informed by sensation, and this in turn delimits the boundary of the gestalt, the limits of perception, the skin of the structure. As our gaze moves, so do the perceived relations or 'connections', and the structure transforms into something new. Beyond our perception, nothing has changed but the limits of our imagination. This process differentiates perception, cognition¹⁹, and so-called "empirical reality" of which we, even as observers, should be an active part. The metaphor of machine structure only goes so far, the metaphor structuralists and cyberneticians took for real. Permanence is impossible, reality is elusive, essence/eidos is unlikely, our memories fail increasingly. When we try to speak of it, we are left only with metaphor – shared perceptions can only achieve approximation.

Aristotle's *law of non-contradiction* founders before the linguistic ambiguity necessary to any discussion of infinity and relativity, where all things are never equal; nothing can be taken literally; meaning in the *logos* can only be found between the lines. This is why early 20th century linguists, such as Edward Sapir, found it necessary to postulate "*the speech environment*" as a primary modulator of semantic content – meaning (see also [Wittgenstein](#)). Mathematics is not sufficient for human communication. It is not language, although it has been used to model or describe aspects of it. The speech environment is empirical – in face to face communication, we know who we're talking to and hopefully share the level of abstraction (context) we refer to without much in the way of calculation – mathematics is not necessary. While set theory and fuzzy logic can account for this, they can not match it without incomprehensible complexity.

Relativity denies absolute opposition or dialectic, often rendering the law of non-contradiction meaningless or irrelevant – there can be no contradiction without opposition. The experience of friction is always relative to that which is being rubbed. If the concept of opposition is maintained, then it can only be a variable opposition: there must be oc-

18 "Order" here basically refers to sequence or arrangement, not time, rule and law. The latter is the 'grand mistake' of a hierarchical ontology

19 or cognitive restructuring of our perceptions which are often only triggered by memory of the imposed boundaries rather than by the 'information' itself – while imposed (or permanent) boundaries facilitate recall, they do not necessarily facilitate accuracy.

casions or situations or points of view where oppositions are more-or-less *not-oppositions* and where shifts and transformations are expected. The casualty of Aristotle's *law of non-contradiction* is the *excluded middle*. One could say survival is the excluded middle between life and death – it is clearly not death, but neither is it life. It is anomie (betwixt and between, neither here nor there) but nonetheless real – it feels melancholic, it may evoke a [scream](#). Relativity joined with dialectics makes for a lethal combination. Hence the ease with which all reasoning can be detoured to express that which we may not desire – sophistry – through dialectical argument ('discourse'). At the very least, we walk away more confused than when we started on our path to knowledge (or is that "power"?).

On the other hand, non-linear reasoning or a *poetic ontology* (Hakim Bey), enables one to say that "the master is himself a slave"; "Australia – or even Antarctica – (*Down Under*) sits on top of the world"; "it is true that there is no truth"; "creation is often destruction, but destruction is always creative". It demands (and is demanded by) viewing the world from other perspectives – at best illuminating, at least entertaining. It may be the source of the tall tale, but never of the spin of the used-car salesman – that spin would not sell cars but invoke laughter or experimental verification. Heidegger's assessment that the presocratic world view largely depicted an *openness-to-being* is unavoidable. It is a view from an 'open mind'. Novelty is celebrated and incorporated (or *let be*); mystery inspires awe; danger is overcome or avoided; 'magical' association is everywhere. Freud and Jung very nearly stumbled upon this -"dreamtime" and "realtime" are merely different perspectives of the same depth ('deep things'). For some they are the same perspective of different things. Modernists call this view of a bigger picture of meaningful connections "superstition" (or in some circles, "psychosis", unless, of course, the thinker has been funded by a large granting institution, and then we call it "astrophysics") and we call a world of complex diversity "primitive". We cannot see that relativity and egalitarian (non-hierarchic) association (rather than absolutes and opposition) are the circular or concordant 'foundation' of community itself – something which is by now nearly extinct. Unfortunately for us and the early Greek philosophers, the high priests were (and are) still in power.

The modern perception of Nietzsche's *will-to-power* (a game of one-upmanship) is none other than Freud's *Death Instinct* – Marx' *alienation* as the wound up spring of civilization; Empedocles' *Strife* embodied as deity; Plato's annihilation of reality in the guise of *synthesis* as the first principle of Western logic; Aristotle's *excluded middle* analytic "You're either with us or against us!": a proposition can only be true or not true. "Let there be no question!" – Socrates' *hemlock*. As the illusion of opposition is decreed, our task becomes the annihilation of opposing forces on the path to grand unification. In this democracy of *all-against-all*, in attempt to establish *progress* through struggle, equality through unity, imagination becomes a sign of mental illness: only the paranoid are equipped with bullshit detectors. In the western world (should I say "global civilization"?) ruled by western Logic, the *law of non-contradiction* is contradicted at every other turn. It is truly a death cult envisioning only tunnels and straight lines between fixed nodes as the path to the here-after *nothing*, when and where the everyday sacrifice of our everyday lives is rewarded with eternally compounded disinterest.

Linear thinking is the rationale for civilized progress. We think this is the only correct form of thought. We think from premise to conclusion, from point a to point b. We postulate infinite progression and infinite regression, bigger and bigger, better and better, smaller, faster. More is never enough. Less is already too much. Civilized progress is already pushing the second "law" of thermodynamics: in a 'closed system', unless a child's growth is at some point inhibited, s/he will outgrow the house and be crushed by the very walls which shelter her; in an 'open system', s/he must at some point be forcibly expelled through an infinitely flexible cervix. Progress is the planetary city. Progress is the replacement of the earth's biomass with *Homo sap.* We are already experiencing the need for food synthesis. Cloning (human?) tissue is thought to solve the problem of hunger when farms and pasture must be covered with asphalt to make room for rural and suburban development – more housing, more digitized factories, more services, more consumption and more need. Cannibalism is the last option, and it is nearer than you might think. Isn't it time we began incorporating a logic of mutual connection, relativity and return before the cybernetic machine or global mushroom cloud incorporates us?

If all things are connected as we have been told (especially by modern chaos theory, but also by the presocratics, taoists, shinto, zen, shamanism etc.), I would think a logic of correspondence (or connection) could replace that of contradiction and friction with no loss of elegance (internal consistency of reasoned associations in our representations) or the possibility of experimental 'verification' (remembering that even children 'experiment' all the time with no knowledge of dialectical materialism!). This has in fact been tried before (e.g., associational learning theory, anthropological search for patterns of culture²⁰ but these attempts were derailed by the dialecticians out of fear that their own little gravy train would lose steam.

Aristotle himself was forced to consider principles of associationism, and in fact, modern computer scientists have come up with a "connectionism" to overcome the limitations of binary thinking. Association in fact, is the basis of "magical thinking", once referred to as "sympathetic". Association is how children first learn to connect words to things and is also the basis of "fuzzy logic", invented to account for some of the implications of quantum theory.

An hypothetical Empedoclean "law" of association would have no need to construct or search out contradiction (in this sense, "law" refers to an orientation, standpoint or perspective, assuming that all things are indeed connected). Fuzzy logic attempts to correct the rigid conjunctive/disjunctive (Aristotelian *either/or*) dialectic in philosophic and mathematic theorems, introducing the notion of *more-or-less*. Empodocles might be in awe. Relativity is accounted for. *Fuzzy* principles of association allow elements to belong to multiple domains or sets. Presumed contradiction does not negate internal or external consistency, so there is nothing which needs transcended or synthesized, only connections navigated. Boundaries can dissolve without annihilating the unique – that is the project of dialectical synthesis.

20 Since the poet-anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, many looked for commonalities rather than distinguishing characteristics until the field was criticized for being "not-scientific

In other words, modern western (linear, or what Marcuse called "one-dimensional") logic has already discovered its own limitations and academic philosophy is already being flooded with a plethora of "competing" micro-narratives rather than the two or three during the "cold war" period. I would think this scenario of a multiplicity of forms of logic itself would be present in both the initial period of civilizations and the period just preceding their collapse. The structuralist, Thomas Khun would probably say we are ripe for a paradigm revolution – surely a call to battle in the name of unity. Is this the search for truth?

Metanarratives (such as first order or propositional logic) based on the rigid concept of singular causes (determinism), internal consistency (structuralism) and universality (absolutism), that all motion is the dialectic result of friction between opposing forces (dialectical materialism), must fail on their own when boundaries (the artificial reduction of context) are removed. This is also to say, "when relativity and the possibility of chaos are accounted for". Chaos might be seen as the child begins to create "nonsense" words herself for the pure enjoyment of it. Order returns with a slap in the face by the 'language arts' teacher: "the *art* of language can not be creative! ... We must be civilized!"

In other words, our ontology can never assume a predictable universe (futurology) with fixed boundaries and a known center and maintain growth – the planet cannot grow to accommodate us and we cannot escape it. Our metanarrative (metaprogram, paradigm, myth) itself was no doubt created by the imposition of artificial boundaries when King Thug 1st discovered private property – exclusion and privilege. Just as the civilized metanarrative, (or the growth demanded by its calculus) necessitates the death of cultures, the death of metanarrative produces a multiplicity of micronarratives (Lyotard). For example, the closer we feel we are to a grand unification theory, the farther we come away from it. This is a reverse application of the Heisenberg principle (of uncertainty). Add to this censorship and the total commodification of information itself! We now become aware of the possibility of the death of civilization itself – bureaucratic growth and its increased atomization and dumbing down of 'components' in *the machine* with concomitant loss of communication between them ultimately leads to total redundancy and breakdown of bureaucratic function – *Fengersén's Last Law of Cybernetics*. This can only mean a return to 'freedom' for the members, transforming from machine components to a multiplicity of simultaneous autonomy and ~autonomy (relation) – the spontaneous (and impermanent?) voluntary association Bakunin and Kropotkin spoke of, not Lyotard's laughing dismissal of chaotic *Brownian Motion*.

The present perception or dialectic that "this is the world we have and I'm damned pissed about it! (but nothing I can do about it)" generating Holloway's "*scream*", disappears when we can stop rationalizing and mathematicizing life and start living it. This is not a call for the abandonment of reason, but for the toleration of other "ways of speaking" – an *openness to being*. This is anarchy.

The world that we have made as a result of the level of thinking that we have done so far, has created problems we cannot solve at the level of thinking at which we created them – *Albert Einstein*.

Notes on Rules in the Spirit of Boas: I've always had a problem with Zerzan's critique of reason ("symbolic thought"), unless it refers only to modern reasoning (constrained by "symbolic" or "formal logic" and quite prone to error because of its ever growing complexity and specialization). Unlike Zerzan, I'd be for *more* symbolic thought. In the old movies, to get passed the censors and maintain an 'artsy' appeal, a sex scene might have been portrayed as a flower flowing gently down a river (e.g., in *Tarzan*). When the couple lit up cigarettes, we all knew what had occurred. The cigarettes and flowers themselves have meaning to us. On the other hand, if $A = \text{Logic}$ and $B = \text{logos}$, then in ' $A \subset B$ ' or ' $A \supset B$ ', A and B are themselves meaningless symbols or more accurately, arbitrary signs – we have only made an assertion, $A = \text{Logic}$, etc. It is not heuristic. We can not ask, "what else might 'A' be?" A specific boundary has been established which cannot be crossed except by the unlearned child, the mentally ill or avant garde surrealists. Language, on the other hand, implies. It goes beyond the immediate both subjectively (limited only by the imagination) and objectively (limited within the shared symbols and codes of one's culture, its "logic" and "traditions").

I would say all thought (beyond simple sensory – or even zen – awareness) is symbolic. I don't think we can posit a direct, unmediated relation to the world, even for Plato or for John Locke (Plato himself recognized this in his *Allegory of the Cave*, which he attributes to Socrates, in his *Republic*). This gets us back to the problem of "reality". We need our metaphors to make any kind of connection just as our perceptual apparatus filters 'sense data' to give us a 'mental picture'.

Xenophanes thought that there is a truth in the world, a reality, but we can only act-as-if we know it – anything more is folly.

I prefer thinking of western, linear, formal Logic as but one type of logic/reasoning if only because the reverse can lead to the kind of thinking which might proclaim that all other/earlier thinking is illogical, irrational or a-rational. With such a view, the imperial state is not only reasonable, but reasonable par excellent! It is an endorsement of enlightenment progress. In Zerzan's tyranny of symbolic thought, what is mediated is not our direct (intellectual) relationship to the "real world" (this was not possible until the largely platonic introduction of the subject/object dialectic), but our active *participation* in the world by detouring and circumscribing our symbols, and this is nothing but the supersession of freeplay with tunnel vision – the co-opting, detouring and corralling of our symbolic thinking, corralling our capacity to be *involved* with the world we perceive.

Aristotle's laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle are the backbone of formal logic and mathematics, and probably date back at least to Euclid in their European manifestation, much earlier in places such as Sumer or China. If all rationality or reasoning is the application of one set of rules or one code or one set of invariable propositions, we are back to the problem I stated above: who sets the rules?. If the answer is "Aristotle" or "Pascal" or "George Boole", we have accepted the rationality of "culture hero". Intelligence becomes synonymous with 'law giver'. It is the same rationality behind "the divine king". If we say "logic itself sets the rules", then I'd have to wonder how and why we survived (actually, "lived") so many thousands of generations without it. Addressing this dilemma, Hegel found the phenomenological spirit, Whitehead found god, Chomsky found the deep structure of transformational grammar.

Formal logic attempts to derive meaning and predictability in a context-free system. In other words, it is a self-contained system. Proofs are not allowed by endeavoring outside this system. Language, on the other hand, is always context-sensitive. New information (new meaning) must always come from outside our own domain (ego). Formal logic demands the erection of boundaries. These fences around our imagination have many uses, but should not be thought permanent. There is always an outside to any domain (a domain is defined by the 'existence' of an outside) but without these temporary boundaries, the world would be too mind boggling to cope with (or at least discuss!). Clearly, we need to impose some structure, some rules. A lifetime peaking on LSD-25 would be short indeed – chaos may be the order of the day, but chaos can kill.

Rules arise to account for acceptable (or unacceptable, but predictable) exceptions to expected events. These are not exceptions to rules, but to what comes to us "naturally" (or "culturally"), so to speak – exceptions to our expectations, divergences from the status quo, breaks in the action, novelty. If Culture is considered a "logical game", then cultural traditions (customs) represent ways that are 'allowed' within that game or system. cultures (with a small 'c') can be viewed as associations of people playing a consensual language game – emic logic. The 'point' of the game is found in the playing. Boas taught us that we cannot impose our 'Logic' or propositions and presumptions on others and expect to come away with any accurate interpretation of them. There are/were a multiplicity of possible and existent logical 'games'. One codex cannot fit all, particularly when conditions of existence (historical, contextual) differ for every where and every when.

There is no "proper" grammar but that imposed by grammarians. Speech is "proper" if it conveys meaning. It is "proper" when it's meanings and syntax are shared (rather than enforced). A group of people share a similar pattern of speech precisely because they speak together. It is a matter of mimicking, adopting, modifying, learning and reproducing. We call this "agreement". That we can disagree illustrates at least that we are communicating, not that we are engaging in contract negotiations. The degree to which meaning is "private" depends on the intensity of the social relation – the saturation of communication into everyday life. No underlying (grammatical) *rules* are required, but there are physiological and environmental *conditions* which must be met, and when we think of conditions and responses, we are speaking in terms of interplay and probability rather than unilinear causality. There are always unexpected results – it is in accounting for these we devise rules.

"If I sit on this end of the empty teeter totter, the other end will rise (every time)". This is not a rule or law, it is a description and can be formulated mathematically. We do not need the formulation in order to play with the device. It is logical, empirically demonstrable and accurate. It is not unlike a photograph. We can add conditions to the environment (another player) and to our physiology (weight differentials) which modify the statement. This can also be formulated mathematically. Philosophers propose the *law* of gravity and the inclined plane to account for the regularity. Even this is not necessary to enjoy or even create a game of it. Gravity is only a *name* applied to an ubiquitous, mundane phenomenon. Other regularities are found which correspond to this notion. Gravity is not a rule. It is its own proof. It is a name like "god" to answer certain

"why" questions. We come up with rules when the game goes wrong – on the teeter totter: "sit closer to the end and it will work better!" If we question the rule, we are driven to experimentation, and in our experimentation, we expand the game – we play with conditions because the rules eventually lead to boredom. The accumulation of rules diminishes the possibility of pleasure, and without pleasure, without reinforcement, we stop learning. We parrot.

A cultural tradition which accumulates rules (because of a correspondingly long tradition of rulers) will eventually come to expect (and in our case, observe) rules for every foreseeable event. This is the creation of formal logic – the basis of our cultural grammar, thought to be *the* universal grammar and whose elucidation we call "knowledge". The possibility of freeplay is gradually eroded. Rules inform our behavior – they are a set of permissions as well as restrictions and when well rehearsed, give us a sense of the power of self control. This is precisely the power of submission. It's a questionable pythagorean assumption that a single set of rules, a universal grammar which can be mathematically formalized, underlies all human activity – hard-wired laws which come with the meat of the psyche. This idea is usually found lurking beneath genetic determinism. It matches the structuralist's *logical necessity* in environmental determinism. Both extremes discount interplay. In both cases, determinism is equivalent to predestiny – a rational justification for any status quo. In all extreme cases, laws are reified, absolutism is decreed, change, modification, revolution, even difference is denied. We have returned to religious despotism.

We may well construct rules for every exception, but we all know intuitively that while exceptions are (by definition) unexpected, there are exceptions to every rule, and in the privacy of our selves, we eagerly seek them out. It is possible the imagination can annihilate law, but mostly we see the reverse – the annihilation of imagination. It is therefore a *logical* proposition that any questioning of rules (dissent) is a function of psychosis, fantasy or, at the very least, "bad science" until a "paradigm revolution" occurs (via the democratic *rules* of consensus).

The early Greek 'philosophers', precursors of modern thought, were dissenters against the religious ideology and the moral authority of the priest kings and their slave-based, tax-funded bureaucracy, many speaking out against the fear of the gods (which, of course, underlies the divinity of kings). But it is also true that many (if not most) were perfecters of the instruments of war and expropriation and technology (tactical and economic logic, rhetoric and mathematics) for that state – educators of kings. Some were reformers such as Plato, who postulated a perfect (hierarchical) social order. Socrates pointed out the illogical basis of the existing social order and was condemned for impiety. Diogenes audaciously laughed in the face of authority (Alexander), rejecting the whole project of civilization but was discredited as an eccentric clown (much like the much later Emperor Norton). Cynics decried all authority and statecraft. It was from among these we got the notion of a golden age – applied theorists of an egalitarian social order which, reminiscent of today's 'primitivist' discourse, might be something to return to, as if there was once one static, uniform all-embracing social relation. Unification of the philosophical project, quibbling only over its details, accompanied the growth of western empire.

Most of what we know about the earlier thinkers (including Plato's teacher, Socrates) comes from Plato himself. Only fragments of their original work survived the later bonfires of the Christians in power. It is their translations and *détournements* which survived to give an underlying philosophical basis of modern civilized *Logic*, (or, labeled by the renaissance men, *Reason*). Mathematical formulation and textual representation after Aristotle allowed such a specialization of learning that a vicious circle was created – a rationalization underlying the class system which thinkers such as Socrates had opposed. This specialization is why it is not the philosophers and mathematicians who cause the problems of society, but the uninformed add men and politicians who maintain them. This lets philosophy off the hook and able to perfect the instruments of statecraft with a clear conscience. Dissent within the ranks is tolerated in the interest of progress when the ranks have been circumscribed within the bounds of "*reason*". This dissent is used as the *loyal opposition* which gives people the illusion of choice.

Historically opposed to philosopher's enamoration with reason, the medieval church embraced paradox (mystery) by institutionalizing *matters of faith* to aid their own sophistry to instill in all the submission to (their) authority – only a supreme authority might embrace contradiction, and only on that authority, more earthly authors may promote it. Hiëronymus Bosch ornamented churches with surreal art, but only within the context of religious moralism and apocalyptic order. 250 years later, Johann S. Bach, another adorer of churches, was initially chastised for introducing the dominant seventh to his melodies – an obvious promoter of (harmonic) discord. When not seen as alienating tools of Madison Avenue, art, creativity, novelty and imagination are still seen only as subverters of *reality*, and therein lies madness. We want no surprises.

Our own infatuation with Aristotle's excluded middle dialectic informs our analyses that all thought must be either rational/scientific or religious/spiritual. More passionate modern thinkers have added "emotion", giving us the so-called "holistic" triad of "rational, spiritual, emotional man(kind)", the still patriarchal synthesis of "rational man" and "emotional, irrational woman" – Venus and Mars. It is still argued as to the primacy of each of these influences to our behavior, but few question our place at the bottom (or top) of a hierarchy of submission: Reason "dictates", passion "enslaves", submission to faith "liberates" us from the "bondage" of earthly desire (more commonly known as "evil"). Thank god for the protestants and the bourgeois revolution! We could eliminate the church by denying contradiction, unifying, transcending or synthesizing opposition. But as Stirner advised, we have only replaced "god" with "man".

Today, the argument of logic (persuasion, discourse) is itself a game of domination (power), disguised as the search for truth or merely the means to an income. There are winners and losers. We do not even linguistically differentiate the *authority* of the expert and that of the master – both have exclusive rights to 'knowledge' (now called "information" – the emphasis always directed to 'things', 'trivia', 'commodity'). They tell us "knowledge is power!" We engage in information wars. For the authorities as well as philosophers, it is not even a matter of maintaining an illusion – they have already persuaded themselves. They have the "products" (of our labor) to prove it – their "net worth". They are the success stories in the vicious cycle of the spectacle – the self-fulfilling prophecy.

We have become an outcome oriented culture – product is all. We do not value process except as a means to specific ends. The only process we are concerned with is *production*. Its end is *consumption* which only benefits *power*. Consumption feeds the cybernetic machine. *Process* is reformulated as *progress*. Even revolutionary thought (discourse) is ensconced in this mind-set. Certain presocratic thinkers thought all process, or the flux of actual connections is the only reality we need be concerned with. Zen, for example, is also more process oriented, less concerned with direct causes in a singular "chain of events", "lines" of thinking producing "results". This kind of thinking also underlies the field of ecology. I guess if there is a point to my diatribe, it would be that we could 'benefit' from rethinking our logic itself, particularly questioning it as a linear system of contradictions or oppositions which must be transcended in personal struggle and toil; a system of progress, of products, the construction of a perfect unified synthetic machine marketing the death to life everywhere, the coming of the so-called "singularity" (the imagined technological joining of the human with the machine).

Thinking in terms of opposites, we are drawn to war. For instance, we see only workers and bosses, and we think eliminating one will free the other. Seen in terms of process, we liberate both by abolishing 'workshop' (slavery). We see rulers and the ruled, so we think killing off the rulers will liberate the ruled. Seen as a process, we liberate both by abolishing rulership. We see owners and the disenfranchised. We want to re-enfranchise by looting or vandalizing the property of the owners, (if only to "wear them down"). Seen as process, we eliminate the owners and the owned by doing away with the concept of property, ownership. This is not to suggest that we should nihilistically eliminate all our notions – abandoning the notion of gravity will not remove our bonds to the planet and enable free flight in this *reality*. This reality does not, on the other hand, preclude other realities – dreamtime. We choose the spot from which we make our stand. The only difference is the same as that between praxis and theory. Insurrection is born when the two are joined.

Seeing commonalities, generalization, relative perspectives, is difficult in a state of war, and that is the state we are in. We are fighting for our uniqueness, our radical subjectivity defined only by the extent of our imagination. So we are want to discriminate and isolate and search out causes of our alienation and means to its elimination. We can't help but reproduce the system we oppose when we fight among each other for persuasive position – for authority. The kind of war I am concerned with fighting is for *living*, and maybe that is something which can only be fought in the doing, not just the thinking.

I would not wish to annihilate the idea of non-contradiction, only its 'legal' status. As Bonanno said, "for anarchism, for the anarchist, there is no difference between what we do and what we think, but there is a continual reversing of theory into action and action into theory. That is what makes the anarchist unlike anyone who has another concept of life and crystallizes this concept in a political practice, in political theory".

Becoming human depends upon participation, and this in turn depends upon overcoming the false dichotomy of the rational mind. Rational reflection produces a self-regarding ego that cleverly abstracts itself from anything that does not confirm its fictive autonomy. As long as this self-regarding ego is not dissolved, participation is impossible. The tendency in Western "spiritual life" since Plato has been to enshrine the ego among the Eidos and declare it to be

sacred. Applied to our cherished spiritual pretences, Socratic irony is like an acid that melts the foundations of this monumental presumption. ... Beware of Greeks bearing abstractions

... The shift from participation precipitates the identity crisis of modern times. Also its de-sacralization: making the ego sacred, we lose all sense of how anything else can be. Better said, "modern man" is the euphemism for this crisis, for the identity we ascribe to ourselves on Platonic terms in a schizoid fiction – *John Lash, [Socrates in the Last Days](#)*.

The Mis-acknowledgment of Contradiction

Lucien Lévy-Bruhl [1857 – 1939] was the first anthropologist to address comparative cognition. In his work *How Natives Think* (1910), Lévy-Bruhl speculated about what he posited as the two basic mindsets of mankind, "primitive" and "Western." The primitive mind does not differentiate the supernatural from reality, but rather uses "mystical participation" to manipulate the world. According to Lévy-Bruhl, moreover, the primitive mind doesn't address contradictions. The Western mind, by contrast, uses speculation and logic. – *Wikipedia*

A year later Boas deconstructed even this dichotomy in his *Mind of Primitive Man*. Much earlier, Socrates is said to have focused on "the pre-intellectual moment of complete participation" rather than Plato's "pre-incarnational Eidos of pure intellect". Plato was the primary author of that subject-object 'axis', or dichotomy. Also from John Lash:

Ah, that word: participation. It is the key to Socrates' true identity and his epochal mission. A technical term in anthropology, it was introduced by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl to describe the mentality of primitive peoples for whom the world is unmediated by conceptual structures in the way it is for us, the way it has been, more or less globally, since the Golden Age of Greece. In short, it is the conceptual format that prevailed before Greek rationality defined the subject-object axis.

Working definition: participation is the involvement that comes with discovering how the external world forms its own relationships with the world of the internal psyche, prior to the mind dictating how these two are to be related. It is, by definition, a pre-intellectual moment, but the horizon it presents contains a whole range of intellectual discoveries. The greatest difficulty in grasping the actual, lived character of participation stems from the error of thinking that it is our thinking that dichotomizes the world. This is simply wrong. For the archaic mentality, living in full participation, the world is already Two. Thinking does not make the world Two, and to assume it does is to invest it with power it does not have... Before the split of self-awareness into world-and-self, we participated in an autonomously split world, a realm of reflections, doubles, counterparts and chirality, a maze of mirror symmetry and, even more baffling, mirror asymmetry.

I think this idea of pre-logical twoness is pushing it a bit, in order to preserve a contradictory nature to the world – twoness assumes our platonic reduction of the world as dichotomous essences. I and you is not a contradiction, and we even have a word for it – "us". Nor is the reverse image cast from a mirror, yet we call it "me". To observe linguistic distinctions in a so-called primitive language which, for example, distinguishes the obvious from hidden, (e.g. in Cariban, the suffix *-(i)kong* 'not obvious', but usually translated 'sacred'), one should not assume an ontology of a divided world of the sacred (hidden) and profane (obvious). To distinguish is not the same as to dichotomize, which is what Levy-Bruhl was getting at. This is not Freudian teleology, or enlightenment thinking that at some point, the civilized have recognized the base dichotomies of the world (like Freud's infant discovering that the umbilical cord has vanished and mother ('me' + 'other' or 'my other') is now a separate being).

Dialecticians such as Levy-Strauss could not imagine a world where contradiction is not recognized, so fashioned primitives into dialectical analysts mediating the world's

contradictions through myth. If irony inherent in the Trickster were annihilated by the myth, the Trickster would disappear (in a puff of logic) and so too would the myth. Recognition of irony is not acknowledgment of immanent contradiction needing transcended. It is fun. Irony makes us laugh. It also helps us to remember. Synthesis of ironic distinctions would take the fun out of life.

If *party* were considered a motivation, analysis is mediation. An immediate situation is a celebration – we are allowed to become clowns. When dichotomy imposes itself ("class struggle"), partyers fight. Emma Goldman thought we should be dancing fighters, which is also to say, "fighting clowns".

Participation is not simply "what one does". Not just any behavior, it is *partaking* behavior. It is our participation in and with the world which gives experience. Otherwise, we are only spectators. The real distinction between primitive and civilized is that in the former there is no authoritative body (of humans armed with laws) enforcing behavior with threats of dire consequence to the person, even though it is admitted there may be 'natural' (or what we would consider 'supernatural') consequences. We think of primitives as superstitious, but there are no greater superstitions than adherence to progress and authority. Participation is the involvement with what we experience. It is *a-mediate*. Mediation interferes with our involvement. Enough mediation, whether physical or cognitive, and we become alienated. We experience perpetual loss. We are angry, depressed or numb. Hyper-alienation was experienced by Winston Smith when he found he actually loved O'Brien and Big Brother and Julia became nothing to him – he became self-regulating and therefore cured of love and rage. In fact, he became cured of everything. Ultimate alienation is, of course, death, the final cure for life.

When participating with a garage band as a performer, one partakes of art. When cutting an album for RCA, there is obvious mediation on many levels: three-minute art suffers. This is why live performances of The Grateful Dead went over so well. Purists will say that *unplugged* is more "immediately experienced". This immediacy is not in reference to time (except in the sense of "presence") but refers to its translation or filtering through solid state or tubular electronics. I consider the tube amp to be just another instrument (preferable to solid-state). Others insist that art is free of *any* mediation, and Zerzan says art itself *is* mediation. This is possible only if art is considered to mimic life, or is viewed merely as practical or utilitarian (as in 'decoration' which is thought to relieve boredom).

The root of partake as well as participation is, of course, "party". I think the Pleistocene cave-painters celebrated life, the universe and everything, they did not try to capture it. This is why there are rarely any spears depicted and their animals are invariably pregnant. It is no contradiction that these same animals were hunted.

Art can be celebration or protest. Think of the painting "*The Scream*" or the song "*Smells like teen spirit*". If we are alienated, our art which portrays it cannot be. Art is the transformation of imagination to the corporal, tangible, sensible, touchable. Even surrealist art is not mental, ethereal, or refined (that is how we might experience it). If art is mediation, mediation need not be 'evil'. The S.I. *détournement* of a commercial graphic sought to bring it back into the realm of art by tweaking it's message.

détournement is always funny (even if in a disturbing sort of way). It is the double entendre Shakespeare was so gifted at using. Art need not mimic life, but it might induce us to partake of it, and one must partake or participate in order to experience. Keep in mind that one can also refuse.

Implicit in both pre-socratic and post-socratic thought is 'moderation'. Epicurus noted that pleasure is the only thing people value in and of itself, but also promoted moderation. Any virtues (such as moderation) are only valuable if they help to achieve happiness, which he equated with pleasure. We tend to translate this only in terms of consumption. That is a mistake. Our all-or-nothing worldview leads us to think that all things, particularly our logical constructions, must be carried through to their conclusion. Taoists also warned against too much reliance on reason and logic. This over-reliance increases the tendency to become saturated with contradiction or it narrows our vision sufficiently enough that we are blind to the contradictions we have now created.

For example, one may posit that a bit of skepticism and cynicism is absolutely fundamental to exposing the illusions which might mediate our experience. Carried to logical conclusion, skepticism as philosophical praxis leads to total paranoia and when mixed with cynicism, to complete paralysis. If change is desired, we must at some point begin to place our trust in unfamiliar roads or create new ones. Participation requires that there be choices available. It also requires that we experiment with novelty. Just ask Sam about green eggs and ham. This is science. Unfortunately, science as merely a method of discovery is no longer taught in our schools. It is now a means of technology, abuse and control, and for the radical who believes our choices must not be dictated by others if we are to achieve authentic happiness, something to be avoided at all costs. A revolution of scientific structure might just be modeled on child's play – that 'natural', inquisitive participation with the world of which all children seem to be masters.

I do not accept the presupposition that Aristotle's laws of thought generalize to all existence, even though they are mighty handy to solve certain types of problem. Their 'over-generalization' even colloquially defines "rigid thinking". It precludes the idea of relativity, without which, autonomy dies in its own tracks. It is limited thinking for a limiting world, without simile or metaphor leading to other domains of meaning, without imagination leading to other ways of behaving. A brief look about reveals that we are surrounded not by natural dialectical oppositions, but by downright cultural oxymorons. The project of civilization is their synthesis, the maintenance of an illusion – *doxa* – the supersession of 'reality' by the plastic..

A basic problem found among scientists, philosophers, theosophists and other magicians throughout history has been the attempt to thingify process. We all seem to do it, and even the physiological perception of what is otherwise agreed is a spectrum, gives us distinct colors such as red or blue. It would be a true statement to say "there is no such thing as gravity", as absurd as this might sound. Gravity is not a thing but a relation between things with certain qualities such as mass. Race is an even more murky category. It is not a thing. If it is real, it is the coming together of an entire 'history' of individual people in individual localities spread over an expanse of space and time,. We can't even come to agreement on the nature of *those*, or whether they are one and the same – "space-time". Race is an *effect* of many complex processes. But it's how we

talk, and this tells us how to organize – we must, after all, be organized to be coherent. Enlightened, liberal thinkers no longer concern themselves with race. We worry whether we are "real" anarchists, or merely neo-anarchists. We criticize the other as a citizenist or merely yuppie leftist. We ponder over the finer distinctions of the concepts of state and nation. We confuse sex and gender with socially determined roles/rules of behavior. We construct categories and then posit best-fitting members. We don't like ambiguity nor easily accept paradox – they present problems which must be resolved. My position is that none of these *things* exist. They are processes, relations, instantaneous points removed from a context or from a spectrum. This is not a criticism, only a description of how we talk. I think Clinton was on to something when he said "it all depends on what your definition of 'is' is". Lange said the definition of a thing is always contingent on the status of who is doing the defining. I do not suggest that the empirical world does not exist beyond our constructions, but that perhaps we are not the organism whose destiny it is to figure it all out – something to do with pissing in the wind.

ch 19: Spectacle, Collapse & The Ethics of Crime

A Brief history of the Spectacle: Tyrants have always understood and mastered the power of force and its maintenance through threat – fear of future force. Out of concern for the future evolved blackmail, extortion, the counter-measure of bribe and then the protection rackets we today call "insurance companies". With such harmless corruption, sustained government became distinguished from isolated bouts of thuggery. After the first tyrants encountered the first revolution, they thought long and hard and then created god. No sooner than that, they gave us priest-kings and piety, from which we got morality and therefore, self-control. These priests improvised the first Nuremberg Defense: "Hey man! I was just following the details laid out in my job description!", and the hostile public was appeased, since back then, they too could read the word and knew it to be good. Fear had successfully metamorphosed into law.

In the East, groups of bureaucrat-philosophers we now call "Confucius" had accomplished a revolutionary feat. The invention of 'ethics' overthrew the absolute divinity of kings and their imposed fear of the gods, but soon realized that gods still came in mighty handy now and then, and like parliament's re-imposition of monarchy after the British revolution, let them be – the illusion of a "benevolent" monarch was born. As Rexroth much later noted, just as both Uther and Gorlois had Merlin of the Cave, every war king needs a priest king at his side. This function was taken over by the democrats when the Greeks caught up with the Chinese. After many centuries of heroes fighting their own gods, they proposed a democratic oligarchy of philosopher-kings – western sages who would manage the slaves with wisdom.

In the "Allegory of the Cave", Socrates warned Plato of the alienating power of illusion, and Plato discovered how one could usurp an harmless illusion and replace it with something more profitable to masters and tyrants. He called the process of coming out of the darkness of barbarity into the illumination of modernity "*dialectikos*". This, he passed on to Aristotle who created the modern illusion, "the good" of the state. Four hundred years later, after the Romans had reclaimed kingship with their czarist empire, Philo of Judea took Plato's republican ideas and laid down the foundation stones for the Roman Catholic Church who, uncomfortable with the ideas of godless Greek democracy, promptly burned or hid away all previous writing.

The camel-pirate revolution in the middle east got hold of the ancient historical documents which had survived the catholic bonfires, and rediscovered the cave story Plato had so meticulously detoured in his utopian manifesto, *The Republic*. After centuries of crusading in the name of censorship, both sides lost and this produced the Renaissance. But all lights eventually burn out, and after a particularly dark period of pissed off peasants who followed the teachings of a fellow nailed to a tree many years earlier for proclaiming that christmas spirits are not what you drink (– *Ian Anderson*), the Western bureaucrats came through victorious. This was called the "bourgeois revolution" by the heretical philosophers, and in some more religious circles, the "protesters reformation". To this day, we think these were two distinct processes, but refer to the general period as *The Enlightenment*, brought to you by a grant from the Aristotle Foundation.

It was an evolved sophistry generating an hypocrisy which continues to enslave even

after 2500 years. Following Hobbes, King Charlie II, Descartes and Hegel, Engels looked at this hypocrisy and called it "the dialectics of nature", Marx looked at its result and called it "alienation". Revolution became the ultimate scientifically enlightened progress over nature. The accomplished deconstructionists, Mark Twain and Max Stirner, simply called all this a "lie" producing an accumulation of unnecessary necessities for the benefit of proprietors against the interests of the individual. Marx replaced "lie" with "fetish" and proclaimed Stirner an idiot, ungrateful to the collectivist teachings of Plato. Boas, following on the heels of Kant and Goethe, reminded us that it is the a-rational shackle of thoughtless custom which could be unlocked once we understood, and then broke from tradition. Freud disagreed, and said there's nothing to be done but cope with it. His nephew, the founder of the Public Relations Industry, discovered upon a reading of *Tom Sawyer*, how the discontent of civilization could be completely white-washed, and rendered invisible. The Dupont corporation gave us "better living through chemistry", to the standing ovation of that great philanthropist, J. D. Rockefeller, dead oil baron and last of the great pirate kings.

Fortunately, there have always been isolated "nuts" waiting in the wings, always threatening to come loose – self-proclaimed anarchists and secretive revolutionaries hanging out in dark alleys or reciting poetry in dark clubs, although their motivations have not always been certain. One of these, the ever lucid (some say "loosened") Guy Debord, brought all discussion back to the cautionary advice of Socrates and called it the "spectacle" – an appearance, show, diversion, distraction. His followers, thinking this a new idea, thought the time was ripe to take over the whole show with worker self-management, but as had recently happened in Germany, Russia, Holland, Spain, Hungary and was occurring in China, force was too great, lies were too pervasive, and misery was too widespread. The show had already become integrated when the pirates, tyrants, parliamentarians and priests joined forces, settled their few remaining minor differences with a few major wars, and announced the upcoming privatized construction of the democratic global village, policed peace on earth and perpetual tranquility through war – the show must go on, even if it kills us all!

Heidegger's *Enframing*: "Maybe the only way for humans to go back to nature is to go extinct." Must this be true, that the show must go on? With the concept of *enframing*, Heidegger is often seen as deconstructing the anti-technology (and therefore primitivist) position. I think the main problem seen with primitivism is a dialectic view which opposes progress with anti-progress, or its reversal. It is still a progressive view of the cosmos. It is not the desire to "return to nature" that disturbs the establishment but the fact that it, like the old hippie communes, can neither be economically recuperated (creating small populations of non-consumers unlikely to buy enough MacCave products to support economic expansion into this area) nor co-opted into organized revolutionary/insurrectionary activity (and therefore harmless to the state even though potentially undermining of capitalist ideology among their neighbors), to be castigated as terrorist on the one hand, or recruited and converted by revolutionaries on the other. Unlike green democrats who wish to make a smaller (or less) footprint on the environment, or DIY (Do-It-Yourself), both of whom still endorse partaking of capitalism, or patriot survivalists accumulating k-rations and ak-47's expressing a "native" will to power, primitivists (at least those who aren't waiting around for a collapse before they decide to

"live"), like crimethinkers (also disparaged around these parts), promote something akin to *dropping out* to create something new, or rather, re-create something old. The point of 'departure' is alienation and mediation and like Marxism, that is also the center of their critique – not just alienation from the means of production, but alienation from life itself. Primitivist logic suggests "If we are enframed by the past, wouldn't it be more reasonable to model something old than to create something new?" That 'primitivist' something is different from the other schemes in that it specifically decries power (authority, the rule of law), capitalism, runaway technology and at least ideologically promotes communist or egalitarian social relations. Even though much of their ontology and anthropology may be misinformed and their critique flawed (one can never go home – *tom wolfe*), I'd think self-proclaimed anti-politicos would spend less energy criticizing the primitivists and more on developing their own praxis. But again, Heidegger's warnings must apply to us all. Of course there is, informed by an interpretation of Zerzan, the straw man "primitivist" who thinks the pre-linguistic caveman (who, by the way, never existed) is the way to go, most folks I've talked with who endorse anarcho-primitivism, display a *tendency* which is *rationaly* informed (by intellectual critique) rather than the fundamentalist religious zeal displayed by hysterical collapsist flintknapping strawmen. This is still not a sufficient critique: many of us "go too far" in our responses – we all wish to put as much distance between ourselves and that which we would criticize.

But an alienating social relation is not a matter of settled vs. nomadic ways of life any more than it is a matter of gathering vs. cultivation or iron vs. flint spear points. It's about how folks treat each other as well as how we think of ourselves. We should not underestimate the power of the self-fulfilling prophesy, nor think of it as an intellectual process. The force of production is nothing but our relations (and self-concepts) mediated by things, in fact by "property" which is a relationship with things, not the things themselves. Our social relations are thus 'mapped' according to our distance to/from things, which is to say, our relative "exclusion", and evokes games of one-upmanship, or 'politics' (keeping in mind that our ideas are also treated as "things"). In this view, the anti-technology aspect of primitivism is itself a falling-in to the notion of the thing, a definition of ourselves in terms of our things – it is still Marx's "Man the labourer". The communist (without property) social relation which they wish to emulate is a positive step, but it is thought an impossible dream (utopian) because our very notions of social relations are molded or "enframed" by a history of alienating relations.

Perhaps the greatest point of divergence between different critical analyses hovers over one's notion of what is *essential* or *natural* about humanity. Work is thus opposed to play and planning & organizing to spontaneity for the instrumentalist. A natural will to power is opposed to a will to live for the authoritarian. Sacrifice for the "greater good" is opposed to narcissistic hedonism for both the christian and the socialist. We have different ideas of *species-being* which enframe our responses and representations and in fact personal ethics, whether those notions are conscious and rationalized or hidden and therefore sacrosanct. The result of en-framing is always mythic, whether rationally and elegantly described or impulsively lived.

If one thinks of species as existing process rather than existing thing (being), its

mythical (reified) qualities begin to fade. Even the biologist's metaphysics of species contains a high degree of elegance, and they will tell you that that is because it is empirically based:

Being a species, ("human", in our case), is a matter of participation in a process, and that is itself a process. The process is reproduction (making babies who can in turn make more babies), and we are the same species because we can connect, engage and reproduce. In this sense, all process is chaotically a-historical, yet appears to orderly proceed through "time". – *Carlos Dufús*

One might come to the conclusion that Heidegger's "en-framing", Debord's "monopoly of appearance", or Boas' "culture history", all related ideas, deny the possibility of creativity, are therefore almost mechanically invariable, resigned, fated. But Heidegger himself spoke of a "saving power" as essence revealing itself through art and poetics, not unlike Artaud's "theatre of the absurd", Poe's "imp of the perverse", or even Boas' diffusion and incorporation, modification or rejection of (diverse) cultural traits. The real essence of any phenomenon is that it is related to everything else in the cosmos – with diversity there is always a revolutionary potential, even if spectacularly enframed. This is the source of metaphor and metaphor is the essence of poetry. It is what makes language an open rather than closed system of meaning.

Diversity is, of course, the first principle of natural selection. Species vary and evolve, and even biologists recognize that there may be as much variability within species as between them. Without the occurrence of the occasional absurdity (variation from the 'norm'), there is no individuality, no reaction, no learning and in fact, no change whatsoever. It is in fact all the various influences in every different combination, everything which has preceded us and the present context surrounding us which make each of us up. It is our single fate to be each of us unique. Uniqueness is diversity seen in a mirror. Learning, enframing, communication and sexual reproduction are tendencies of normalization. The norm thought of as a *finished product* is an illusion, a phantasm. There is no standard beyond that implied in historical or spatial *tendency*. The standard is in fact only the mathematical result of a measurement of variability. If the unique and different from the *norm* is how we define the absurd, then absurdity is the rule – statistics is the measure of degrees of absurdity in order to calculate a norm, an imaginary middle ground. But if we also go on to define normality as a rule and absurdity as that which breaks from the rule, then conformity is the greatest absurdity. We have created spectacular democracy. On the other hand, the emphasis on and respect for the individual's needs and desires is the celebration of diversity, and therefore the highest social compliment. Life rationalized is a paradox. The egalitarian social relation is not a dialectic between self and other, individual and group. That is a matter for quibbling philosophers and opposing attorneys in divorce court. Self and other is only a matter of perspective.

Whatever one's definition of "human" is, we are always drawn back to our alienation. If you do not doubt your own humanity, where is the problem with a "mythical" humanism unless it restricts your own self-determination and engagement with others (is oppressive, dictates a different set of definitions, etc)? This is mythical individualism – one-against-all. The situation is that we are all human (a stage in the 'collective' species being) and at the same time unique. The dialectic is derived from the democratic myth of all-against-all which most accept, but I would think that the so-called an-

archist project would involve reclaiming the species-being/humanity away from the process of control. The alternative to this humanity is the maintenance of control/power or a constant state of 'red-neck' friction – "Don't tread on me or I'll blow your frickin' head off!" This is the alternative we are living: a vicious cycle which is ordered, commanded, secured, set, all part of the process Heidegger called "enframed.":

[translator's note²¹ – *Stellen* embraces the meanings of a whole family of verbs: *bestellen* (to order, command; to set in order), *vorstellen* (to represent), *sicherstellen* (to secure), *nachstellen* (to entrap), *verstellen* (to block or disguise), *herstellen* (to produce, to set here), *darstellen* (to present or exhibit), and so on. In these verbs the various nuances within *stellen* are reinforced and made specific. All these meanings are gathered together in Heidegger's unique use of the word that is pivotal for him, *Ge-stell* (Enframing).]

Represent, disguise, exhibit, entrap. Sounds like the Spectacle, no? I don't believe this is set in stone, and the fact that dissent is becoming more and more widespread would seem to support me. Cultures and traditions do, after all, change. Might the conclusion forecasting doom imply "yes, but only for the worse" or "the synergy/phenomenological essence is too enframing, too overpowering, there's nothing to be done"? You might notice, I'm no longer talking about primitivism. Heidegger's analysis is not a special case only applying to anti-technologists.

This announcement of catastrophe is surely a declaration of progress as well as collapse. The alternative denial of nature (here, a euphemism for the planet *sans* humanity), even if epistemologically justified, is to remain blind and "go with the flow": the technologist's "progress (or perhaps a messiah) will save us" or even Alfred E. Newman's "What? Me worry?". It is true there is a trajectory, so much is "inherited", but it is neither strictly accumulative nor teleologically progressive: many items are lost to our cultural "memory"; many retrieved artifacts have lost all meaning to us; many traditions are discarded when they are felt inadequate to changing circumstances, even though their remnants (detritus) may enframe/influence our future responses. In the same way, our modern technology, like our bureaucracy, is so complex in its production and functioning, even "experts" are unable to reproduce, maintain or repair it. There are no more fix-it shops – the on-call TV repairman lives on a shelf in an archaeological museum. Meaning is lost and the image is fading when the future is something to be wagered (the futures industry) and planning and preparation are no longer considerations. At some point, function must also come to be lost. It is true, inadequately functioning technology still produces 'wealth' (and we used to bitch about "planned obsolescence" back in the '50's and '60's), but ever more precariously – quality control just costs too much – new products die before they're ever put on the shelf. It is also true that all decision-making regarding functioning is left in the hands of computers, but computers themselves must be designed, constructed and implemented by now-automatized humans, proficient only in their own specialized but mediocre functions. The problem with Microsoft is not a result of a conspiracy of inadequate mediocrity but mediocrity itself – at some point, all progress demands collapse.

But it is also possible to incorporate and reproduce less modern technology which can go on to supersede the more modern. I'm thinking here of the current DIY trend of

21 from Martin Heidegger: [The Question Concerning Technology](#)

refurbishing and marketing pre-computerised cars. The point is that the most enslaving idea *vis à vis* technology is wrapped up in the notion of linear progress – that the new and improved, the increasingly complex is inherently better than the old and reliable. I've always preferred the old black-n-whites over their digitized remakes. If this digitization is progress, why are tv & radio broadcasts faster than high speed internet? Why did my '64 Rambler get better gas mileage than my '87 Suburu, and if either broke down on the highway, I could get the former going again with a pocket knife, garden hose and hay-wire – the latter had to be abandoned? Why does nothing new seem to work five minutes after it's brought home from the store? Ask any wrecker, and s/he'll tell you the biggest business in the towing trade is brand new cars. The next biggest is police impound. Shit just doesn't work any more. "*Challenging*" notions such as progress, complexity and relegation of functioning from centralized organization provides for "*revealing*" the bindings as well as boundaries of technology which Heidegger spoke of.:

"we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology".

Detouring the statement "Necessity is the mother of invention" to "Invention is the mother of necessity" gives one a choice: cell phones are not a necessity! "Questioning is the piety of thought" – H. There always remains the possibility of challenge and in fact, refusal.

The "C" Word And Its False Optimism: I understand this is a dirty word around these parts, but as long as we're on the topic of endings, I'd like to explore the idea of collapse. First, let me say that I agree that this is a dangerous idea, with the implication that we need do nothing but wait, and poof, the world-as we-know-it will vanish to the sustained delight of the cheering audience. That is false optimism. When I suggested that the spectacle was in the process of collapsing all around us, Bill Brown replied that it has never been stronger. I had expected he would comprehend that I used the term "spectacle", and not "economy" or even "civilization". I agree that the military-police-technological-pharmaceutical industry and it's capacity has never been stronger. I don't believe that the oil it depends on is quite the non-renewable resource we've been led to believe. It takes about twenty years for an exhausted well to start showing signs of renewal. Peak oil is a myth – we only extract it faster than it is replaced in any locality, and that is a problem easily handled with globalization.

The economy is itself an illusion, and therefore not subject to the second law of thermodynamics. It cannot collapse except from the perspective of the subjective experience of the individual who has been rendered homeless. All it takes to bring more money/credit into the system is a declaration from the IMF and corresponding keystrokes by the accountant geeks. And it is neither money nor credit which drives the economy, but labor – the appropriated life of workers. Capital, as the emanation of surplus labor, is likewise not a concern. Population increase and global reach combined with an increase in desperation guarantee a never-ending source of labor. The chief effect of an increasing gap between the rich and poor is the increased desperation felt by the miserable, making them perfect candidates for employment in shit jobs, as well as con-

sumers of pharmaceutical palliatives.

The only hitch in the giddyup of progress is food production, but at this point, starvation is a growth industry because it increases desperation on the one hand (for the hungry) and continued toil on the other (by the just-getting-by). It should be obvious to all that the planet cannot support this unchecked pattern of growth, but the moment of our self-destruct mechanism kicking in is probably quite a ways off, and we are, for this moment, safe – that is, as long as the computers at NORAD don't revolt and push the little red button.

How then can I possibly suggest that the spectacle is collapsing? I am thinking of the oil which keep gears from burning each other up in a fast running engine, the glue in a portable house of cards, the mirrors which enable levitation at the magic show. I am thinking from the perspective of the audience. I am thinking of Jean Pierre Voyer's definition of "spectacle", which is the monopoly of publicity:

The secret of the misery of daily life is the real State secret ... The Spectacle is nothing but the private property of the means of publicity, the state monopoly of appearances. With it, only the circulation of commodities remains public. The Spectacle is nothing but the circulation of commodities absorbing all available means of publicity, thus condemning misery to invisibility. The spectacle is the secret form of public misery, where value operates implacably while the deceived gaze only meets things & their use. – *Jean Pierre Voyer*

And as Kropotkin noted,

... all civilized life becomes one huge lie. We accustom ourselves and our children to hypocrisy, to the practice of a double-faced morality. And since the brain is ill at ease among lies, we cheat ourselves with sophistry. Hypocrisy and sophistry become the second nature of the civilized man. – *Kropotkin*

Juxtapose this "one huge lie" with Lyotard's notion of the metanarrative, breaking up into a myriad of micronarratives. For a post-structuralist, this is not too dissimilar from the structuralist thinking of Thomas Khun in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. My point is that the monopoly of illusion, the myth, is breaking apart, and this break-up has been escalating since the rise of post-modernism. There have always been isolated 'wingnuts' for whom the programming didn't quite work, but today the program language itself is fragmenting, under attack by viral infection metastasizing throughout its own technology of mass communication. It has probably always been known that there are two methods of maintaining slave-like compliance, and those are force and illusion. I think Marx illustrated that misery (alienation) is a third. With misery and illusion, little force is necessary. Debord, as I understood him, suggested that it is the spectacle of appearances which glues the whole modern works together – we tend to self-manage our own alienation (see also, Fredy Perlman's [The Reproduction of Everyday Life](#)). In this sense, the spectacle is not a synonym of capitalism or civilization, but a carnival of hypocrisy, the process which makes the whole mess appear like a self-running machine, running on the fuel of misery, delusion and the occasional use of brute force, running in perfect harmony. The more accurate depiction would be that of a machine operating in runaway mode. At this point, we're experiencing floating pistons preventing further acceleration.

We are witnessing today the increase of misery (homelessness, starvation, incarcera-

tion, disease, mental breakdown, etc., all on the rise) and the growth of the police state precisely because the monopoly of appearances, mass delusion, is collapsing. The balance has been interrupted. Hardly anyone believes the social lie anymore. There are no more commies to blame. They try to give us new enemies, like the greedy chinese and invading mexicans and terrorists demolishing sky-scrappers, but more and more, these lies are met with suspicion. Of course, racism is ever present, and is a good trump card, but we are not all convinced that the enemies are to be found anywhere but in the government and on madison avenue, despite our prejudices toward each other. Organized religion is desperately trying to retain its membership, but only fundamentalism sells. Elsewhere, even "new age" is only a lump-all category of ever more diverse beliefs. Even hollywood is portraying stories of resistance with anarchist tones. It's a plot sure to sell. It was thought that new gizmos and trinkets, like the brain-damaging cell-phone, would subdue us, just like the myths had predicted, of beads and mirrors instrumental in conquering native people everywhere. Increasingly, these trinkets are being turned against their makers.

The institution of a police state (it's not coming, it is here) is always an act of desperation – foolish moves only witnessed during the end-game. What else can this top-down paranoia be? The managers are getting nervous. [HPWombat](#) noticed that the police are increasingly concerned that they will be met with violence. I think this fear is unwarranted – there is still a mystique around the notion of "cop-killer". Sure, kill your partner, your children, fellow students, but leave that cop be as he's tasing your paraplegic grandmother in the street! He's only trying to teach you the proper respect for the law. 'Non-lethal' means of torture at home are required because one home-video shown in the right places might result in mass riots, a situation where the cops will actually, god forbid, have to work off those doughnuts. Aside from the occasional institutional hanging and police shootings in the safety of dark alleys, lethal methods are largely outsourced. All is fare in war, and war is always "over there".

Capitalism has more-or-less conquered the globe. Police actions are still required from time to time to quell local nationalist movements, but we are seeing an increase in lethal weaponry and a permanent state of global warfare. Yes, it sells, but wars abroad are not necessary – they are increasingly attempts to counter dissent at home, to re-establish control, to maintain the meaningless existence of the masters of war and their bureaucratic machine. Wars are not fought to access natural resources. Resources are readily available to any corporation which desires them, no matter where on the planet they exist. Conquest is passé, but there is no longer any source of imagination at the top – no one is immune to the combined dumbing down programs of higher education and mass media. The magicians have succumbed to their own illusions, astonished by their own prestidigitations. Warfare is today only distraction to distance our thoughts away from eminent domain, that for more and more, scarcity is being replaced with absence. The necessity of war is the one illusion which actually kills no one in particular, everyone in general. Debord's *integrated spectacle* is none other than Fredy Perlman's fascist *world-eater*, the successful merging of the *worm* of empire and the *octopus* of commerce after millennia of mutual competition. Globalization is the only end any autocrat has ever had in mind. "The enemy is dead, long live the war!", but today's theme song ringing in their ears is ever more Peggy Lee's *Is That All There Is?*

Suppose they gave a war, and nobody came? – *John Lennon*

Even democrats are starting to see this spectacular death. The spectacle will not be resurrected by force or petition. It was created (selected, for those evolutionists among us) to eliminate force so that the fat cats could busy themselves elsewhere, like dining on torts and counting their money and gloating over power while the rest of humanity gleefully toils. Hardly anyone is looking gleeful these days!

The Spectacle Doesn't Lack Reality: The Ethics Of Crime

It's a reversal of the Frankfurt School thing about the culture industry being about deception, alienation, etc. Here, what comes first is reality and then imposed false consciousness cuts us off from it, distorts it. But, one could also say, what comes first, what is vital is illusion, and then to secure themselves against it, societies posit reality. In this view, the culture industry would no-longer be about lack or alienation, but an accumulation of too much reality, hyper-reality – Cornelius.

In this sense, the illusion creates itself out of what is not said. For example, there was a time when governments provided some services such as providing bread for nur-
turance and circuses for entertainment in order to appease the people and maintain rule. Today, with the announcement of privatization, the government is only another corporation whose only function is to maintain a brand name. There is no longer a truth behind the image. There is not even a lie. As Debord suggested in his [Commentaries](#), it no longer even matters. For Baudrillard, this is the birth of the [hyperreal](#).

Would it be considered reformist to abandon this quest for consciousness of the real and ultimate truths, and, as much as I hate to say, return to Marx's idea of a scientism (which I would modify as "a child's inquisiting and experimental play") which addresses the implications of our accumulation of illusion (or hyper-reality)? Maletesta gave another good example of the nature of the spectacle, portraying a person with bound legs from birth, convinced that the bonds were the only thing keeping him mobile, and who forthwith attacked the "man of science" who was attempting to cut his bonds. The Thomas Theorem (Thomas & Thomas, 1928) suggests reality and illusion are identical in their consequences:

"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences"

If the spectacle were an actual (rather than metaphoric) magic show, we could all sit back and enjoy the show, or call bullshit and stomp off home, perhaps to the cat-calls of "party-pooper!" but not to the buzzing of a tazer and seven to ten at the forced labor camp.

I think Marx was wise to concentrate on the observable effects of capitalism and proclaim revolution an applied science. It is "common sense". It is the observable hypocrisy of misery and its sophistic rationale we see all about us and fits well into a Manichean frame of reference – the good guys against the bad guys, the downtrodden standing up to the evil villain. It is a much more meaningful approach for angry coal miners and street-wise anarchists & revolutionaries than the grand philosophical schemes developed by esoteric academics, but there is no more nor less "truth" in either approach.

To call the state (double entendré intended) a "lie" justifies the class war, but the fact

is, the ruling class do not know they are lying, nor are they aware of the hypocrisy around them. Their own rationalization tells them that misery represents a deficiency in the miserable – they are merely inept players in the game of life, losers or at best, unlucky bastards. When their own children fall into this category, they are disowned. Like naughty children, the workers have their legs bound for a reason. It's for their own good as well as for the greater good: the good that comes from christian sacrifice; the good which Aristotle, the father of science proclaimed – the good of the state. Spectacle, like Boas' concept of culture, at least explains (but does not justify) the situation seen from any perspective without resorting to teleology or mystification such as Jung's "collective unconscious". It also provides a perspective from which to challenge our situation.

The spectacle, historical commentary and revolutionary critique coalesce at the juncture of 'truth'. It is already empiricism which fuels our gut reactions – the spectacle assaults all our senses, and because it is ingrained in our consciousness, is the source of the hypocrisy we feel about (and within) us. It is a socially constructed situation whose personal consequences are real. The radical transformation of society might simply be the construction of constellations based only on harm (whether "subjective" or "objective") and its negation, accompanying desire and its promotion. I think it was 'Iroquois' tradition which suggested that our personal decisions must weigh-in the effects on our children for the next seven generations. This is the only meaning "ethics" can have for me. When our anger combines with personal ethics, we become motivated to do more than rhetorically challenge the situation, we fight back.

Without this, can there even be a difference between reform and revolution? I guess my answer would be that it doesn't really matter, except that reforms take place on a daily basis, nothing improves; revolution always occurs in some distant unattainable future, nothing happens. Both reform and revolution are progressivist illusions. I think this line of thought can only point toward crime as our only radical option, neither reform (obviously) nor revolution. There can be no play without an element of crime. To play (or experiment) with the rules is, of course, quite illegal unless one is a devotee of the spectacle. In this case, when one is 'caught', Agamben's state of exception is enacted and the law is changed (or set aside) to accommodate – the state of exception for the one is required to maintain the state of law over the other. The state (in the future) which the "true" criminal devotee envisions (in the present) is, of course, the state of lawlessness, here and now. I also think "anarchist" is still a better descriptor since, just as Stirner reminded us that "theft" is only an acknowledgment of "property", "criminal" is only an acknowledgment of "law". The implication of this lawless state would indicate not only the collapse of the spectacle, but of civilization itself. Without the so-called "protection" of the law, thugs are dealt with personally and mutual aid is rendered possible.

Closing the curtain on this show is certainly going to require something other than (or in addition to) hope, science, metaphysics and armed struggle. Marx advised waiting for the ultimate crisis of capitalism before we strike. I'd say, the situation has always been critical. It may be helpful to consider this ancient theorem:

"A single wasp sting can kill when the moods are already coursing with the viper's poison"

– Anonymous Hibijibi, ca 23rd cent BCE

This is his-torically the appropriate moment for revolution to raise its head. But we are not living in history. This is the age, after all, of flexibility, zero commitment, zero responsibility. The thrashing tentacles and segments of the disintegrating spectacle still has the power to prevent folks from realizing that they do not need submit to reified (but dead) ideas (such as "capital"), laws, bosses and other authorities, that they can do quite nicely depending only on each other. The only remaining question is, "Is this realization even possible?", or as Auntie Dave often [repeats](#), "Do you believe in life before death?" If the answer is "But we couldn't survive!", my response would be "What's there to lose? We're dead already!"

The worker alienates his life in order to preserve his life. If he did not sell his living activity he could not get a wage and could not survive. However, it is not the wage that makes alienation the condition for survival. If men were collectively not disposed to sell their lives, if they were disposed to take control over their own activities, universal prostitution would not be a condition for survival. It is people's disposition to continue selling their labor ... that makes the alienation of living activity necessary for the preservation of life. – *Fredy Perlman*

ch 20: The Property Theory of Labour

Suppose John Locke got it backwards when he declared that property derives from labour (and from which were derived theories by both Adam Smith and Karl Marx, each of whom went on to talk about the labour theory of value)? Then, concerning labour, suppose Marx had made a *species* distinction between creativity and productivity rather than subsuming the both under one category (much as "nation" and "culture" are often forced in our language, creating a lot of *political* confusion and miscommunication)? As it is, we tend to see them as either synonym or in opposition requiring a transformation. The same can be said of use- and exchange-value.

Doesn't productivity also measure creativity? To say "she was a productive artist" is essentially an arithmetic value judgment, isn't it? Productivity here doesn't contain creativity, but quantifies it, as if that was a desirable characteristic were she employed as a painter. But then, as a 'professional' painter, she would have to leave out all the frills and whirlyquews. Just as fecundity must always outnumber fertility ("Only one sperm cell may enter this production facility! Go way!"), use-value inherent in the pragmatic denies the cosmetic whose "function" cannot be determined, like an invited guest who finds no empty chair waiting at the dinner table.

This is not to dichotomize them: productivity is creativity coopted and then constrained and effectively reduced. That her art is "more or less creative" is also a value judgment, but is a qualitative rather than quantitative measure. It may be based on originality or many other qualitative criteria. Perhaps it is inspiring, and "produces" incentive in me to give it a try? But is this "product" a result of her creativity or my vicarity? Can vicarity be a creative process? Obviously, interpretation or reinterpretation necessitates some degree of imagination else Mozart would have to be called up from the dead every time the band plays one of his tunes. A performance by the London Symphony would be just another seance.

There is another sense of value, and that is "esteem" or what Jorn described as the "aesthetic" relation. It seems reasonable to me that production alienates one from unconstrained creativity, and in fact, much of what we consider is personally creative is just an illusion born of commodity fetishism, so the two (productivity & creativity) cannot be semantically equated or ontologically opposed. Otherwise Marx would not have proposed an ATR (*After the Revolution*) world where we are free to create rather than enslaved to the labour of production. Marx' label, "commodity fetishism" might be *post-modernized* by Baudrillard's "simulacrum".

What then would become of the idea of *the development of productive forces* beyond the notion that progress will save us, in which case liberation or revolution are always confined to the future? Was Marx thinking "creative forces" and marxians thinking "productive forces"? I'm not trying to resurrect Marx because I think his view of human nature is particularly civilized – his "species-being" is not a theory of human nature, but of the civilized, or as Cammatte would say, the nature of "domestication". To the defense of Marx, he avoided the problem by cleverly acknowledging that human nature is the nature of who we are at the time in which we are being human. But I'm thinking of

this quote by G.A. Cohen:

Production in the historical anthropology is not identical with production in the theory of history. According to the anthropology, people flourish in the cultivation and exercise of their manifold powers, and are especially productive – which in this instance means creative – in the condition of freedom conferred by material plenty. But, in the production of interests to the theory of history, people produce not freely but because they have to, since nature does not otherwise supply their wants; and the development in history of the productive power of man (that is, of man as such, of man as a species) occurs at the expense of the creative capacity of the men who are agents and victims of that development. [from wikipedia.org]

Furthermore, it seems to me that property *a priori* accompanies the imposition of scarcity (rather than scarcity being an immanent quality of "nature" – an idea from Hobbes, Malthus & Spencer – that populations 'naturally' grow and are limited only through competition). The institution of property grants the owner authority. Institutionalized (central or otherwise) authority creates property through appropriative behavior or exclusion. One must appease the owner's "good favours" to gain access. One could as easily say authority (the behavior) and property (the reification) birth one another. I have said property and authority are two words for the same process – "*bi-nominalized reification*".

The "dictatorship of the proletariat" is merely the return of ownership to the author. One might be surprised to find Marx' reticence to embrace Stirner's "Egoism", and in fact, his demonstrated hostility (obvious in *Saint Max*). Both would maintain property in one form or another. This is why I do not distinguish politics from economics beyond that, in the context of production, it is the former which is the forceful means to maintain the latter. The end is the regulation of scarcity to maintain the status of the property owner. The resulting behavior is seen in systems of exchange (developing out of bribery) and work/services performed in exchange for the crumbs of existence. Thus we are called "wage slaves" for a reason. (In a truly spectacular society like that imagined by multinational corporations and their advertising executives, government could be completely abolished with no perceptible change to our daily lives. There is also a theory that we already experience this and that the government is only another corporation interested only in maintaining its brand name).

Proudhon and Stirner both had a critique of property yet both are claimed as heroes of the [american] libertarian and anarcho-capitalist cause which maintains property – possession maintained by "might" or "right". What's the difference? Such thinking *is* commodity fetishism – more concerned with commodity than community, more focused on subsistence (as in the sub-existence of "just getting by") than sustenance, or alternately, competitive accumulation rather than mutual aid. Our culture requires this lead to labour fetishism and is reinforced by increasing levels of debt: the perceived need to preserve 'jobs', as the products of labour are seen as the only means of survival (even after a successful revolution). The conclusion is that as property is freedom, we should all want more. The double-bind of vicious cycle is rationalized into a win-win scenario.

Could we conclude that productive labour (opposed to aesthetic creativity) can *only* derive from property? Then value (seen as anything other than the simple measurement of the perpetuation of cruelty – the stress level of domination) derived from labour

would be absurd. Property and exchange value are the same thing, and the sequestering into labour, placing a body on one side of an equation with property on the other is only the means by which we are allowed to acquire it and hence measure ourselves.

It's often considered that laziness is the opposite of labour. It appears to me that laziness would provide excellent personal motivation to call for a slave society. It seems we have yet again two definitions for a single term, labour: 1) the job we go to (or disagreeable job, as a less disagreeable one euphemistically warrants a new term – "career", "profession", "calling", "pursuit"), and 2) any physical exertion. Creativity and play can be extremely physical. The usual comment about its productive potential is concerned with how useful it is to someone else – In a fit of rationalization, it is called "altruistic". Productivity demands a marriage between use-value and exchange value to the point that they merge. For the body engaged to labour, one's body is only another commodity or product. Henceforth, all relations are really *productive relations* with property. Play is abolished in favour of productive games. We now have an option between mind-games and body-games.

I suppose the lazy approach to sex would be artificial insemination, something neither too exhilarating nor pleasurable. Passion & physical desire are rendered academic. We are only concerned with a product. Institutionalized sex, whether at the chapel, sperm bank or whore house, metamorphoses pleasure and desire into commodity, just as publishing houses commodify communication and the telling of tall tales, just as institutionalized sport transforms physical pleasure into laboured use-value.

Some take the *yuppie* route, proclaiming they'd "never stoop to manual labor". In their leisure time, they play extreme basketball or roto-till the yard for a garden which never seems to appear. After all, payment received for physical labour indicates a low social position – mental labour requires a positive quality which that other kind of worker does not possess: "intelligence"! Sports celebrities counter this law by commanding exorbitant salaries which render all other considerations moot. The value of a "celebrity's" product is "entertainment value", commodified pleasure through vicariousness. Like the theatre-goer, sports fans are all peeping toms at the window if they are not prisoners peering out through the bars.

Clearly the abolition of work does not imply the end of physical activity, and just as clearly, the preferable solution is not volunteerism. The technological solution has always attempted to end physical activity, with the hopes of constructing another slave-based society where machines are at our beck and call, ready to do our bidding. Now they even do our thinking for us, stripping intelligence of its own commodity value.

Technology: My neighbor came across a hydraulic log splitter and we are sharing it around the area. One can split a cord of wood in no time at all. However, all that bending, stooping and lifting involved in operating it, not to mention pulling the start cord, nearly killed my already ailing back. I'm back to swinging my trusty old maul ten minutes a day (I split wood for two households). Still, five guys with a case of beer could out do the gizmo with little exertion and less time spent. What's the hurry? The reason such "labour-saving" devices were invented in the first place was to increase production

with a decrease in labour cost (that is, the number of employees to be paid), by someone in an engineering firm who only remembered the toil when the old man said "Do the chores or else!" or perhaps would never stoop to swinging an axe to see the fun it might provide and creative uses it might take on, like hacking out your sweetie's initials in an old stump. So we're back to the question "But how productive is that shit!?" Often the prior knowledge of the "labour-saving quality" helps to sell miniaturization of industrial machinery for "home use". Productivity in this sense is only concerned with creating property, not practicality and it is the "job" of the advertiser to create a desire for it. Desire is in fact the product of the salesman, for this is the machinery of commodification.

I do think a discussion of technology is relevant here, as it is still the main product of labour in industrial as well as post-industrial society, even though today it is only a digitized miniature of what was before grand and scarce, or it is a technological (virtual) replacement for everyday life. Please allow me to ramble a bit, as technologists have been making the same promises of liberation through advances in technology since Jahaan Ploughman invented the plow.

I worked in a highly automated dairy and another which utilized archaic (almost medieval) machine works which served to negate the extreme effects of gravity on the worker. I can tell you that the new technology actually increased both physical and "mental" labour. Modern technological solutions serve to decrease the number of employees (labour saving) but all those ancillary tasks are now imposed upon one person, and anxiety levels skyrocket in the name of efficiency. Unfortunately, quality of product also decreases due to the necessity to cut corners for the same reason. In our culture, efficiency wins hands down over quality every time. There is also the problem that the more automation tries to eliminate the "disagreeable" aspects of labour, the more mundane, boring, and unimportant is our perception of our work and in fact, of ourselves. Increased detachment replaces pleasure.

The argument is always presented, "there will always be disagreeable chores". As Bob Black explained, one needn't expect to get all orgasmic from every activity. Sometimes it's hard to distinguish chore from play, other times a distinction is appropriate. Splitting wood is enjoyable to me. Doing it eight hours a day would be murder. Doing it in a blizzard at 30 below is particularly offensive. You'll notice that in the latter two cases, it is not the wood-chopping which is objectionable, but the conditions which surround it – employment and bad weather.

It might also be argued that a sense of ownership is all that protects product quality, giving us an additional sense of personal responsibility. Ownership implying taking on responsibility only means you are alone: you made your bed, now you have to lie in it! For those attracted to ownership of the means of production, I'd remind them of the rationale behind the old Gypsy curse, "Be careful what you wish for, you may just get it". No one will come to your aid if you fuck up. I'd also remind that, together with the tools of the trade, workers *are* the means of production. Fortunately, many radicals today oriented toward "workplace struggle" are more concerned with taking back their lives through the expropriation of their livelihood (the workplace) than the ownership of their product. Their utopian futures center around ideas of distribution rather than accumula-

tion.

An important distinction underlying a creation-production dialectic is that between property and possession. Possession is what you have here and now without proprietary considerations. The only things which might be considered "owned" or more-or-less permanently held (like my shirt or pocket knife) are those things which should be available to all or reproducible with ease. We can appreciate this in our own language with phrases like "he'd steal the shirt off your back" or "he'd dig out his mother's gold fillings in her sleep" to describe antisocial characters. Sharing those harder to get items reduces the need for mass production and eliminates commodification. There are many other things (like waste and pollution) sharing reduces.

Relationships based on production and it's property are not social relations in the strict sense (beyond the mechanical notion of society being nothing but a assemblage of component individuals). Social relations entail giving or sharing. I don't think Stirner went far enough in his critique of property. His solution was possession through might. Sorry, but this is how property was created in the first place – either appropriation from others through force or exclusion of others through force. Above, I didn't get the difference between *possession-through-might* and *property*, and therefore, Stirner's solution was no solution at all. Mark Twain and Guy Debord illustrated how illusion and deception can replace the need for constant force, to the point that some of us freely give up our own children (for example, to the military) and pat ourselves on the back for a job well done, as if our children are something which is owned by way of the responsibility we take in having them. Parenting becomes nothing more than a duty. Children are production units molded and shaped for the market. As Tina Turner said, "What's love got to do with it?"

Finally, I'm not against having technology. I'm against it having me. Technology is absolutely *not* neutral! This does not mean we should abandon all technology! That would hardly be possible. We need to be able to rein it in from time to time. The highly mechanized dairy I mentioned had to step back and bring back some old methods. A breakdown in any area meant the cows didn't get fed because the system was too highly integrated. The institution of redundant systems only made navigation more cumbersome. Human (muscle) backup was impossible because most of the staff had been laid off in the mechanization process, the big bosses couldn't stoop to pitch in and wander from their job descriptions, and there was too much work involved anyway because the machines were just simply in the way. You'll find that in the long run, mechanical slaves end up enslaving us because we grow too dependent on them. In fact, without a class system of have-mores and have-lesses only possible with the imposition of property, (and this is applicable to any proprietary system serving to regulate scarcity, not just capitalism), most of the so-called labour saving gizmos would in fact be unnecessary.

But that's another story. I'd like to rephrase my original thesis. Property historically precedes production (a euphemism for forced labour). If property derives from exclusivity, then there is no liberation by transforming private property into communal property nor exchange-value into use-value (both conceptions of value can only conceive/birth production and property). I think the abolition of work must entail the aboli-

tion of all forms of property. I don't see that property is a necessary concept at all. If community autonomy is desired, the very idea of "community property" reduces the word "property" to a meaningless linguistic appendage. If property and work are maintained, what is the objective of the revolution? If the objective is only the end of capitalism, we are companions to many who would maintain the state. If we are anti-state, we are in league with corporatists who see government as a hindrance to their business of accumulating even more capital. This is a misunderstanding, since corporatism is just another state, and global corporatism is in fact the final goal of the bourgeois revolution.

There is a certain attraction toward nihilists who want to "destroy the totality, liberate desire", but then that's only a slogan. It begs the question, "what is the totality?" To put all this another way, while most see alienation as the direct outcome of capitalism, that it was given birth by capitalism, could it be that alienation sets us up to become capitalistic in our relations? If, along the lines of Cammatte, alienation is rather the result of our own domestication, then it is the civilizing process itself proceeding from the creation of property which gives birth to alienation, and the anti-capitalist approach to Nirvana falls short of the anti-civ perspective (which must, of course, also include the former).

In other words, capitalism is a problem, no doubt. But it is not THE problem. It is only one among many methods of exploitation states have utilized. Clearly, the state is a problem. But it is not THE problem. There have been systems of class exploitation without the state political organization. Economic class division is a problem. But it is not THE problem. Individuals exploit (capitalize) each other on a daily basis regardless of class composition of the one or the other. Civilization itself is a poorly defined category signifying a different idea within a large territory of meaning by every user of the term. It is a syndrome, not a disease. But the relation which underlies all these problems is property. What is property but a way we treat each other? We withhold favors. We buy and sell our lives. We play games of one-upmanship won or lost according to how much we accumulate. We compete and name our prize "property". We whore ourselves to accumulate more (or even enough!). We kill each other to protect property belonging to another who considers *us* his own. All this is opposed to sharing, cooperation, mutual aid and reciprocity, practices which annihilate that which is owned as much as do subversive acts of vandalism. Is there a difference?

Non-neutrality & Technological Solutions

Neutrality as to space (/time):

Neutrality is said to be neither here nor there. That leaves two options for our little cartography. It is either placed somewhere between here and there, or it is nowhere at all. If it is in between, then when I move to that middle spot, it now becomes here and neutrality must instantaneously move or cease to exist. It moves to nowhere and our two options disappear. This is backed up by Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy.

Neutrality as to objects in space (/time):

Neutrality ultimately suggests a state of detachment without consequence or implication – the neutral one adheres to objects on neither side. Neutrality always

stands alone. It follows that if all objects are connected, which is to say that changing the conditions of existence concerning one has effects upon everything it is connected to (that is, everything, as chaos theory and just about every other line of thinking outside of aristotelean, enlightenment discourse suggests), then neutrality as a quality of existence is pure absurdity.

Therefore, the question of the neutrality of technology is also pure absurdity and should be treated as such. The posers of such questions are exposed as either disingenuous sophists or inebriated by massive opiates, which may also be said, are religiously dogmatic.

Doesn't it seem so many problems which we ask technology to solve are often unintentional ramifications of earlier technologies, and we're always asked in return for patience: "We just need to work out a few more bugs and ..."? This is the trap which produces an escalating positive feedback cycle, kind of like the self-replicating patterns of child abuse.

There is a freudian argument suggesting we *should* be mean parents so that our children will be reactionary and perhaps change the world. Of course, this is bullshit. There was a similar thought that the daily threat (back in the day) of nuclear annihilation would produce enough outrage (and that it did!) that the technology would be discarded. Instead, the media simply stopped talking about it and now we are all "no worries". The threat has not diminished. In fact, technological progress has made the "War Games" scenario even more likely.

It is, however, very impressive that some technologists are looking toward sharing and gifting their creations, but this is to the credit of the creator, not the fault of the technology. I'd hope that ending motives of profit and accumulation with generalized gifting/sharing might reverse this effect (runaway technology). We do need a different level of thinking. In the mean time there is sabotage and property destruction – excess, that which can not circulate, the toy no one wants to play with, is returned to the earth. This attitude doesn't mean the nihilistic end to all technology²² by any means, but we need to be able to side-step the persuasions of the advertisers, taking charge of our own desires rather than having them inflicted upon us. In fact, I think it is an ethical call for folks to take some personal responsibility for the implications of their behavior and endorsements and a concern for the desires of those others around them as well as their own desires/interest/aesthetic. I think sharing, which is implied in circulation, is an

22 I use the archaic sense of technology as the modification of a "natural resource" for a special (or even general) use or purpose. Ethologists include finding a purpose for an object even if it is unmodified, such as the chimp's use of a stick to get bugs out of a log. I think of technology as what one does with tools, or even the fact that one uses tools in the first place. The 'anti-tech' "tools"- "technology" dialectic is equivalent to my "technology"- "modern/industrial technology" distinction. What I find puzzling is their prohibition against pottery. Pottery does not imply agriculture or a division of labor (for that matter, neither does melting a piece of ore picked up off the ground in the peat campfire and proceeding to shape it into a pretty or useful design before it cools). The oldest known pottery dates from paleolithic Japan, with a largely gathering type "economy". Would basketry present a problem, since it is a much more complex creative process? Or are some *anti-techs* merely misinformed on their archaeology? Clearly, the problem is *"a particular set of social relations arranged for production ... directed at modern industrial technology, but critique of technics certainly doesn't exhaust the merely modern"*. – Zerzan

improvement over the gift, which suggests a point of origin and a terminus, even an investment and a return – the machinic laws of tit and tat.

The idea of creation itself is often perceived as a point-of-origin to terminus linear process starting with the "creator", or alternately, "producer" and ending with a product passed on to the distribution network. This is the result of the illusory separation, the detachment we feel from the rest of the world. Everything is connected! But that is a secret. Instead, we are offered truth: a serene but disconnected landscape visible only from the basement of an ivory tower.

Not to be confused with invention or discovery of the novel and unique, modern technology is craft and its aesthetic is coopted, de-personalized and fragmented. Technological invention has historically been the result of accident (for example, photographic processing) or a long process of trial and error. Technological progress is the systematic production of new ways to do the same old things. A bullet is a glorified arrow or spear point with an explosive energy driving the projectile replacing muscle power and whose use-value is only measured by mortal efficiency and the distance between the killer and the victim). A backhoe is a glorified mechanical pick & shovel. Obviously, the glorified versions require more in the way of miners, oil riggers, food producers, transport workers, managers, bureaucrats, all providing services, all who's lives and relationships are focused on production which then produces even more of the same. And that is the point. Change & obsolescence in technological product is ever required, and we are told that this is not only natural evolution (always invoked to suggest the inevitability of progress), but that we can eliminate all the 'bad' conditions which go into producing technological progress and go on producing new and improved machines which are said to save us from labour and property. After all, technology is neutral. My ass! Unsurprisingly, we look at the distributive aspects of "*the productive relation*" in the same way.

In the context of my original interpretation, product (or commodity) can only be the result of providing a service for others in exchange (and in fact, only and necessarily in exchange) for (or "as") the means to survive. Survival is thereafter called "the means of production"! In our system, this survival-product is itself a commodity, and in fact, the laborer is also a commodity. "Workers rights" is only a veneer which, at first glance, puts limits on the owner, but on closer inspection, only demonstrates to the worker that this is a "civil" process and in fact, keeps labour "voluntary" and abundant.

Mr. Strawman: "Okay, but what about barter! We will need to establish some sort of trade networks in order to distribute needed goods!"

The idea of a distribution network (outside of an ethnographic picture of existing social institutions) often presumes some kind of pre-existing system of exchange. In other words, as distribution implies a functional role for the distributor, that distributor is in fact a labourer – there is a service not only rendered but institutionalized. As to exchange or trade, many people across the world quite adept at distributing needed goods have offered the sentiment, "trade is what we do with our enemies!"

Revolutionary Politics:

just as (with Marx's projected narrative) the development of productive forces encounters the

fetter of capitalist production as 'socialisation' of production and communist society becomes possible so the theory of revolutionary workers' councils encounters the fetter of a belief in objective historical development.

... If the workers' councils that establish themselves within the crisis of capital are to aid the objective formation of conditions favourable to communism they will have to understand two crucial elements of their position: (1) they are not a communist formation but only a (potentially) for-communist formation, in fact they express the crisis of capitalism in terms of maintaining the coherence of production; (2) As they attempt to organise the lived activity of society as an end in itself they should not forget that the technology they are deploying in the attempt to realise this end is also moving but in the opposite direction as it seeks to re-establish the economic relation, the rhythms, the cybernetics, the exchanges, most appropriate to its functioning – the return to capitalism is always undertaken for 'practicality's' sake. For both of these reasons the lived activity directed by the workers' councils should be engaged as much in the decommissioning of inherited technologies and instituted relations as it is in the realisation (and realignment) of productive forces. – *Frere Dupont*

Two other premises seem to me underlying not only councilism, but most of the solutions we come up with.

The first and most important is restated as "The people will need to be fed!". From here, we arrive at "What must be done?" and "Who will feed them?" Our own ego-involvement suggests WE come up with a plan. Our own helplessness suggests SOMEBODY OUGHT TO DO SOMETHING! This is the birth of the politicisation of revolution.

The problem, of course, is that "the people" are not "children". For that matter, children are not children from this perspective. The new-born infant is an accomplished eater at between two minutes and twelve hours, depending on the ease or difficulty of birthing.

Just thinking of food production, the "socialization of production" is doomed from the get go. I'll try to explain with a scenario of possibility. Councils are set up as philanthropic institutions. With all the best intentions, we have already divided society (it is already divided) into producers (farmers, in this case) and management (councilors). A major function of the councils will be to coordinate distribution so that everyone's nutritional needs are met – farmer, trucker, assembly-persons, everyone. The goal is equality of access and opportunity. Even though needs are dictated "from the bottom up", they are satisfied from the top down. The "people" now achieve guaranteed survival through dependence on the system. The theoreticians are, of course, the system-designers of an autonomous self managing provider class. Class has in no way been abolished, it has been automated. The system becomes rigid and specialized. Interdependence is forced in the name of egalitarianism. This is not a society but a machine. The state is also a machine. The state thrives even if capitalism is relegated into the shadows. This is not communism even if drudgery is minimized to three hours a day and everyone is fed. It is still a prison, but this time without wardens and guards. Personal agency has given way to dependence for one and all. The people will die from boredom and kill from a sense of stiflement. We will need a police force and better drugs from the "People's Revolutionary Pharmacy". Well, maybe direct democracy with recallable delegates can rectify this little matter, but then again ...

What if we changed this first premise to the more realistic "People need to eat"? Duh! Kropotkin in fact phrased it somewhat similarly: "The revolution will need bread",

and concluded that anything folks do in satisfying this requirement will be preferable to what "hide-bound theorists" come up with simply because it is a matter of spontaneous self-organization. This is what is meant by freedom. The premise is now able to transform into "Some people will need more help than others in satisfying their needs". What this amounts to is the setting up of mutual aid societies. This is in fact the guts of *First Nations Warrior Societies* (cf., [Taiiake Alfred and Lana Lowe](#)). Folks who can help search out those who need it. There's an old Chinese proverb which goes something like this: "Folks who are given fish become hungry when the river changes course or when the giver goes away. Folks taught to fish will follow the river and cause the giver to go elsewhere".

The second premise concerns the function of the revolution itself. This is the transformation of exchange-value into use-value. Both of these are forced juxtapositions so joined in order to give birth to economic manipulation. If we were to separate them back into their original territories, we come up with three independent (but not isolated) fairly harmless notions: exchange, use and value. Let's look at "value". Value has only two basic senses: measurement and emotional attachment. One can, it's true, be fond of measurement (the value of the sum of two and three is five), but it is very hard to quantify emotional attachment. The best we can come up with is "a bunch" and "hardly at all". Our attempts at quantification pigeon-hole this into "love", "hate" and "apathy".

Use-value tied to needs or desires seems to me a matter of estimation only as it refers to esteem, not actually measurement. We use things because we are fond of them or the other things which they help to achieve. For example, I love my guitar probably more than the product of my interaction with it (I'm not very good), yet I still love the interaction as well. There are many other things I love as well, some I detest. The revolution says "these are personal matters I am not concerned with ... this is liberty. The revolution is only concerned with the production and equal distribution of food, shelter, medicine and such". The revolution will only interfere in personal life if it's function of coordinating production and distribution in the philanthropic interest of "the people" is hindered. My question is how "interference" comes to be measured and how far it will be allowed to extend.

Yes, this is only a possible scenario, but it does have some historical precedence. By all means let's not throw out the baby with the bath water. Communication is essential. Authentic communication (dialogue rather than debate) is the basis of community and therefore of communism as well.

The Labour Theory of Power: Our culture tells us that nothing is ever good enough, there's always room for improvement. We are presented with the biggest problem of all (that we must work toward *self-improvement*), and technology and politics are always ready to give us a solution. This is equally not to suggest that technology is the root cause of all our problems, but that it is a mutually influenced interplay of the state, industry, capitalism, class structure, etc. in a perpetual positive feedback spiral. Accelerate any function, and the whole also accelerates. We need to get out of the spin cycle of promises from each sector that the beast can be tamed with a tweak here and an twist there.

The negative critique is not toward all technology, but toward political and technological (particularly modern, high tech) solutions to what are invariably *social* problems. Certainly, even primitivists are not against all technology, which would, as you know, include a carved stick to dig roots from the earth (but see footnote 22). The anti-tech position has always been directed at modern, industrial technology and all those ancillary techniques (and their tools) which require a class society of workers and "the privileged". The redefinition of the word to refer only to the modern world we experience does not change the relation or our objection to it. Dictionaries may disguise, but do not negate history nor prevent its recurrence in the future.

How can dead labour, machinery, reassert its domination over lived activity within conditions where lived activity is institutionalised as the aim and means of communist society?

Many technologies that work for capital do not work for communism. They do not work because bound up in their coding is a reliance on conditions in which they dominate lived activity – the worker under communism feels the same sense of boredom, alienation and exploitation as he does under capitalism, because the activity that is demanded by the machine he's operating is exactly the same.

... Once a barrier to development is defined by activity as a barrier, it is 'overcome' and that is the end of it... there is no 'going back'. But even the latest of Marx's writings were written 30 years before Freud's theories of the 'return of the repressed'. There is no anticipation in this narrative of productive overcoming that 'objective labour' materialised within the capitalist social relation might be capable of biting back against a move towards communism. And yet regression to capitalist forms within communist terranes has occurred within all revolutionary attempts. – *Frere Dupont*

There seems to be a large consensus that technology is the primary product of labor in a linear relationship. It was premature to suggest that property precedes labor, because I see them as two sides of the same process of exchange backed by force, threat of force, or blind accommodation to spectacular force, which are all other ways of saying "involuntary deprivation". I'm here forced to supply operational definitions of both property and labor in relation to the element of force itself, and of both product and technology as results of this process. All product is property when others are prevented access to it, whether it is held by an individual or community. Many here are against the idea of individual (private) property. I would be among them. But this is not entirely what we experience. Our system is in fact also one of community property, (how else would one describe corporate assets, property taxes or insurance premiums?) but we generally think of this in terms of class struggle and have coined a plethora of names to describe the two ends of a spectrum of haves and have-nots and of course, the mysterious middle, always uncertain as to which side they are on or on who's side they would take in a crisis.

For the have-nots to have anything, they must provide services to the have-mores in a highly imbalanced exchange. The more unbalanced, the more we are likely to call the situation "capitalist" rather than "barter", but of course, capitalism is not necessary to labour and the production of property the situation entails. Slavery is the condition with no concern for "balance" whatsoever, yet the slave still needs housed and fed. This is not an exchange – it is purely one-directional. By "labour" then, it should be obvious I'm not thinking of chopping wood for the home fire-place here, but chopping another's wood so the latter doesn't get dirt under his fingernails and so that one's self & family

can eat. Neither am I thinking of chopping wood for your old granny because her arthritis and brittle bones prevent her from doing it herself nor by chopping wood for a friend who seems busy changing the spark plugs in your car. There is no force or fear of deprivation nor even exchange necessitated by these examples. By product, I wasn't thinking of the particular feelings which are 'produced' in me when I think of an old high school sweetheart nor the fine clay figurine I might mold in her honor. I shouldn't have to do this, but those using sophistry and deceptive rhetoric utilize any ambiguity in the language and demonstrate a lack of understanding for such topics as evolution or physics, yet go on to proclaim the "laws of science" (or "nature") to meet the challenge of a threat to their notions of progress and the neutrality of the technology which allows them more and ever "improved" sparkling and shiny toys. Luster was once a distraction away from the realities of the world of work, it is now paradoxically invoked to bring down the world of work rather than reclaimed and returned to its original field of aesthetics.

I think some of the resentment over post-modernism concerns the mistaken idea that it brings on the death of cosmetics. This is only its historical, architectural aspect, which I don't see as anything beyond *very-modernism*. I want my gargoyles, and I want to watch them piss on passersby below when it rains! Although that is a function, a valued use, the death of gargoyles is the victory of use-value. Interesting how much modern buildings resemble modern headstones – monolithic, cubist slabs possibly erected to simulate a defiant stand against gravity (that is to say, "nature"²³), but for the most part carrying the message "Nothing to see here, go about your business"!

I get the suspicious feeling that ever since the situs began with their critique of the spectacle, radicals everywhere have become frightened of making anything look aesthetically pleasing, have become frightened of putting time and effort into that – gasp – spectacular element of the product, as if we shouldn't be allowed to focus on this element of pleasure until we reach utopia. It's a superficial concern – *Emma Gambadé*.

Is it always necessary to distinguish intention and discovery, to separate learning from instinct, rigid organization from spontaneity, especially considering the common dictum on "the best laid plans"? Should we persist in our mistakes, should we not learn from chance happenings? The pursuit of predictability in the world is at the same time the elimination of chance. An impossible project as such, if it could be carried through, this would only culminate in the end of surprise, the end of aesthetics, and in fact, the end of science itself. As the situationists said, "we will all die of boredom".

23 This is not to suggest that Victorian architecture, or even Gothic cathedrals bear any resemblance to "natural" phenomena. The point is in the so-called "aesthetics of absence", that use-value is the only value. It is actually the absence of aesthetics. If there is any other semiotic intended or inferred, it is the picture of a dead and buried world.

ch 21: Altruism: Love, Economy & Egoism – or – Love is Business and Business is Bullshit!²⁴

everywhere the hypocrisy, or rather self-deception, of an "unselfish love," an interest in the object for the object's sake, not for my sake and mine alone ...

The possessedness of love lies in the alienation of the object, or in my powerlessness as against its alienness and superior power ...

[On the other hand,] the egoist's love rises in selfishness, flows in the bed of selfishness, and empties into selfishness again. – *Max Stirner*

So is 'love' itself something one can possess? We're often said to be possessed by it, but for Stirner to suggest that "true" love is always selfish sounds harsh to us. But love is possessed, ("my own") only in the sense in which my hunger is also "my own". It is the subject/noun only in the sense in which 'hunger' is. This is a statement of a process, and the process is only a relation between objects (or subjects), not a thing in itself. Nominalized love is reification in the colloquial language, deification in the poetic. 'Love' and 'hunger' are 'things' only to satisfy the linguistic or even more specifically syntactic requirement that we can further refine or communicate our feelings of arousal, nourishment or connection between the self and other, between the self and food. Love, of course, is also a verb: we live to love, we love to eat and we eat to live.

As deprivation from food transforms epicurean pleasure into hunger, desperation, competition, theft and prostitution (or self-employment), alienation turns the lover into sacrificial victim or a slave to passion. It is not hypocrisy but polyphony which brings on confusion. It is not a logical contradiction to be simultaneously a slave to the other's and enslaved by our own passions. It is only a derogatory remark applied to one who loves to live as well as to one alienated from living – epicureanism and poverty are equally criminalized. Our categories of absolutes confine us to to a small terrain of meaning, unaware of shifting levels of abstraction. We are confused when the fence has fallen and the cattle have gotten out. We are called to action, fencing pliers at the ready. Psychologists used to tell us hunger is only the state of arousal, the condition who's only function is to motivate us to eat and is brought on by scarcity or alienation. If we eat too much or too little, it is seen as an impairment, something like a grammatical error or a flu bug. It did not occur to them that eating is enjoyable in itself and like love, hunger is only a relationship. Those who have a zest for life, a will to live rather than a will to power, are said to live passionately, and we call them artists. If poets and painters did not starve in attics, we could not love them. That is the hypocrisy.

Love has no meaning without the object or referent, for then, like the hunger of starvation, it is unrequited and becomes a different "thing" entirely – it is sadness and remorse or longing. Hunger and love merge. It is no longer the relation between the subject (ego) and object of love (other). When I say "she stole my heart, then broke it", I have in fact lost nothing, not even my feelings. A relationship was denied. I have become alienated even from myself, since in this case, the self is not felt complete without the other, the one time when the mathematical equation, $2 = 1$ is correct. One can in-

24 Originally titled "Toward a Theory of Why-Can't-We-Just-Learn-To-Get-Alongism"

deed die from a "broken heart". And so Browning asked "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways".

Love then is also the behavior between lovers – the praxis of our feelings, the relationship (or its potential) demonstrated. Unlike the dimensions of a particular rock, relationships are infinitely variable because they are creatively, subjectively, emotionally valued. How indeed does one measure love? In the behavioral context of "lovers", love almost invariably implies sex. Through multiple entendre, the confusion between indice and unit of measure raises the spectres of both comedy and revulsion, and *taboo* and the allied *joking relationship* between in-laws are born. The Greeks were ahead of us, dividing the semantic territory of love ('relations of attraction, desire, care' etc.) into four autonomous states: *eros* 'sexual love;' *phileo* 'have affection for;' *agapao* 'have regard for, be contented with;' and *stergo*, 'familial love' of parents and children as well as that of a ruler and his subjects. Philosophers ('lovers of knowledge') well noted the larger territory, and glossed the generic *Eros* (with a capital "E") 'relationships', the source of universal flux rationalized in *logos*. Empedocles may have given birth to western dialectics when he divided all process into relations of love and strife: the smooth and the rough, flow and friction, life and death. Prior to the 17th century (that is, abandoned with the onset of the industrial revolution), *lief* was a word which bridged the semantic territories of live and love. Today, strife is often a synonym for (or at least a symptom of) marriage, a relationship bound only by monogamous sex and often a familial monopoly of cruelty – the tabooed "extramarital affair" (but not "strife") is sufficient grounds for divorce.

Sex is human. But biologists tell us it's also animal and in fact, vegetable. It is this generic sex which still reflects the universal cooperative relation which makes living possible, yet we speak of our employment as "how we make our living". We used to talk about gravity in terms of "laws of attraction", and chemists still use this metaphor from time to time. Those we're attracted to are said to have magnetic personalities. Or we say "it's all just a matter of chemistry". Poets tell us sex is the climax of love. Both medieval christians and pagan gnostics agreed, back when orgy referred to a profound and ritualized religious experience. As we get a bit of experience under our own belts, we see that, like all sharing relationships, sex and love actually enhance one another. Even our language demonstrates this: "It's pretty *fucking* important stuff!" But the very topic of sex in 'polite' conversation is taboo for a good reason: the taboo keeps us from seeing how connected life, the universe and everything just really is. It keeps us isolated. Even our "reactionary" endeavors in this forbidden territory serve to minimalize and superficialize sex. The separation of the behavior from the relation and equally, the supersession of the relation by the behavior generates the assessment "love is business and business is bullshit!" This fits well with the universalized prostitution of life revolving around the workplace in the interest of satisfying hunger. Unless egoistic ends are kept constantly in mind, an altruistic or "romantic" love only gets in our way and must be avoided or repressed. But doesn't psychic repression always seem to invite secret transgression?

Just as psychic repression should not be translated as 'oppression' so taboo indicates no more than limit and structure. Both of these aim to preserve coherence of identity, and retain sufficient energy within social activity so as to reproduce society in each successive genera-

tion. Just as structure is important in music, or so fenderson argues, so it is in other social activities.

The liberal critique of taboo is staged in terms of rationalisation, which aims to release all 'irrational' constraints on social relations. But in fact liberalism only manages to reassert a series of abstract irrationalities (based on infinite regress) but which are not accessible through lived experience. I think the liberal critique of primitive injunctions could not grasp their ambivalence – taboo invites transgression and thus supplies energy to society at the level of a tension between a transgressive desire and the taboo that invites/codes such desire.

All pre-capitalist societies are confronted by the meaninglessness of existence but taboo imposes a scale in which meaning becomes applicable and meaninglessness (or terror) is refuted. The question is, how to establish limits and form which must be experienced as real but at the same time which also must remain manipulable? [– *Frere Dupont*]

Sometimes psychic repression is merely oppression self-managed. Taboo is the scale which underlays our melody. My own song differs from that played these days, and I think in many ways mine is less healthy. My grandma, the monarch of our family, was twelve years old when Queen Victoria ended her reign and H. G. Wells had been questioning Victorian authority on sexual matters. Grandma was no fan of Mr. Wells. I still uncontrollably blush when confronting this topic, even though I understand the irrational nature of my reaction. If taboo (like any other cultural tradition) is not internalized, it always invites transgression. Some taboos have very good reason, for example restrictions against eating raw rabbit or post-partum sex taboos spacing births in situations where a rapid succession of births might impose on the ability to feed any. Constraints are viewed irrational when the conditions which brought them into being have changed, yet those taboos are maintained and reproduced by the "forces" of custom or tradition. To question the rationalizations behind restrictions on social relations should not be viewed as promoting the release of all so-called "constraints". This is not possible. There's nothing wrong with custom and structure. It need not be constraining. For example, polite discourse (rather than political correctness which today is replacing it), was not a bad idea. Custom and structure make us who we are. They do not need to inhibit improvisation, which is art. Sometimes they enhance it – harmonic structure differentiates music from the noise of fingernails on a chalkboard.

On the other hand, taboos which constrain public discourse on sexual matters may also help keep them private, and therefore more open to personal exploration or improvisation, without fear of other household members' inquisitions (e.g., nosy grandmas).

On yet another hand, we very often have taboos against behavior few would engage in anyway, "just in case". Such might be taboos against eating human flesh, particularly your grandmother's. Sometimes our personal taboos (a sense of 'revulsion' at our own imaginings) just happen to be everyone else's. For the analyst (psycho or otherwise), it could be argued that this only reflects the success of internalization – repressed desire. That is sophistry based on a view of human nature which is rooted in moral, ethical and legal transgression and must therefore be controlled. The circular reasoning here must be obvious – there must be rules imposed prior to their transgression. In the territory of sexual relations, such "transgressions" might be cross-generational incest or bestiality which are probably universally taboo. Another sort of analyst might as easily suggest that, like all societal rules, we only impose taboos against the unexpected or unlikely when there are obvious negative implications (functions) of its transgression. Ultimate-

ly, our analyses depend on our views of human nature. This is not to suggest phenomenological essence, but our generalizations attributed to the other (actually, to *all* others), based on our experience and education ("just so" stories told by teachers).

Only a paranoid culture would actively search out novelty and then proceed to criminalize it. Such is the basis of democracy – "keeping up with the Joneses". The complete and unabridged *Oxford Dictionary of the English Language* is dwarfed by the *United States Criminal Code*. Such a system of democratic constraint gives us the philosophy of pessimism of Schopenhauer, who in 1818, wrote "A man can be himself only so long as he is alone; ... if he does not love solitude, he will not love freedom; for it is only when he is alone that he is really free." Interestingly, "eros" and "freedom" are etymologically cognate in Greek and Old Norse (in as much as the goddesses Aphrodite and Freya/Frigg are cognate), but their semantic divergence had already paved the way for Schopenhauer's pessimism and later, Stirner's "selfish love". To their defense, *private* and *peace* also share in this etymology (from Proto-Indo-European **prijos* 'dear, beloved').

When societal rules do inhibit, we are frustrated and prone to resist, or if well socialized, we feel guilt at the merest desire to live (freeplay?). Some taboos were created not by the conditions of lived experience, but to enhance alienation *from* lived experience. They are no longer called "taboo" but "edicts", "grammar", "the rule of law", even "nature". In this case, voyeurism and vicariness are our only [other] option, and we are demoted to spectator and imitator. This is also the basis of spectacular democracy. Critique allows transgression to reformulate itself as liberation, rather than transgression for its own sake. We simply cannot "destroy everything" and start over *tabula rasa* as some nihilist insurrectionists would have it: a five thousand year history of universal prostitution enframes all discourse. The word "discourse" itself inhabits the semantic terrain of strife – "competition".

In our language and culture, even clichés of human relationships must be expressed in terms of economics and politics (and utility). It's basically a mathematical simplification of human relations to those of give-and-take or one-upmanship and one-downmanship. It is about exchanges and equivalences – the game has annihilated play. Is it even possible to imagine a merging or communication without the notions of addition, subtraction and subduction? A union or conciliation or interaction which does not entail dominance, theft, compromise and sacrifice? Perhaps our dialectical approach (that is, "conflict resolution") to social relations is why we have so much problem with the concepts of 'mutuality' and 'reciprocity' and even respect for 'diversity'. We bandy about the words, but only in relation to a sense of moral obligation or the management of our utopias and other fantasies. Although we might tolerate diversity, do we ever actually celebrate it? It would seem we are attracted to the safety and security of a transubstantiation of 'love' to mathematical (or chemical) reduction. We call this the application of 'reason' – our source of knowledge. This is a recipe for all behavior, accounting for our own separation and domination/subjugation as well as that of the other. My question: "Isn't there another kind of relationship?" In fact, don't we often embrace love, like an engrossing fantasy novel or chemically induced dream-state, as our only waking escape from the alienation of the world of time and motion engineering and cost-benefit

ratios?

If love is maintained as possessedness, which is to say "my love which I am free to share with whomever I please", then how are we to get around issues of competition and therefore domination between lovers? Suppose we were instead to consider love as a form of non-mathematical value – what our friend Mr. Marx might call a use value sans instrumentalism? The "egoistic" relation can only be seen as a subjective relationship. Love realized then describes the relationship as a mutual value – a mutual appreciation more in tune with the archaic definition of "love". Value de-mathematized becomes "esteem". Without the notion of property, the zeitgeist which possesses civilized man, then marriage can only be seen as a community event. The community acknowledges and eventualizes the relationship with a feast, the sharing of "goods" – a sharing westerners have translated as "dowry" and "bride-price". When some thing is given "as a token of our appreciation", it is not the token (as "property") which is important. In fact it is *no-thing* beyond a reminder (symbol) of our esteem, or in the case of a marriage between families, our mutuality. But the spirit of economics demands that this is an "exchange" enforced by the authority of patriarchs, the community, the state. It is not too far a jump to consider our spouses – loved ones – also as property. It is only through property and its measure that we are bound.

But without the notion of property, where is there room in the world for the spirit of economics? Where also is there room for the spirit of politics, which gives rise to domination – force and withholding? What then would become of our relationships? Sharing is never an exchange, for nothing is lost or abandoned. Like the relationship between property and theft, could there be notions of piety, fealty or even adultery? If property can only be said to be that which is possessed, and is freely shared/circulated (rather than acquired, owned or given), then where is there room for competition? But property is more than mere possession. What can be the object of a "competition between friends" besides property or position, which is to say "domination"? Then 'friendship' becomes reduced to a master-slave relationship or sado-masochism:

masochism n.

1. A psychological disorder in which sexual gratification is derived from abuse or physical pain.
2. The deriving of pleasure from being dominated or mistreated. [After Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-1895).]

sadism n.

1. Psychology. The association of sexual gratification with infliction of pain on others.
2. Delight in cruelty. [After the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814)]

There is no doubt that the tyrant is never loved, and loves nobody. Friendship is a sacred word, it is a holy thing, and it exists only between good people, it is kindled by mutual esteem. It is sustained not so much by favors as by a good life. What gives you confidence you can rely on a friend is the knowledge you have his integrity: the guarantors of that are his natural virtue, his trustworthiness and his constancy. Where there is cruelty, treachery and injustice there can be no friendship. Evil men are not companions of one another, they are conspirators. They have no mutual affection, but a mutual fear: they are not friends, but accomplices.
– *Boétie*

Competition and domination, the two conditions necessary to each and every tyrant,

can only be described in terms of scarcity, and it is the imposition of scarcity which creates property. The alienation of love itself, that mutual connection between the self and other, provides the ideological destruction of community. What sex is to love the gift is to altruism. "Giving it away for free" negates prostitution. It also negates economics. Like "the free market", a "gift economy" is an oxymoron – a phrase with no meaning.

The modern conception of altruism is bound up (enframed, if you will) by the language of economics. Everything is calculated according to a cost-benefit ratio, and that is our only concern. Economic justice is only a balance between sacrifice and theft. It's always a precarious balance. I much prefer language such as "radical empathy" (– *orrior*), which refers to a system of spontaneous flux. Reciprocity is an effect of a gifting society, not a driving motivation subject to measured calculation and transaction. Even in the most complex and ritualized form of the potlatch in elder days, exchange value was not a consideration. It may be true for some, but mostly we don't help a drowning person out of concern for the tit-for-tat anticipated payoff, but concern for the individual, the other. I'd rather see this as driving force behind the circulation of goods or services in a system of mutual aid than the notions of duty and responsibility, notions which demand hierarchy or power relations, notions which stand alone quite well apart from any implication of "empathy". The retort that this is utopian idealism is nonsense. It described the situation for thousands of years before and outside of civilization, and it was never associated with a nasty, brutal and short existence.

Heidegger's "saving power" for a world enframed by runaway technology (and, I would add, economy) is the world revealing itself between the lines. It is outside of the circumscribed avenues of logic, and that is in the larger territory of art. The praxis in the former is work; in the latter, it is play. I don't think there is a need to invoke human essence, humans are easy to spot. Humane, on the other hand, is a way of behaving or relating which is sometimes hard to spot and even harder to formalize, but it's lack gives us ample proof on a daily basis that something often called "humanity" is missing. We do, however, know it when we see it. Words such as "thank you" or "that was nice of you" are still meaningful to us, as are the actions which provoked those words, most notably, a gift.

By archaic definition, a proper gift has no strings attached. Anything else is a payment, a transaction, an exercise in authority. In modern usage however, "a gift" is "a good deal", and even "a steal". Walmart is our benefactor – everyday low prices. Today property is no longer theft but an *essential attribute*; it is *the gift* which represents anti-social behavior – getting "something for nothing". In accordance with the first principle of circumscribed logic (circular reasoning which underlies the self-fulfilling prophecy), "nepotism" and "corruption" provide all the proof we need! Therefore, all behavior is egoistically motivated and it is economic law and the police who would enforce it which protects us from the gift (it is, after all, in our *nature* as well as "our own best interest" to take!). So goes the standard argument of the kleptocracy.

For many, "gift" in its archaic sense is unthinkable outside the domain of sacrifice. It is only a synonym of transaction with the additional attribute of delayed gratification. It is an insurance premium. The same process of language-change over time concerning the terrain of "friendship" illustrates the primacy of egoism (more properly, "hedonism").

In modern usage, "friend" and "acquaintance" and "accomplice" are all semantically interchangeable. The archaic sense of "friend" implying a connection or bond of empathy is rapidly becoming unimaginable. And we wonder why our "romantic" relationships have no permanence (sex and love having merged semantically, the former colonizing the latter's territory). Economic thinking also saturates parent-child relationships.

My dad "sweat blood" (sacrificed) so that I wouldn't have to, or so he said (altruism can be a handy rationalization, a justification. A potent antacid, altruism relieves guilt: take two with meals for quick relief!). Because in economic relations, sacrifice cannot exist without theft, I became his property and this provided the basis for his authority, and so he also said. We are told that love is sacrifice, accommodation and compromise. When love is a payment and domination its return, love is theft. When this formula is transposed, love is guilt. Is it any wonder that love has become a four letter word amongst polite company?

The extreme reactionaries against this linguistic and cultural change some call the "Kumbiyah" crowd: altruistic hippy love, light and roses which often degenerates into the misery of democratic sacrifice via the destruction of the individual. This untenable position is why so many "flower children" went on to embrace smack from CIA factories in SE Asia in the '70's (and Afghanistan decades later). That these two sides (altruism and hedonism) result in "non-overlapping magesteria" (never the twain shall meet) is not due to an inherent contradiction and incompatibility, but to devotion to absurd Aristotelian logic on which modern language usage hinges. The very same logic which produces a George Bush and his mother's "beautiful mind" provides the irreconcilability of reformist socialists, libertarian communists and insurrectionary anarchists, each of whom would embrace a "communist revolution" – the possibility of living is superseded by its rationalization and we remain enslaved to the real consequences of our unrealistic categorizations. This is the essence of self-fulfilling prophecy, and as our frustration increases, the criminal code grows like runaway cancer.

ch 22: Postscript on the Irrelevance of Religion and Ideology

"As Marx said, every child knows that a social formation which did not reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produced would not last a year. The ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the conditions of production" (– Althusser).

To put this more scientifically, I shall say that the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'.

In other words, the school (but also other State institutions like the Church, or other apparatuses like the Army) teaches 'know-how', but in forms which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its 'practice'. All the agents of production, exploitation and repression, not to speak of the 'professionals of ideology' (Marx), must in one way or another be 'steeped' in this ideology in order to perform their tasks 'conscientiously' – the tasks of the exploited (the proletarians), of the exploiters (the capitalists), of the exploiters' auxiliaries (the managers), or of the high priests of the ruling ideology (its 'functionaries'), etc." ([Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses](#))

The big problem with a radical, even if reasonable critique, the idea of "educating the masses", of enlightenment ("they only need to open their eyes!"), of propaganda of the deed (setting a good example) is that we are attacking a system of faith, an ideological system more ancient than christianity, and it is a system shared as well, at least in large part, by leftist reformer and statist-revolutionary alike. This is no mere metaphor. The name of this church is *Organized Production* (of exchange values – services, trinkets, gizmos, commodities), its sacraments are *Labour* (the precondition of survival), *Markets* (providing the circulation of private property) & *Government Dole* (providing the circulation of community property and called, of all things, "charity", "social services" or "back to work programs"²⁵) and its ritual practice provides for the construction & maintenance of civilization, which is to say, "itself" – the productive and efficient "social life" which sets aside "man" from "beast".

Perhaps because of a little organ in the brain called the amygdala, the trump card of

25 These are all attempts to transform community property back into private property. For example, in the usa, food stamps appropriate community property in the form of taxes and re-distribute it to people who have a hard time getting fed. This is not so much a charity to the hungry, but a subsidy to the food producing corporations to maintain a certain level of profit by maintaining a certain level of consumption and thought by some to counter a natural process of inflation, by others, a means to increase it. State socialism merely reverses this formula regarding private (corporate) and public (state) property. Both systems depend on a certain level of discontent. The illusion is that the state functions to "make it better", to equalize conditions (democracy) or to provide for our future. This is not to suggest that workers in the social services and other so-called "helping professions" are conspirators scamming poor people. Of course, conspiracies exist, which is why we come to expect "government corruption", but in the big picture, the system works so well for the capitalists because the workers actually believe their professions are for "the people", not the corporation. In other words, the system works because of ideological commitment, faith in the doctrine and hope that things will get better.

emotional attachment beats reason every time. Like the catholic church, ours is an ideological system which functions to relieve guilt for the exploiters and maintain feelings of shame and insignificance in the exploited. It is a small thing to proceed (to or from) guiltless rape of the planet and its other inhabitants to (or from) exploitation (not excluding institutionalized rape and murder) of each other in the name of "god", "the greater good" Aristotle spoke of or even "The Revolution" – in effect, these are all the same thing. If Dostoyevsky was right, and we are all Golyadkins searching out meaning in the world around us and finding our 'place' in it, religion justifies and normalizes (naturalizes) our alienation and encourages us to wear the masks of others. We are encouraged to transcend our self and become a mirror for the other in the interest of a democracy which calms all seas.

It is only revolutionary ideologists and religious practitioners who distinguish the bourgeois revolution from the protestant reformation and completely disregard the spontaneous peasant rebellions across Europe which made both revolution & reform not only possible but necessary. But what else is an historic rupture than unanticipated change, only recognized after the fact and thereafter labeled "The Grand Conspiracy", "Great Reform" or "Historic Revolution"? Althusser did not anticipate that the superstructure could slowly wither away while the "gang of thieves", "partners in crime" themselves went ahead barely challenged – "the exploiters (the capitalists)" and "the exploiters' auxiliaries (the managers)", would go on to become *only* "the high priests of the ruling ideology (its 'functionaries')" performing specialized rituals with no concern whatsoever for specific meaning and even less for general purpose, whether they represent the forces or counter-forces of control. Modern Ideology, given birth when Plato discovered cognitive dissonance, insures that all revolutionary breaks equate in the long run to reformist gradualism. We are thus confident that the periodic crises inherent in capitalism (or any other generalized system of exploitation) will always counter any gains made by reform. As an old capitalist (Hearst) once said, "The secret is to give them a dollar, and take back two!"

The grand project or utopian vision of civilization as realized by the bourgeois revolution via the protestant work ethic is thought nearly complete. A belief in the conquest of immortality (the god-like autonomy of the self) or the equally absurd unification of mankind is making the long-term goals as well as romantic yearnings of revolutionaries and dissenting utopianists as sterile and obsolete as those of the ideological functionaries themselves. The unfortunate result of this project is that the self has been nearly annihilated, selves fragmented. For most adults, the Ideology sublimates awareness of this alienation by appealing to "nature", substituting subjective oppression with objective goal-seeking competition and creating an ideological pool guaranteeing its own reproduction. Even so, the sentiment that something still smells rotten is pervasive, so the greater the number of denominations within the faith, the better this process works. There is an ideological variety suitable for everyone. Is it any wonder that, other than small children who have yet to learn their place in the world (all that *top-of-the-class* or *back-of-the-bus* shit) and the many harmless beings who have succumbed to the death of all feeling in states of depressive acquiescence or disabling withdrawal, those on the reactionary (sometimes called "lunatic") fringe have always been a minority among minorities? The social ideology sounds the death knoll for the unique imagination of the

individual: "Individual life as individual life is characterised by divergence from what has just been said and not repetition of it" [– Dupont.].

Without teleological implication, the grand old church bureaucrats have established *The Church of the Grand Bureaucracy*, making the infrastructure, that source for the satisfaction of our increasingly artificial needs, the *All* and the superstructure unnecessary. The divergence in the meanings of the word, "State" are in the processes of merging. It is no longer appropriate to speak of "The State" as a superstructure. It is only "State" as a condition. Landauer said long ago that it was always just a condition. Many on the fringes refer to it as a mental condition. The State is dead! Long live the State!

Skyscrapers may have once spectacularly symbolized the grandiosity of the superstructure – the project of civilization, king, parliament, pope, the capitalist ('head') class, the summit conquered, the forces of nature mastered, the decapitated pyramid on the back of the one dollar bill proclaiming death to monarchy. Today there is no superstructure. That metaphor is no longer applicable. The pyramid has flipped, successfully negating the possibility of revolutionary overthrow not by clever disguise, but an out and out disappearing act. The tower is only a sink, stripped even of its old aesthetics but shrouded in countless layers of grand conspiracy theory. The twin towers have fallen – it matters not who fell them. Like all modern technology, the skyscraper is only a device to increase and complicate the bureaucratic connections (and circulate commodities) and concentrate power (a form of meaningless wealth announcing meaningful privilege) in the hands of an increasingly decentralized ("globalized") quasi-organization, living in gated enclaves (sinkholes) connected by satellite transmission, handing out hope for the nirvana of universal employment in "interesting and useful" jobs to people who cling to the idea that there even is an economy, and it can not only be saved, but maintained. Capital itself has been rendered invisible. Slavery has made a big comeback to accommodate those necessary but unpleasant chores required to feed the synergistic beast. Even in the slave sector, there is hope that automation will liberate the slave to become a wage-earning machine operator – a "tech". But this wage is only symbolic. Survival outside the enclaves of wealth is accomplished by means of supplemental, underground economies of contraband exchange in local environments of toxic waste – rural as well as urban ghettos, each surrounding its own "green zone" secure from barbarian influence.

Like the individual "subject" (or "proletariat") or even major corporation "struggling in these precarious times" (both illusory beings inhabiting our ideological schema – the illusion is of individual or corporate "*structural autonomy*" maintained by repeated allusion to brand name, the mediatic mantra), the tallest building is entirely disposable. In fact, it is necessarily disposable to maintain the spectacle of growth, if only to mask the increasing incompetency of its designers. Once necessity is properly inculcated, quality control is no longer cost effective. Every replacement is taller than every predecessor, yet each new gizmo is outdone in one way or another by the old. Before it's over, every 'country' resisting the future (that is, sovereign nation-state) will need be bombed back to the stone age in order to continue progress and erect security fences around smaller, 'culturally sensitive' territories representing a new, expanded consumer base for needed

military technology to maintain those fences and for pharmaceutical companies to assist in the manufacture of consent within them. This is Balkanization, reminiscent of a nazi wet-dream.

Remember that "shock & awe" was the terminology of a geopolitical economic strategy before it became the chief military strategy of state terrorism. Because of the general commitment to the ideology of production & growth (competition, progress and redemption), I fear nothing would have changed but the form the spectacle has taken on had the unionists, worker-councils or anarcho-syndicalist federations succeeded in their struggles. We would all have become volunteers, experiencing the dignity of managing our own exploitation on 'culturally sensitive' reservations, coordinated by a global federation – little different than the Obama Program straight from the play-books of such imaginative philanthropists as Brzezinski and Kissinger, Mussolini and Augustus. Unfortunately, our social planners have not anticipated the social mayhem created by the current incompetence of the ideological apparati, taking no lesson from their experience in Iraq and the periodic ruptures at home in the form of riot, mutiny and local insurrection. The sound of clicking bullshit detectors, although still perceptible only at lower decibels, is beginning to amplify, but unless the ideology itself is rejected, of sacrifice & power (disguised, of course, as "love & productivity"), that all we are is what we own (but we always need to *be* more, so we should *own* more ...), no amount of political activism, reform, insurrection or revolution will lastingly, if at all change anything of consequence.

ch 23: Anarcho-Communism: For Freedom & Community

For years I kept showing up at all the right demonstrations & singing all the right songs, & one day I realized that the world still sucked & my own life was out of control. I'd done all these things to save the world, & I couldn't even save myself. I understood then that my real work was me, not the world. – Arlo Guthrie

* * *

We are somewhat trapped by time travel paradoxes here and the anachronistic forms of rhetoric belonging to the old and the young (I think of Cat Stevens, Turgenev, and Wordsworth's 'The child is the father...'). I am trapped in the future ... A personalist/individualist revolt must encounter its limit in the society that it is a part-expression of, in that defeat it will fall back onto one of two positions, either it accepts its defeat and formulates a critique of its revolt from the perspective of one attempting to renegotiate a belonging in established social forms (this is the most usual response) or, more rarely, it will transform its revolt into new terms, 'new questions' and will thus pass on to 'another level' which views the (absence of) revolt of others to be of vital concern.

The problem is that the older impulse, the urge to establish memory and identified pattern, to contain youthful revolt in pre-established narratives, is essentially conservative and in constant danger of misrepresenting its own position with regard to the social relation (becoming a mouthpiece for certain received unconscious tendencies). It is this 'safe place' that the in-itself youth flood and overwhelm. They are protected from our/my conservative error by their very inability to understand form, scales, orderings and sequences of human relations.

So, but even so, the message of experience to innocence remains the same: the terms of youthful personalist revolt will/must be defeated and that is very painful but it is not the end. It is possible to go on from that defeat, to recycle it and to socialise it. There is an other side located beyond the terms first set out. And even better than that, there is something to be drawn from such defeats, a concrete form which may be reflected upon and included which would not exist if the attempt had never been made. Whilst it is true that there is an injection-moulded mass production of 'individualism' there is also a genuine individuality that may be retrieved from personal revolt by communists. Therefore, so, even so, my position remains constant: we are in the business of establishing mesolimbic/reward pathways in communist terms in the preparation for our collective arrival at the same place at the same moment – Frere Dupont.

I always thought smart americans were the most proficient at seeing the world without any shades of gray. They are certainly among the most forgetful – yet another refutation of Lamarke's position on the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Yes, John Wayne was the poster boy to teach us a freedom-loving rugged american individualism, but at some point following the second big war, collective disillusionment pasted itself right over that picture. Things were starting to look like this would transform into a collective disengagement up til the early '70's, but especially around 1976, when the discohedonistic age began, an age of mass conversion from private heroin seclusion among friends disappointed with "hippycite" guru elitists running communes as little parliaments regulating community chores, and outspoken agitators & rock stars promising a big change which never seemed to come, to the lonely collective of the spectacular cocaine dance of complete strangers packed into noisy clubs and destined to always remain strangers.

Before this, american youth had begun to resemble their european cousins who always seemed so friendly and wise when they came to visit (although to be fair, Europe is the birthplace of "punk hooliganism"). Teen reactionary anarchism and an elder, laid back communism we thought somehow "*French*" and an even more laid back Eastern

Zen were about to merge when we realized that even our beat heroes had sold out, had abandoned us to rake in bread from book contracts to fund their own extravagant addictions. Everything before had just been a fad. Suddenly, free stores were open to "business" in town. Our homes and apartments were left open for public inspection, community cigarettes, community pot, a community fridge in every kitchen, a complete abandonment of any notion of house rules. Our addictions were somehow less than extravagant. But *Rolling Stone* and *High Times* magazines re-introduced us to the commodity value overriding the social value of our drugs of choice. Growing more expensive with each passing day, we couldn't quite break from a minimum of either criminal or "more respectable" employment to maintain them. Quality and community were again overwhelmed by quantity and appearance.

We had started to become a "we", an agreement, but were killed again by an overwhelming force of I's before it could be decided what it was we specifically wanted. We only knew what we were against – the systematic destruction of any sense of freedom and community at home and lives and whole communities abroad (largely SE Asia) by "the establishment" (fat cats and their brown-nosed cronies and moralistic followers – "rednecks" who would cut your throat at the mere mention of "peace" and "hard-hats", charged with tearing down the abandoned buildings you were squatting to build a parking lot, menacingly swinging crowbars and shouting "Get a job!" ... and we were later criticized for not exhibiting solidarity with the workers!). Generally speaking, we all yearned for community, and of course, the ever present desire "to be left alone". We were confronted with accusations of idealism and utopianism – "Get a haircut, Pinko!". For the poor, one could only be what one could be in the army! Otherwise, it was on to college and the promise of "great jobs". Some choice! As our comrades succumbed to the enticement of the buck, is it any wonder many of us turned instead to the honest dependability of shutting the doors, turning on and tuning out – "Everybody must get stoned!" So went the revolution, as all great movements eventually go, down the toilet.

Freedom and community. I always thought the construction, "anarcho-communism", was redundant, that stripped of the political implications of party-line revolutionary state of the latter half, which seemed to underly all our wars for what seemed like forever, communism and anarchy were both the default position of humanity, not dialectically opposed, not idealist fantasy ... if we could only find the reset button. Isn't it what we witness forming over and again in the spontaneous communal behavior of folks temporarily abandoned by the state during periods of natural disaster? Hostile armed military presence is always the posture of of the state (always to the tune of maintaining order and protecting property) when they finally come to rescue us, but only after the calamity has subsided and folks start getting on fine, all on their own. Arrests before food ... looting is a capital offense not worthy of trial. Survival is only tolerated within the auspices of state and capital.

In our structured black and white world unwitting of any connection, much less balance between a self and an other, viewing communication as a state of mutual antagonism in a quest for power or sociality as a personal sacrifice for the greater good, anarcho-communism as a mutual relation between selves and others remains an impossibility, even if it is an unvarying, ever-present desire for those who don't dream of

standing atop a pile of carcasses, taking in the rotting fragrance of death with a sense of personal accomplishment.

Today, we again seem to see anarchy as that teen-spirited American or Americanized reaction of self-centered rebellion (this is why James Dean was so embraced, iconized and martyred by Madison Avenue as a necessary replacement for John Wayne – the function of all pop stars is to embrace potentially rebellious youth back into the loving arms of consumerism) opposed to the less reactionary or more settled down collective movement of smooth European left-communism, concerned for the other as a moving mass along predictable lines nudged here and there in the hope that a truly free individual will emerge at the other end and take over the factories. It seems to me rather more important to point out that it can only be free individuals who will *inherit* the factories when they become abandoned through a loss of interest in maintaining our place in them. What they do with them from there will be a matter for that future generation to decide – that will constitute the revolution, but first must come refusal.

Must it be a conundrum that it seems so obvious that mass change cannot come about through the single acts of an individual, yet it takes many individual actions to constitute one collective act? Does friction need arise because the young are impatient and don't want to wait for the proper historical conditions to come about before we can act as a group of free individuals, such that in the mean time the group over-rides individual desire, such that collective action seems like just so much more of the same old force putting limits to free expression, the individual always being cautioned: "patience"? Perhaps this is the attraction of nihilist solipsism and collapsism, hoping for a natural disaster or universal riot because we ourselves are powerless and can't seem to come together with enough others to make a difference, because we must wait for a mythical revolution before we can decide to live, because alienation, like the junky's rush, is the only promise we can depend on – it's a guarantee.

Is there some place we time travelers from the past and from the future can pause, get out of the twisted helix of a double blind double bind, meet and discuss this with the inhabitants of the present? Are we ready for such undertakings while we contemplate our overtakings? Or have all our languages grown too distinct, a true representation of the either-or, black and white fragmented world we call the present? Perhaps I was wrong, and this death of memory and the resulting ignorance of pattern *is* the default setting, but I still have hopes that Lamarke wasn't totally mistaken, and, as Bordiga reminded us, it is only the disposition of bourgeois civilization itself, with modern capitalism as its vanguard, toward murdering the dead²⁶ on top of exploiting the living, to keep us productive but forgetful workers committed to such concepts as "out with the old, in with the new" while we bury ourselves ever deeper in our toil, even though, from time to time, the words "This job sucks!" is surprisingly heard coming from our own mouth as if we were afflicted with Tourette syndrome, and bending over to grab our ankles, we await our collective punishment before it's even offered. We seem to have had no trouble retaining the lessons of the capitalist social relation! The problem is not so much amnesia or the loss of imagination, but that our awareness of the present is so strong, it overshadows everything else. Burying one's head in the sand, taking the position of the

26 <http://www.geocities.com/antagonism1/bordiga7.html>

three monkeys who neither see, hear nor speak evil, and indulging in the luxuries of immediate gratification or the obsessive-compulsive self-flagellation of workaholism are merely variants of the same choice – going with the flow. The current is just too strong, but it is our acquiescence, becoming a disposition which makes it so.

Is communism, then not possible, or is this only the voice of fragmentation, of alienation? After all, doesn't every utopian vision contain hidden traps? Could this be as easily said about revolution? Could it be that the thing which is impossible is the imagination of what it would be like without alienation and that itself is only a symptom? Revolution following communism is certainly possible. All it takes is a collective decision to give ground to thugs. Why is this always easier than the collective decision to stand firm? Is the quest for immortality too strong, especially since there have always been fewer thugs than thuggees? Our quandary must be an ideological one, a matter of learned and patterned resignation because there have always been equally fewer resisters than submitters (but there have indeed been resisters). What might be impossible is not communism itself, but communism as a result of revolution, meaning we might give too much credence to our own collective agency yet none whatsoever to individual competency. Sure, it's always argued that refusal is perhaps necessary, but not sufficient for revolution. May be it is revolution itself which is not sufficient. Don't the outcomes of past revolutions indicate it may not even be desirable? When Bordiga's floodwaters subside, we see some elements washed out to sea, but too often the left and right banks have only mixed in the turmoil and changed sides in the aftermath, even when the river has altered its course and the surrounding terrain has changed.²⁷

Bordiga said "the capitalist mode of production isn't eternal and it will collapse with the victory of the working class. It will have disappeared as soon as exchange values and commodities don't exist anymore, that's to say when there isn't either mercantile exchange of the objects of consumption, or money anymore." Obviously, alienation precedes capitalism, hence the anti-civ perspective – capitalism being only its latest phase, the latest "*avant-garde* of civilization". I don't think alienation comes with the equipment. This suggests to me that the predicted victory is not so much military (a new regime – "dictatorship of the proletariat") or even materialist (new modes of production) as it suggests a needed change in values, perhaps the dadaist annihilation of value itself. Many hopeful ones (waiting for a savior) are starting to say the working class will only achieve victory (liberation) after a collapse of "civilization as we know it". Without a change of mindset and the social behaviors which follow (or maybe vice versa, but

27 "The huge river of human history also has its irresistible and threatening swellings. When the wave rises, it washes against the two retaining embankments: on the right the conformist one, of Conservation of existing and traditional forces; along it priests chant in procession, policemen and gendarmes patrol, the teachers and cantors of official lies and state-schooling prate.

The left bank is that of the reformists, hedged with "people's" representatives, the dealers in opportunism, the parliamentarians and progressive organisers. Exchanging insults across the stream, both processions claim to have the recipe to maintain the fast-flowing river in its restrained and enforced channel.

But at great turning points, the current breaks free and leaves its course, "shifting" like the Po at Guastalla and Volano onto an unexpected course, sweeping the two sordid bands into the irresistible flood of the revolution which subverts all old forms of restraint, moulding a new face on society like on the land." – Bordiga [*The Filling and Bursting of Bourgeois Civilisation*](#)

probably a dynamic interaction of the two), the big collapse will only produce a lot of little islands of "civilization as we know it". Both revolutionary and collapsist positions are messianic. It is the same whether we are the agents of change (revolution) or a catastrophic change annihilates the agents because their poor planning produces piss poor performance – the theory of 5 P's to which both sides ascribe. The difference is that between refuse and refused, quit and laid off or fired. Doing nothing assures us the ultimate crisis is certainly going to happen at some point. The question is whether there will be anyone left to witness it, whether the planet's own consumption will represent the final agency. This is why we maintain and expand our critique – we desire a different world, a different context, a new set of conditions whether we can imagine its form or not, and we wish to share that desire.

Communism has been repeatedly defined as a social relation wherein we share our creations and our memories rather than an economic relation wherein only the results of our production are divvied out equally (or not, as in our current situation) by a specialized class of *divviers*. Communism is said to be classless. We already know what we need to do to exhibit it in the close circles of everyday life. Keeping in mind past dead ends gleaned from social criticism as well as direct experience to mark roads we might not wish to travel, what needs added to refusal is a certain acting-as-if, as if an alternate future context already surrounds our everyday present. It is about standing one's ground. Do we really need to know in advance precisely what we will become before we start the process of being? History and futurology may be fine places to visit, but to take up permanent residence annihilates the present. On the other hand, to never visit these places assures only a continuation of alienated existence. Learning sequesters the past; mindful of history's mistakes, creative imagination appropriates the future. The question of possibility is whether we can do more than what we are doing now, which seems to be nothing at all but bide our time and wait for a reprieve, if only in death.

ch 24: Revolution Redux: Meaning & Movement

I brought up that action comes before meaning.. Would a period's form of communism-becoming exist as a meme so that people could aim specifically for communism at some point instead of giving into pressures from the state and political groups? So an attempt at communism-becoming in the present can create the model of near future communism-becoming. Its becoming is an expression of social desires from unremarkable locations towards a common will in conflict with the capitalism and not the actions for potential rulers (Obamania!) or a desperate few? Or is its becoming the very meaning necessary for communism to exist...communism is always the social form created in reaction to capitalist contradictions, when a social form is created? – *HPwombat*

What does this mean, "meaning"? Isn't meaning just the interpretation of action useful to sportswriters? Is it "sense" for the materialist, the recognition of the unique which is in turn an acknowledgment of difference? An index to a larger category for the botanist, a larger space for the cartographer? If not just referent or interpretation, can it be the object of goal-directed behavior? If meaning is only its subject, that is, theory underlying and therefore antedating practice, aren't we transformed into weathermen, or perhaps lab rats wagering on which scientist in a white coat completes the maze first or pushes the button which doesn't deliver a fatal dose of electricity? Is meaning the means, the end or the becoming between them? Or are meaning and object, action or objective merely the backsides of each other, seen by an uninvolved (that is to say, objective) third party, as if watching a play? Is the distinction only a mystified abstraction from praxis, taken from today and imposed on future generations to insure we are correct, that we are on the right path? The self-fulfilling prophecy? My current favorite: "meaning is only derived from mixing metaphors, carefully but vigorously shaken, not stirred." Only metaphors illustrate connection and flow – movement beyond mundane grammatical 'sense' and the dry syntax of information systems.

It was once said Anthropology is comparison or it is know nothing. Meaning is the source, path, derivation and destination of comparable processes and should not be confused with truth. Always confined in the territory of theory, meaning only posits patterns which move. Is this movement the same idea as the Greek "flux" before Socrates, Plato & Aristotle thought it out of existence? Circulation? An "intimate order"? Meaning buried just beneath consciousness, its atom, on the analogy of genes, called "meme" & transmitted to the next generation completely unawares? Is there wind-blown or bull-dozer dirt covering (meaningful) ancient encampments?

The hydraulic theory: Isn't capitalism, as the latest *avant-garde* of civilisation, just an ever new and improved cork in one pipe diverting circulation away from us, leaving dank misery and rust? We, left behind, are to survive in stagnant waters if we can't find a channel upward and outward to flow with the elite? By hook or by crook! Rock-n-roll stardom, a stretch limo headed for the senior prom, a yuppie house with an apartment over a detached garage used to store our things we do not remember owning, but still feel too important to abandon to make room for a family in need of shelter? And then we replace the cork behind us, roll over and go back to sleep. History is a progressive process of cultural amnesia. If one has achieved the american dream, doesn't that mean one is living in a dream world?

For the cartographer: Is movement a path being traveled, but without destination? A Red Path my Indian friends speak of, the path of Taoism, of Hindu "truth", Deleuze' and Bataille's nomadism, the track of "righteousness" Job was riding before god-the-tempter tried to derail him with the misery of an imposed order – ethics, law & morality from without? Spiritual education – finally accomplished with Moses! This attained, managed truth leads us down many deaden(e)d roads. Did we decadently fall or just take a different turn? Life is left behind, but life moves, nevertheless.

Communism becoming: "...communism is always the social form created in reaction to capitalist contradictions, when a social form is created" What if this sentiment were turned inside out? "Capitalist social form is always the set of contradictions (the confusion of unresolvable binary oppositions) created in reaction to the intimate, (communist) order" making capitalist meaning the virulent and cancerous meme eating away at the human body by injecting it with organs?²⁸ Like our machines, we must be organised! There are springs which need winding. Take care you do not succumb to a bug and sneeze to death. We must be civilised! Is surgery indicated?

We cannot just let being be; there must be agency. The machine model of the universe suggests that man makes his machines in his own image and likeness just as he was made by King Organ (aka *Thug the first*), the bearded fatherly fellow living in the sky and pulling the strings of natural selection. The reverse of this is that man makes the maker in his own image, and the machine itself is only a mimicking doll, a toy simulation of the most its maker can imagine, that this represents man's supremacy, not his limit, that he has as a prize for ingenuity, won the right to impose his own order on all else. But the world is not machinic, machines only pretend worldliness. Machines now make each other. Could a machine come to make a man who, unlike Pinocchio, would search out the Blue Fairy, wishing to become a machine? Have our machines already done this?

Political machines: An automaton is a Deleuzian *organism*, otherwise known as a specialized machine or a component therein. If this is so [and we are not all automatons – are any of us actually; do automatons dream, or is that something intrinsic to *being* itself?], how do we assemble, create, design, implement something which is already present? This is the historical function of the historical party. Agency. Shouldn't we rather get out our trowels and tooth-brushes and proceed to excavate? To remove the dirt and filth in order to expose precious artifacts?

Just what is "communism"? Is the "meme" an invariant virus and as we track its

28 Holistic medicine, for example, does not concentrate on parts but their relationships within the whole, that it is the whole as a functioning body (unit) which needs attention in health and healing. In fact, it also concerns our surroundings as part of the body's functioning. This big-picture approach causes much chagrin to the establishment M.D., a repairman (mechanic) who is only trained in cutting out or replacing parts like one would change the oil filter in a volkswagon, inserting synthesized fluids and compounds (almost all toxins of one sort or another) to replace or augment natural ones, has no training in nutrition or in social dynamics and other stress agents which impact health, largely because bio-tech corporations and pharmaceutical companies do not require such to make a profit. As a result, medical schools will only denounce holistic medicine until a profit potential is realized by their financial benefactors, much in the way all the small, independent organic farms supplying product have been purchased (leveraged out of existence) by the big corporate food giants. Only the label remains.

movement (epidemiology), we witness an on-going infection? Or is it an archetype, a subdued cultural memory? Perhaps it's an instinct, a reflex action so many romantic theorists of human nature have described and mystified, which the young Marx tried to demystify and materialise with a 'scientific' approach? Even he succumbed to amnesia – he "matured" with old ideas of progress and Calvinist duty. Amnesia itself only forgets the questions. When confronted with the age old question, "What the fuck?", we tend to revert to older, stronger answers, programs, subroutines. We look to authority. Truth is always the leadership of the party.

The cure: Do historical parties try to halt one impending sickness while thinking themselves authors of another? Or is that the other way around, a cure, the result of much mixing and stirring in the back-room lab of *The Peoples Revolutionary Pharmacy*? Is communism something that can be erected like a 50 story bank building; is communism something done to us, or Of Us, By Us, For Us? That is how Dave Beck described government: "The government buys the people, force the people, and offs the people!" Or is communism rather Deleuze' body without organs, Bataille's intimate order, the red-letter christian's Jesus? If communism doesn't include, entail, display anarchy, a lack of specialized organizers, managers and bureaucratic minions, is it not hypocrisy?

If we pull out the cork, clear the obstruction, break the dam so that the river can return to the sea, clear the rubble from the path, allow movement & circulation, of what use are architects and construction workers? Should we aspire for positions in maintenance, as janitors and plumbers instead? In other words, what's to create when the water is already flowing? Bordiga said the revolution doesn't create communism but removes the obstacles which impede its movement.

What is it that flows? Gifts? Is freedom an unobstructed path, an un-dammed river? What are we talking about?

The historic party's meme is an abstraction that follows what is perceived to be real attempts at communism. So the historic party is insignificant to the real attempts in the grand scheme of things. Individual meaning, however, will find an interpretation for the intention of their actions, thus a mass acceptance of bourgeois ideology to reflect their actions which is compliance with bourgeois order. The real movement will be receptive to ideologies that are hostile to bourgeois order when their actions are already expressing that hostility. The historic party will become relevant when the real movement needs an interpretation that expresses its intention to break with bourgeois order. What is the relevance of catalysts? Catalysts create a memory of interpretation that SHALL BE re-interpreted for the real movement when the catalyst is associated with the actions of the real movement. The history of catalysts will be appropriated as part of the history of the real movement and it's catalysts will define its behavior.

Not all catalysts are the same, some are consequences, some are exceptional material forces, some are individual behaviors, some are the wrong side of the bed, some are hangovers and hurt feelings, some are stubbed toes and spilled milk, some are ugly commercials and billboards, some are 4 day coke binges, some are good relationships and strong family ties, some are hugs before bed and tears during prayer. Ultimately the basis of the catalyst can be traced by individuals within the historic party to a creation by systematic problems with how society is dominated or other theory that expresses why people are acting against the system that pits them against the system. Some have an interpretation that exposes under-class compliance and the difficulty of individuals and excluded groups to accept this compliance, despite their exclusion.

What isn't a catalyst? The base exploitation that all proletarians face? – *HPwombat*

ch 25: Reflections on *Autopoiesis, Culture and Society* by Humberto Mariotti

"When one puts objectivity in parenthesis, all views, all verses in the multiverse are equally valid. Understanding this, you lose the passion for changing the other. One of the results is that you look apathetic to people. Now, those who do not live with objectivity in parentheses have a passion for changing the other. So they have this passion and you do not. For example, at the university where I work, people may say, 'Humberto is not really interested in anything,' because I don't have the passion in the same sense that the person that has objectivity without parentheses. And I think that this is the main difficulty. To other people you may seem too tolerant. However, if the others also put objectivity in parentheses, you discover that disagreements can only be solved by entering a domain of co-inspiration, in which things are done together because the participants want to do them. With objectivity in parentheses, it is easy to do things together because one is not denying the other in the process of doing them. " – Humberto Maturana.

Following the direction of Maturana, the conclusion of Mariotti's piece, [*Autopoiesis, Culture, and Society*](#), states that

"Increasingly morbid societies have been built, which insist in disrespecting the autopoiesis of their components. We live in communities that describe themselves as always looking for a good quality of life. However, when observed with a more rigorous look, what can be seen is that this quality is accessible only to a minority. Furthermore, the costs of this quality are dangerously (and increasingly) high, because it keeps generating a dreadful series of by-products – which begin with social exclusion and end in death.

... the linear mental model is only adequate as a basis for the conventional market economy, that underestimates or simply discards the non-mechanical dimensions of human existence.

... [it] pretends that it is possible to resolve systemic problems by means of a linear and unidimensional mental model. As a consequence, this economy keeps creating scenarios in which the integral human being (that is, the complex human being) is always divided, used and finally excluded.

... We are talking about the consequences of an oversimplification of human condition" – Mariotti.

An alternative perspective than this so-called object-knowing, rational thought comes out of the biological notion of autopoiesis, self producing (and reproducing) autonomous systems paradoxically dependent on mutual feedback within their environment. This is the first time I've seen the "modern condition" referred to as not only a simplification, but oversimplification, and it makes perfect sense. In *Language*, John Zerzan criticizes this ultimately western kind of cause-effect thinking as the basis of alienation, but attributes this rational (symbolic) thought to underly language itself and therefore culture itself and the human condition (species being). Mariotti points out that our unilinear, rational and "simple" thought (aka objective knowledge) derives from *this* culture, not culture itself (he nowhere describes or even mentions alternative cultures, but insists not only on their possibility but demands their ubiquity when we are seen as biological communities of healthy biological organisms). Mariotti comes close to the ideas I've tried to present on a primitivism which does not exist, the lessons which we can learn from so-called primitives, or as Seaweed insists, the tales remembered and told by "indigenous" elders who have a much shorter history of slavery than we and a handle on their ancient languages, all in the process of dying out completely, all casualties of the modern

condition.

I've always had a problem with the idea of evolution as progress from simple to complex organization. This is a teleological explanation resting on the assumption of progress in nature: all things evolve from simple to complex organizational structures. What science has actually illustrated is that complex relations are just as apparent at the micro level (cellular biology, biochemical ecology or even molecular chemistry, atomic theory & quantum mechanics) as at the macro levels of analysis (general ecology, astrophysics, metaphysics). The implication is that simplicity itself is a figment of the imagination. It does not exist except as the "form" of something abstracted from its context. The "natural" progressive dialectic is destroyed by the very process which gave it birth. If we concentrate on parts removed from context to demand this simple-complex dialectic (for example, that picking berries off a bush is simpler than managing an orchard), we merely choose to ignore all the other complexities involved had we only turned our attention to the context surrounding both activities instead of the one we chose to perceive as more complex. The berry must still be picked! That a multicellular organism is more complex than the single celled creature is only a statement of quantity and ignores the fact that the former is merely an organized pattern consisting of multitudes of the latter. The latter engages in equally multiple and variable relations with its environment without such a tight connection (obvious skin or boundary only witnessed from our level of perception).

We're talking about organized patterns²⁹ embedded within and interacting with a

29 A pattern is a field of connectivity. A structure is restricted in time and space, so is seen as a unique collection of connected "parts". Structures fit nicely into cause-effect relationships and contrast. A pattern need no such restriction. Patterns are revealed through comparison and correlation. These are only differences in perspective. Obviously, we all approach the world from both perspectives. The point of difference is in the primacy we ascribe to either perspective or the focus of our attention on nodes or lines – nodes posit structure, lines reveal pattern. In the pattern, lines are only a metaphor for a relationship. All relationships are not necessarily physical. Even the physicist will tell you that the bond at the molecular level is only a matter of shared electrons. Both historical materialism and Darwinian evolution ultimately focus on shared historical conditions and perturbations – field effects. Our object-language only illuminates autonomous structures which may be manipulated.

For a specific example, a child automatically patterns his/her own vocalizations ("babbling") after those in the speaking environment, largely from the mother at first, then outward as the child's social universe expands. One could say a toddler is an expert at pattern-recognition and pattern-matching, and this is how local speech is reproduced. This kind of mimicry is in no way simple imitation. It is a complex function of largely unconscious comparison of speech patterns in the environment and one's own pleasant babblings, and the resulting idiolect is produced as a resonance. The whole process hinges on the establishment of trust, a positive mutual social relation: deaf children soon cease their own babbling. An inimical relation subverts the pattern leading to frustration and neurosis. The child's language then recapitulates that of the environment. It is autopoeitic – both creative and created.

A Boasian perspective sees this process underlying most of our habit, custom and tradition – cultural reproduction. It is not an intellectual process. A political perspective tries to simplify the pattern, bring it to consciousness, impose it, and goes on to call this democracy. Trust is no longer a consideration. The social relation becomes one-sided, recapitulating unilinear logic itself. The reproduction of pleasant patterns (mimicry) gives way to the obedience to group-think realized as neurotic self-consciousness. Democracy is a healthy superego, the inhibiting internal dialogue, the inimical schizophrenic voices, the alienation of the self as the civilized body imposes upon and subdues the individual. The reactionary individualist is thereafter placed in the category, *anti-social*

larger organized pattern, matrix, context. Mutual influence or nested levels of positive and negative feedback account for both change and reproduction (new versions of sameness, continuity). Autopoiesis implies that we are both creator/producer and created/product, organism and environment, cause and effect. This is no paradox. Paradox is the product of linear and binary thinking. But such interpretations which put determinism (unilinear agency) or dialectics to question are therefore usually rejected. Even though relativity predicts linear thinking will always end with paradox, we say "there must be a rational explanation", "it's all just very complex", "someone must be to blame". Yet paradox is ironically (according to Mariotti) the fundamental principle of living systems:

the term "autopoiesis" expresses what he [Maturana] called "the center of the constitutive dynamics of living systems". To live this dynamics in an autonomous way, living systems need to obtain resources from the environment in which they live. In other words, they are simultaneously autonomic and dependent systems. So, this condition is clearly a paradox.

The problem is not with nature but with the limits of our object-oriented language³⁰. I think what we normally infer by "simplicity" is simply pattern recognition. We share a recognition of pattern and assume simple structural organizing principles. With "complexity", we may suspect or assume there is a pattern, but it remains elusive, unrecognized, intuited. We create theories about it or model it with nonfunctional miniatures or allegorical tales. On the other hand, we also recognize moments of uniqueness and distinction, and when repeated, come to form or suggest a pattern of their own. The truly novel is a free radical, unaffiliated, fleeting, forgotten unless it can be abstracted, co-opted and replaced into a foreign pattern. This is the process by which we eliminate the possibility of chaos (disorder, isolation, lack of fit or fitness). We can thereafter define the heretical and burn its proponent at the stake, or admit that the world is truly a great mystery which nevertheless gives us many clues for living in it.

30 A less object-oriented *linguaging* existed in many places in indigenous Native America. We can hear sentences all day long where nouns are entirely missing. Speaking is oriented around the predicate as qualities of action and acting. In Euroamerican languages, sentences demonstrate the pattern $S \rightarrow NP + Pred$. Algonquian, for example, demonstrates $S \rightarrow Pred$. This does not mean nouns don't exist or cannot be formed. An object might be inferred but only in terms of appearance, likeness as it relates to, impacts or is influenced by something else, as well as how we come to perceive it (grammar & syntax make epistemology apparent). Speech tends to center on relationships rather than properties or attributes of the object. The emphasis is on being, doing, becoming, relating. Ideas are not likely to be turned into stone monuments. Our emphasis on distinction and division, so important to science and philosophy, is said to give us a capability for more complex understanding. Is this the same as understanding complexes? In Hopi, there is, for example, only one word which means both "starting" and "stopping". We might think this simple and inadequate, but the fact of the matter is that it instantly answers certain metaphysical problems. We find that where one process stops, another always starts at precisely the same point, and as we stand further back, we see it's all the same process after all. The word contains in itself a metaphysical statement. It implies context and flux but also abstraction and expectation. One is not inclined to stop and ask "Now what?" – continuity leaves little time for acquiring signed permission slips. But transformations are also expected. Proper names are also verbs (think "Dances with Wolves"). When the word is no longer appropriate, the name changes. Name changes invariably accompany rites of transition. Such *linguaging* is flexible, and is able to transform with changing conditions. There is nothing simple about it. The language itself (*linguaging*) harmonizes with the world it is ensconced in.

Gregory Bateson reminds us that the majority of our world, even of our selves, lies beyond our conscious purpose and pondering – complexity becomes the sacred. Simplicity is by that virtue the banal, mundane, ordinary. How soon we forget that the ordinary, the minuscule, the banal represents the limit of our knowledge yet go on to proclaim our own grandiosity and power. How many simple patterns we have lost (like that of eating food on our own planet without the need for supermarkets and their politico-economic regulating institutions). While climbing the tree of knowledge we've become so wise and competent (or is that complacent?) our life and experience is rendered simple, disconnected, ineffectual as measured by anything beyond one standard deviation above normality in IQ test performance or considered by the highly trained and state-certified psychological specialist "normal" rather than "schizophrenic" ('conflicted mind').

Knowledge itself is an interesting notion, subjected to much hostile discussion. We can, after several hundred years of debate, only conclude it is the notion of an idiot traveling a dead end road³¹. Knowledge is not a *thing* which may be accumulated and possessed. It is only a small mirror reflecting bits of the totality. Sometimes it is a highly distorted reflection, but in most cases, the scenery travels by so fast it becomes meaningless and unrecognizable, at other times the surface of the mirror is totally opaque. Our brighter halogen bulbs and our faster thinking machines only announce that they are themselves only simplified versions (shards of small mirrors) of us. Our intention, of course, was self-improvement! Today's technophiles seem intent on replacing us altogether³².

Like the good doctor-mechanic, we ask only what we are, never who we are and why we are doing it. Motivation is always translated in terms of economic gain (good) or irrational (emotional) misguidance (bad) – in other words, an imposed moralism. We are subjected to medical experimentation, we are objects of study, structures with interchangeable parts. Structuralism views the world only in terms of such mechanical structures, and by forgetting the question of who we are, confuses three distinct pro-

31 I don't mean to dis knowledge too harshly here. Certainly *knowledging* is a pleasurable pastime. It is a *human* pastime. Its use in an equation of exchange value is deplorable. Its calculation in terms of use value is certainly limiting. Would one expropriate the numbers from an obsessive-compulsive mathematician because they are of no use to you? What kind of monster will you then create without them? Without the conscious end (product) of knowledge acquisition, without attaching too much value or finality to the endeavor, there is no limit to the places it will take you. This should not be taken to suggest that knowledge cannot be useful or valuable. Obviously, it should never be taken as final. Without a sense of the absolute, there is no need for depression when these places turn out to be dangerous. Pleasure together with a mindfulness of implications need be the only motivations. Negative implications are obviously the negative feedback pointing out to others harmful paths and dead-end roads. Memory and communication establishes tradition (common knowledge) when pleasure is shared and predictable. Unfortunately, common knowledge for the civilized establishes the "facts" that pleasure is only for the wealthy (or "criminal") and negative implications are expected for the poor as established by the hard science of empiricism.

32 Fire, which the halogen bulb "reflects", is as much a "part" of us, intrinsic to our being as is speech which our cell phones "reflect". While phones and bulbs may describe who we are today, their disappearance does nothing to our "species being". One cannot say the same thing about fire, a connection certainly of primary importance. Prometheus is still paying for that gift, chained as he is to a mountain top with his guts daily eaten out by vultures.

cesses, structure, organization and pattern, and calls them "synonym". Organization consists of the actual connections, the mutual feedbacks, cooperation, flow, reciprocity as well as their pathological subversions such as competition and struggle, antagonism, exclusion, rejection. Organization is eroticism. Its subversion is war and disposability, or excrement. Even Maletesta essentially pointed out that modern hierarchic civilization is not a new principle of organization, but a process of disorganization, the conscious destruction of social organization which is the set of social connections ("the" social relation) which mimic or recapitulate natural (undisturbed) organic systems. From the perspective of Mariotti, they *are* organic systems. A social relation is not a noun, however it's used in the sentence!

The implications of connectivity present to us recognizable and comparable patterns, statistical (probabilistic) tendencies. In order to communicate these observed patterns as well as make sense of them ourselves, we create structures. *Languaging* can be seen as our (human) means of sharing recognized patterns, not answering the great question of "Life, The Universe and Everything". This is right out of Wittgenstein. I'd interpret Frere Dupont's "prehuman" as this prelinguistic, unconscious or intuitive mental activity. But this is not the source of gnostic revelation (if that level of "truth" is even possible) because as soon as we begin to *language*, the process of feedback changes everything – "higher" and "lower" levels of "consciousness" are mutually influential.

We abstract patterns from their context, give them a name such as "rock", "myself", "you", "garage door" and proceed to give them the qualities "reality" and "autonomy". This kind of thinking gives many phenomenological philosophers the mistaken idea that the entire world is created by our ideation. This is a pretty arrogant assumption. They mistake the totality, being, becoming, and all those other squishy notions only artists and lovers and occultists discuss with "structural reality". The empiricist demands that these structures exist "in themselves", all else is delusion! Just ask the carpenter who hung that door or the farmer who picked that rock from the field! Neither has left the simplified world of structural (objective) reality. Post-structural thought, often called "transcendentalism" by those who remember history³³, is clearly in the realm of primitive superstitious discourse of an awesomely complex universe of infinite possibilities and spectacular transformations, precisely the world the reactionary wants – possibility, choice, revolution.

33 That is to say, I see another pattern resemblance between some of post-structuralist thinking and transcendentalism. The intent here is in escaping the bonds of rigid structures and witnessing a whole new show. This is not necessarily the gnostic experience, but still an old way of looking at the world before it became so highly structured in the 19th and especially 20th centuries. Hence my reference to history. I guess that this follows the intent of the essay in that pattern recognition is the construction of metaphor and should not be taken to mean isomorphism, a purely structuralist notion. The lack of such isomorphism sent the recapitulation folks in the 19th century to be burned at the academic stake a bit prematurely. I would say the same thing about Lamarck. Surely a radiological or toxin-produced mutation during meiosis is an acquired characteristic passed on to future generations? But that's the little picture. From a larger view, cultural reproduction passes on acquired traits to new generations through the telling of tales as well as the "creative" efforts of advertising agencies. This is why Kroeber called culture "superorganic". Unfortunately, the progressives caught on and announced that culture transcends nature, cultural evolution supersedes biologic evolution, another gold star for the side cheering on progress and the conquest of nature. Man is god. Not quite what the hindus and their buddhist sects were trying to tell us!

For both the phenomenologist and empiricist, the universe is composed of a void filled with objects (either hard, fast & "real" or imagined but with "real essence") which occasionally collide. We must be ever on our guard for big objects like global-killing asteroids and small objects like the virus or even free radical which is out to do us in. They differ mainly in terms of agency, that unilinear, unidirectional path of rational thinking – cause-and-effect "objectivity", "phenomenology" or solipsist "ideology". Neither apprehends community nor will even approach eros – that which makes community possible. The ultimate absurdity from the point of view of our "common sense" would be that the self is itself a community of autopoietic organisms living and dying independent of the imagined totality of "me" and yet constitute this plurality or multiplicity called "myself", this local "complex" here and now. The irony is that this is precisely what the microscopic examinations of cellular biologists reveal. "I" am rendered by this ignorance a singularity. I am an object in and of itself. I am all alone. What if all our objects are only the result of isolating reification? The most we can say is that everything which exists does in fact exist, and like the physicist of subatomic particles, we only know this because of their/our implications on everything else. All we are left with from an ontological point of view is the recognition of fluctuating patterns and sharing processes. Objectivity would infer just as much of a simplification of reality as subjectivity or the ultimate solipsism of Descartes and the out-of-the-frying-pan, into-the-fire dictates given to Moses.

Both objective and subjective reality leave no room for community. A community is an organic, autopoietic complex. Radical politics ascribing creative agency to revolutionaries only ever imposes its own complexity in the form of alternate institutional structures (which only replace existing institutions) rather than observing and mimicking the natural patterns of organization which are rapidly becoming extinct due to our incessant and arrogant meddling with the planet and each other. We remain objects which need to change or be changed. Margaret Mead suggested the following:

I used to say to my classes that the ways to get insight are: to study infants; to study animals; to study primitive people; to be psychoanalyzed; to have a religious conversion and get over it; to have a psychotic episode and get over it; or to have a love affair with an Old Russian. And I stopped saying that when a little dancer in the front row put up her hand and said, 'Does he have to be old?'

An objective ontology ultimately concerns itself with (among other things like proper class membership or behavior interpreted only as means progressing towards ends, product, objective, etc.) whether reality, the world, universe, etc. is a singularity or multiplicity. We wonder if perhaps we shouldn't unify it., such that all ends correlate with my own, or alternately, my ends correspond to all others. Relativity predicts that at some point, the distinction will disappear because from one perspective, it presents itself as a singularity and comparing perspectives illustrates multiplicity. To concentrate on class membership so we know which noun is appropriate or to create new nouns, relativity soon demands fuzzy logic and even multiple class membership. Free radicals (all possible puns intended) belong to no class. *Das Ding an Sich*. Considering the set of all possible sets (which does not include itself) causes our eyes to cross and we have just created the void and killed the hierarchic (taxonomic) totality. The totality, the absolute

cannot be a member of a superordinate set. Yet we have already demanded that the totality is a possible set. I think Bertrand Russell discovered this paradox. Whitehead found proof of god: the Superordinate need obey no rules, it can only (super)ordain. Both De Sade and Mark Twain saw this limitation as proof of the non-existence of god: he must obey the one rule excluding him from our domain, thereby becoming subordinate to man. Stirner said, man, god, what's the diff? Einstein was able to fold space-time inside out and resolve the problem mathematically, but that is not a language I understand. Would we have these problems if "life, the universe and everything" were not considered a noun? Obviously, many do not see a problem at all.

Another possible ontology is reflected in ecology. Reality becomes a verb or *relating*. Things are only secondary effects of relational patterns. This is hard to phrase in English which places primary agency in the thing – the object or the subject is a transmitter or a receiver. We speak of ecology as a set or sets of relations. "It" is forced back into objective thinking. It is hard to think in terms of qualities of action (adverbs) without a separate referent, a specific subject or object of that relation or behavior. Consider two sentences: "There is a coyote behind the storage shed", and "Coyoting (going on) behind storing". The second makes sense to us when mapped against the first. We say "the noun phrase is implied by 'coyoting', therefore 'coyoting' is a subject". But the second has implications we may not be aware of. The first sentence is a statement of epistemological authority. The second leaves open alternate interpretations: "No, hearing dogging!", "Trickster is only playing mind-games!". The "truth-value" of the statement is unaltered. The dog or coyote is defined by the pattern of signals it presents to us. One could say that the objective view can also be questioned, so what's the difference?

Both nouners and verbers are coming from an empirical base (both our epistemologizings are themselves verbs!). We only know a creature is present because it is creating. If it is not creating, a nouner will either call it dead or an inanimate object. Verbers are directed to whole behaviors or patterns of relationships rather than categorical membership based on minimal pairs demonstrating distinction – Bateson's "the difference that makes a difference" (for ex., a two-toed sloth is opposed to a three-toed sloth by virtue of anatomy for the structural morphologist, while an ecologically tuned zoologist will tell you their eating habits are more important than their number of toes – we have a bigger picture). The difference between a dog and a coyote will be argued inside and out for the user of nouns, depending on the level of abstraction each "speaker" is coming from. The verbally oriented will distinguish the two by means of compared pattern – "you'll know it when you see it". Dogs (n.) dog (v.) and coyotes (n.) coyote (v.). Men man and women woman, gorillas gorilla and baboons baboon. Radicals don't fit our expectations. The world (reality) presents itself as patterns or constellations of behavior and relationships between behaviors. Nouners go on to dissect them, sometimes to the point of invisibility (atomic theory and politico-economics).

Verbers such as the Cheyenne were able to create behavioral "classes" (named patterns) such as Contrary (against social roles or categories) or Hemaneh (betwixt and between (gender) categories) to include those who exhibited behavior outside of social expectations within the community. Whether a "phase" or "permanent condition" was of

no importance as both change and stasis are expected in the world, and the very existence of radicals makes them also part of the world. Nouners such as ourselves like to destroy what doesn't fit nicely into our established (structural) categories. Isn't the first rule of nature "survival of the fittest"? Of course, Vaneigam defined survival as "prolonged death"!

It shouldn't follow that I'm thinking verbers are superior to nouners. Relativity is an epistemological methodology, not a political moralism. In fact, likely neither even exists except among the most rigid of thinkers. On the other hand, a primacy on nouns (objects) and taxonomic classification does fit better with reductionism and may be, in the long run, "subjectively" restrictive, particularly when our behavior (who we are) is only valuable to another who's ends may not be our own – we become use-values, commodities. Could it be that verbs direct our gaze to bigger pictures which do not oppose subjects against objects and go on to mediate them? The point is that the implications of either tendency illustrate a different world view, not different (mutually exclusive) worlds, even though they may be "worlds apart". This is my interpretation of linguistic relativity, and perhaps why I've been diagnosed "schizophrenic".

All kidding aside, relativity and mutual influence should never be confused with determinism. It is true what Butler, said that a chicken is only an egg's way of making another egg. It is equally true that a chicken and egg are only nodes between more important lines. You can only guess at the picture until you connect the dots. An artist can draw a continuous line with nary a dot and still give us a recognizable representation.

What's this got to do with politics, anti-politics, class struggle, revolution or their critique? Related questions: "How do we find agency?" and "What sort of world do we want?"

Recapitulation: Long ago, when a certain kinship was noted between "Man" and the other animals, it was determined that what set us on the road to being so special was tools. Nearly everyone else in the world proposed fire, but the technophiles won when they explained that fire is itself a tool. We came to be called "Man the Tool User"³⁴. When it was discovered that chimps, otters, crows and beavers also use tools, they changed the name to "Man the Tool Maker", not wanting to share the stage with anyone else. The little African australopithcine (Southern Ape) primate was welcomed into the brotherhood when it was seen chipping the ends off of river rocks to make pointies he could put next to his mouth and scare off the sabertooth cat from that tasty carcass and also use them to carve off bite-sized chunks of meat. Homer, with his tales of Prometheus would have turned over in his grave to see such a guest at the dinner table, but ancestor worship was back in vogue and anthropology was beginning to be accepted as a source of polite dinner conversation. Anyway, the protestants especially liked this new designation and we became "Man the Producer". It's way god-like. Some were able to eliminate god altogether, and we became modern. We would rule

³⁴ Interestingly, the etymology of organism itself goes back at least to Aristotle's day, *Organon*, 'tool' or 'instrument'. Epicurus proclaimed that we teach the mechanistic view of the world in order to free us from the fear of death and godly caprice.

ourselves with bosses, landlords, parliamentarians and presidents. Our heroes were "captains of industry", self-made men. They were in a far better position to take care of us than god was ever able. We could all be industrious and get a chance at the big pie in the sky.

So to make a long story short, just about everything we came to do was seen in terms of construction-work. Language is no exception. We, after all, make sentence constructions and we can deconstruct them as well. Proof! *Languaging* (not even a word) implies behavior. *Language* implies structure. We use structures. We use tools, we use language. Everything is a use value or it is nothing. We must keep busy and have something to show for it. If he hadn't insisted we share our products with those unfortunate souls who can't quite make the grade, Marx' *Das Kapital* might have become the New, New Testament. The Captains said we must only try harder, while sniggering and whispering to each other "in yer dreams, sucka!".

But what if we turned the equation around? What if we insisted on *languaging* and that it is a behavior which allows us to interface with our environment, and speech is a particularly human way of accomplishing this amongst ourselves? Would not this make tools a sort of language? Outside of civilization, this seems to describe just about everything. Everything interacts (communicates) with its environment in mutually influential ways. Everything is the environment for everything else. Self and other, individual and environment become redundant distinctions. The only problem I see with this approach would be that we'd have to have very, very large dinner tables, with such a large family to entertain. We're taking our hammering and building sheltering and offending none but the nail and our dinner!"

Relativity: Franz Boas is often considered the "father" of modern anthropology, and the ultimate mentor of all future ethnographic fieldworkers. Three methodological concepts in approaching *cultures* are almost invariably connected to Boas (or well they should be): *Relativity*, *immersion* and *rapport*.

Relativity puts parentheses around objectivity and this is the first condition of immersion superseding detachment. The objective view is always from a detached position. Immersion puts one into the context with wide open eyes. The object is removed from the other, the subject is removed from the self. Immersion likewise puts an end to armchair theorising (the pure subjective analysis). Within parentheses, objectivity is seen as but one perspective, one line of thinking (unilinear reasoning) among many possible lines all coming to form different but equally valid positions. From one perspective, light is a series of particles, from another it is waves washing up on the beach or ripples in the pond. But light is still light. From one point of view, a hammer is meaningless outside of what it does or allows us to do, how it facilitates our interaction (communication) with the world around us. But a hammer is also "just a hammer". Autopoiesis is mutual interdependence. One begins to see the opposition between autonomy and dependence disappear. Self-management and reproduction are themselves placed in parentheses.

Poiesis. This word, the root of our modern "poetry", was first a verb, an action that transforms and continues the world. Neither technical production nor creation in the romantic sense, poietic work reconciles thought with matter and time, and man with the world.

Martin Heidegger refers to it as a 'bringing-forth', using this term in its widest sense. He explained poiesis as the blooming of the blossom, the coming-out of a butterfly from a cocoon, the plummeting of a waterfall when the snow begins to melt. The last two analogies underline Heidegger's example of a threshold occasion: a moment of ecstasis when something moves away from its standing as one thing to become another. – [Wikipedia](#)

Western thinking is *Enstatic*, 'standing-within-oneself'. Enstasy is the source of the phrase, *Das Ding an Sich*. It praises the unique, and rightly so. But it leads to a schizm between the subject and object. We are all rendered schizophrenic, minds in conflict, unless we retreat back into a pure objectivity or pure subjectivity and this reproduces the "modern" condition from one generation to the next. But of course, these are limited views. *Ectasy* derives from the ability to occasionally stand outside oneself and interact with the world from a different perspective. This is the source of empathy, the development of rapport. It is the first condition for the ethnographer, without which, comparison is replaced by co-optation or appropriation. It constitutes communication, which is a mutual influence or it is nothing. This is not a world changing event, but can lead to changing the world. Poiesis is the root of poetry, creation, revolution. Autopoiesis is the organic community.

ch 26: Eco-Epistemology: Aspects of the Syntax of Theory – or – Toward an Anarchistic Biology: Rectifying Revolution with Evolution

epistemology: "theory of knowledge," 1856, coined by Scot. philosopher James F. Ferrier (1808-64) from Gk. *episteme* 'knowledge,' from Ionic Gk. *epistasthai* 'know how to do, understand,' lit. 'overstand,' from *epi-* 'over, near' + *histasthai* 'to stand.' The scientific (as opposed to philosophical) study of the roots and paths of knowledge is epistemology (1969). – [Online Etymology](#)

the premise of you and your compatriots
seems to be that information will free people.
this is a liberal premise, demonstrably false.
that of course does not mean that
the lack of information will free people either.
the world is not binary. – *Leona*

There's an old inscription at CIA headquarters:

"The truth will set you free"

They should know!

The literal translation for *epistasthai* 'overstand' brings to mind the vanquishing of an enemy. *A fait accompli*. One can see where we've come up with the phrase, "Knowledge is power". An accomplished exploit, knowledge is a means of accomplishing exploitation.

Then there's this little ditty:

Thither thou know'st the world is best inclined
Where luring Parnass most his sweet imparts,
And truth conveyed in verse of gentle kind
To read perhaps will move the dullest hearts:
So we, if children young diseased we find,
Anoint with sweets the vessel's foremost parts
To make them taste the potions sharp we give;
They drink deceived, and so deceived, they live.
– *Torquato Tasso, 1581*

A sugar coating makes information easier to swallow, but that is not always a sufficiently reinforcing association to make it *fit* to be called "knowledge". Information swims like a sperm cell looking for a hole in our thinking wherein to take up residence. Entry gained, now there's a pregnant thought. The systems theory approach suggests that information may be modified by the system (our "brain") in order to "better fit in". This, of course, goes both ways – there is a mutual modification and it is not always a conscious process. What doesn't fit passes clean over our head. The output is always different than the input. This is what processing means. Sometimes this is what misunderstanding means as well. Lies and truth are only moral assessments to match input to preconceived notions. Truth is always pre-established until it is shattered by communication with the world around us. Shattering might produce an epiphany, a cognitive leap or a revolution, but mostly this doesn't happen. Repetition is the source of our conservative approach to the world, our wish for everything to be safe and predictable. From this process of communication, we attain "common sense". Repeated, we ac-

commodate to tradition; shared, we form a school of thought. Truth by consensus. Organized knowledge. The infection has metastasized.

Children do not come into the world a blank slate. The slate is, from our grownup perspective, a surrealistic masterpiece. In fact, we often think it a nightmare. It is surrealistic in that newborns do not make distinctions. Freud informed us that the infant has no ego. If knowledge is distinguished, if it is distinction, a mark of excellence, then the slate needs reduced, arranged, ordered, limited. Much must be erased. Distinct information is stored only if it becomes valued, and value is only an emotional attachment. Small children come to us fully capable, but without ability. Their babbling contains every possible sound found in human speech. It is stripped away in language acquisition with a Nietzschean forgetfulness. They become more able, but with increasingly limited capability. Adults find increasing difficulty learning new (spoken) languages, something which comes automatically to the child. A child is a master of every possible emotional display, capable of great feats of kindness as well as anger, always looking to connect the emotional burstings to incoming communication. The distinction is not yet there between without and within except in the capability to feel pleasure and pain and everything in between. Every moment is forever. Piaget called it the "sensory-motor" phase. Without giving it a thought, the child is fully cognizant of ecological immersion, something which able-bodied adults can only imagine. For us, it is an "altered state".

Small children, not making grand distinctions, have the best of memories, if memory is anything like holographic storage of patterns of perception. This is the source of familiarity (from "family"). The biggest whole is mother, and that is a huge pattern instantly recorded during the first twelve hours of birth. There is more to memory than simple regurgitation for further digestion. There is also the matter of feeding each other. While recognition of order produces distinction, distinction creates order. Nitpicking also creates order. Too much of this creates the obsessive-compulsive ritualized neurosis no longer capable of holostic thinking, of dealing with patterns. If trust is a bond, and it is not established, one can certainly appreciate order, but cannot live outside of chaos: the cluttered room syndrome sets in rapidly.

I'd like to suggest that Gregory Bateson's "difference which makes a difference", the process of distinction, may be inverted. Chaos, the unprocessed world, comes predistinguished. Every "bit" of information is (or seems) unique. Chaos is only extinguished through comparison, incorporation, merging. Patterns only become recognizable by their commensurability. One "thing" always stands in relation to another. Trained in oppositional thinking (or perhaps it is that we come into the world defiant), we call this the process, the learning of distinction. We forget there must first be a capture before we can proceed with our experimental dissections. What is new is compared to everything else, including internal patterns before it can stand at all in our perceptual or cognitive fields. Of course "new" patterns are given birth, but only on our resonance in our environment. Merging or incorporation must be preceded by recognition (pattern matching), and that is necessary for iteration. Reiteration transforms information into knowledge. Presumption is born. We feel secure to perform without giving the world a second thought.

Addressing gender as participation in a performance act, the "post-structuralist" Judith Butler echoes Boas' "anti-intellectualist" focus on custom, habit and tradition, but ostensibly, only through the works of such as Foucault and Derrida:

Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed by a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance. – Judith Butler

Nineteenth century revolutionists had an infatuation with science, and in fact some (Kropotkin, Reclus) were scientists themselves. Emerging from philosophy and naturalism, the science of the day revolved around the also emerging fields of evolution (social evolution by Spencer (early) and Morgan (late) and biological by Darwin & Wallace) and behaviorism (toward the turn of the century) from a long tradition of largely British empiricism, and the "hard sciences" (chemistry and the physics of electromagnetism, metallurgy & engineering) more practical to industrialism and warfare. The naturalists found in the American frontier and European forests a laboratory for experimentation with intentional, autonomous communities, following a long tradition of drop-outs going back at least to the middle ages.

But science and technology seemed to have proven progress a good and worthy project. Potential was seen lurking from every dark alley but hypocrisy was also becoming more and more apparent from any perspective. Self criticism inherent in science seemed a good starting point to save progress and end hypocrisy. The second half of the twentieth century saw more and more people (largely philosophers and artists) questioning progress itself after witnessing the effects of two world wars and its energy sources which could realistically annihilate the entire planet. The 1960's nearly accomplished a spontaneous revolution, taking the old revolutionaries quite by surprise. Science itself has begun to question progress in the 21st century based on developments in physics in the early twentieth.

Differences found among radicals today often revolve around the epistemological bases (or unquestioned assumptions) of dialectical materialism and a quantum relativity lurking beneath post-modernism. The die-hard Marxist revolutionaries and leftist reformers are starting to show everyone else that stasis is a much stronger urge than change, even when that stasis is the preservation of progressive notions – the revolutionaries still refuse to initiate their revolution! Paradoxically, contradiction seems to be winning out over progress lending some credence to the dialectic approach. But everything seems to be falling apart without our help. Much discussion now centers on notions of collapse and extinction equally as much as gradualism and rupture. Minor adjustments in thinking will render them *not* mutually exclusive, but possibly lead to profound ends (or beginnings). The adjustment involves the merging of phenomenology and empiricism, long thought to be mutually exclusive. The apparent radical dualism is outlined below:

A. **Dialectics** (from wikipedia.org) is the science of the most general laws of development of nature, society, and thought. Its principal features are as follows:

- 1) The universe is not an accidental mix of things isolated from each other, but an integral whole, wherein things are mutually interdependent.
- 2) Nature is in a state of constant motion:

"All nature, from the smallest thing to the biggest, from a grain of sand to the sun, from the protista to man, is in a constant state of coming into being and going out of being, in a constant flux, in a ceaseless state of movement and change." – *Friedrich Engels*, *Dialectics of Nature*.

- 3) Development is a process whereby insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes lead to fundamental, qualitative changes. The latter occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, in the form of a leap from one state to another.

- 4) All things contain within themselves internal dialectical contradictions, which are the primary cause of motion, change, and development in the world.

"Merely quantitative differences, beyond a certain point, pass into qualitative changes." – *Karl Marx*, *Capital*, Vol. 1.

B. **Complementarity** in physics (both/and replaces either/or) and **emergence** (from synergistic relations) derive from relativity and uncertainty (*vis à vis* observer differences and effects) and point to a non-linear view of apparent dualism in nature and have broader implications for thinking about revolution and intentional organization than does dialectics alone.

- 1) The change from species to species is not a change involving more and more additional atomistic changes, but a complete change of the primary pattern or reaction system into a new one, which afterwards may again produce intraspecific variation. – *Richard Goldschmidt*

Small changes early in embryology accumulate through growth to yield profound differences among adults." – *Steven Gould*

- 2) Complementarity rather than dialectics points to the importance of quantum to the negation of determinism in linear concepts of causality:

In the relativistic world view of Einstein and Boas, every statement can be inverted. The standard, or colloquial view of directional agency cannot invert the question "to what affect does the moon have on the tides?" to "to what affect do the tides have on the moon?". But the colloquial definition of gravity developed since Newton ties gravity to mass itself, such that all matter is mutually attractive not only in the physical sense, but also in the the erotic. The quantified answer to the first question is "gargantuan!", to the second is "minuscule!", but to neither is accurately answered "none whatsoever!". – *Dufús*

A small change, or "fluke" is insignificant (a statistical unlikelihood) only until it is not so. Its signification is the underpinning of catalysis, of crisis or catastrophe, a perturbation resulting in or from abrupt structural transformation. A fluke, or radical novelty, is in no fashion a matter of accident, chance or coincidence. A fluke is also the unanticipated-

ed outcome/response of a ("complex") interaction of conditions, ultimately meaning that flukes are necessary as both catalyst and transformed structure. A fluke must therefore be something to be expected. When it is reproduced and generalized, it becomes the *status quo*, the ubiquitous condition, the antifluke. Steven Gould called this "punctuated equilibrium". Without flukes, that is, the presence of the novel, unique individual (whether a grain of sand or the sun, a protista or a "man"), diversity would be a non sequitur. The process of the transformation from flukes to ubiquity is normalization: learning, natural selection. Reinforcement does not come from the environment so much as from interactions within the environment. What has often been confused as agency and direction is seen on closer examination to be nothing but self-fulfilling prophecy or the self-reinforcement of a continual positive feedback loop. If there is a direction, it is toward coherence and matriculation. If there is agency, it is reciprocal, a matter of mutual influence among interacting elements. This attraction has variously been labeled, from "gravity" to "love". Even so, everything which comes together eventually comes to fall apart, whether constituted by atoms or ideas. One could say complementarity is a view of life, dialectics of death. Empedocles reasoned not the ultimate dialectic but the polarity of flux as "love" and "strife".

Adaptation via natural selection is a statistical change in pre-existing elements interrelating to form a pattern. The structure itself, the coherence of pattern somewhat constrains the number of possible relations within: pigs can't fly, else we would not call them "pigs". This is the *a priori* argument from linguistics. The more deductive structuralist argument comes to the same conclusion based on the necessity of a complete structural transformation of the organism required before any designs for flight could be entertained by a pig. The physicist would require a change in gravity, such that the same pig could probably fly on the moon. The genetic perspective informs us that the pig's ancestors couldn't fly, and they were pigs too. In any case, these represent no limitation to the pig's ability to live (interrelate) as a pig but in fact open up (bring forth) a world of options for doing so, much as an understanding of music theory allows one to produce a symphony which doesn't sound like chalk on a blackboard. (This is not to suggest that such music is not possible without theory – the "groove", like zen bowling, does not derive from theoretical analysis). Theory is interpretive, not generative. Only our interaction with theory produces predictions, and we can only wait and see if the world agrees or disagrees with us to assess them. Like a zoom lens, the only value of a theory is in its adjustability. Piaget called this "accommodation".

Everything seems driven to make connections. From one perspective, the difference between a rock and an idea is in the tightness and manner of its connections. A well matriculated rock is a mountain. A dying mountain becomes many rocks, rubble. Dead rocks are dust. A good idea is no less "real", just less sensual, even though it can have sensational implications: a titillating idea such as "mutual eroticism", a repulsive thought like "police state" can equally change the world. Yet we scoff at the "native" who sees magical potential (agency) in words (incantations). This is because we see our words as stand-alone creations which are only roadsigns to the "out there". When ideas are expressed as word combinations, the coherence we call logic: the logic of passion is "poetry", the logic of empire is "tyranny", the logic of speech is "grammar". Logic does not generate meaning. The words themselves are more windows than sign-

posts. Reason is not a map or representation, but a construction, a glass house whose windows either have darkened shades or produce a view of other glass houses peering back. Meaning is always a matter of ecology – the total relations within and between houses.

Reason is a television show confused with a reality of rocks and organisms. Reality tv is an idea which goes on to produce a reality outside of tv. That is why we call its shows "television production", not the production of televisions (aka factory work). In an older English, "production" referred to what went on on a stage, a performance, not a commodity shot out from the backside of a factory. Television is an audio-visual reinforcer which inspires us to keep our jobs at the factory by limiting our views of novelty and therefore choice. It assures the conservation of the stasis of progress and perpetual change in the direction of oblivion to which all systems of unrestrained positive (teleological) feedback (reinforcement) must eventually arrive. Television is not a conspiracy, but the unintended by-product of a technology (radar) meant to detect unseen enemy bombers on their way to annihilate us. It is a fluke born of paranoia which transformed (through normalization) into an anti-fluke limiting the re-occurrence of new flukes. It is a good thing the world is not a machine, else it would have gone itself extinct eons ago. Contrary to Deleuze, the world is not machinic, machines attempt to be worldly.

Even god was made into the image and likeness of "Man". As the television producer said to the witch doctor, "Who knew that the voodoo that you do would be seen as nothing but hoo hoo?" Whereupon the good doctor replied "That's just a bunch of academic doo-doo!"

Novelty (diversification) and the still enormous amount of possible relationships within, precludes the thought of absolute stasis in existing conditions. This does not imply progress, only flux. Variability must exist before any variation is selected (reinforced). For example, there used to be an on-going debate as to whether television corrupts youth (via propagating a social lie of the ubiquity of violence, sex, etc. associated with pleasure in the first place and pain in the second) or only reflects the corruption already "out there", as the media apologists defensively proclaimed. A non-aristotelian ("both/and") perspective of the world will see "truth" in both sides. There is "corruption" and its representation universally propagated (propaganda) increases its likelihood among the viewing public, particularly when the target audience is the very young (still "open" or not yet so set in their ways; it reinforces the world view of those who are so "set"; the world itself obediently responds without the merest speculation of awareness). The process is the normalization of what might have been a historical fluke (antisocial behavior) by means of self-fulfilling prophesy. I've always noticed a strong homology between the idea of natural selection (evolutionary theory) and learning theory (especially operant conditioning), and I think this is it. Maturana called it autopoiesis, a merging of synergy (or "emergence"), self-organization & conservation.

Conservation is the first law of physical systems. Conservation becomes us!

Life (actually, "living") converts matter to energy and vice versa. It also converts one kind of energy to another kind of energy and one kind of matter to another kind of matter. It also reproduces itself so that it can continue to do this. Life is metabolic as well as reproductive. It could be said life is death-defying. Reproduction is the ultimate joke

played on mortality. This has all been said before:

Transformation and *conjugation* [as in "marriage"] are two means of gene transfer among bacteria. (*Transduction* by viruses is another.)...

evolution happens when cells are reprogrammed. – *Brig Klyce*

History is a process of transformation through conservation. History is a process of transformation that is continually arising on what is being conserved... such that although something ended, something fundamental was conserved... If conservation stops, history ends... There has to be a continuity in the story. This is exactly what we find in the history of living systems: some life forms disappear but living systems go on. And what is conserved? Living.

So the history of living things is a history of the conservation of living, with many changes in form, each of which conserves living. We are one of these millions of forms that comprise the biosphere [ecosphere]; a biosphere which is the present of a history of the conservation of living. We are part of the biosphere, the natural landscape has to do with us. We look at the biosphere and find it beautiful because we are coherent with it. We are coherent with it because we belong to the same history – as well as to the local coherences we may have generated. – *Maturana*

“Universal causality is nothing else than the eternally reproduced resultant of an infinity of actions and reactions naturally performed by the infinite quantity of things that are born, exist and then disappear within it”, – *Bakunin*

"Certain phenomena in nature produce what he called “qualitative novelty” — material changes that cannot be expressed in simple quantitative terms; they are emergents rather than resultants. To quote G. H. Lewes (1875):

Every resultant is either a sum or a difference of the cooperating forces; their sum, when their directions are the same — their difference, when their directions are contrary. Further, every resultant is clearly traceable in its components, because these are homogeneous and commensurable... It is otherwise with emergents, when, instead of adding measurable motion to measurable motion, or things of one kind to other individuals of their kind, there is a cooperation of things of unlike kinds...The emergent is unlike its components in so far as these are incommensurable, and it cannot be reduced to their sum or their difference.

“nature is not a homogenous and spatial system [... but] the result or effect of a multiplicity of geneses. New existences continually spring up and add to the older ones which compose with them [...] a common nature”. – *D. Debaise*

“We talk about the ‘march from monad to man’ (old-style language again) as though evolution followed continuous pathways of progress along unbroken lineages. Nothing could be further from reality. I do not deny that, through time, the most ‘advanced’ organism has tended to increase in complexity. But the sequence from protozoan to jellyfish to trilobite to nautiloid to armored fish to dinosaur to monkey to human is no lineage at all, but a chronological set of termini on unrelated darwinian trunks. Moreover life shows no trend to complexity in the usual sense—only an asymmetrical expansion of diversity around a starting point

constrained to be simple.” – *Gould*

Evolution is not a theory of change, but a theory of the process of staying the same, which is the continuity of living, engaging and reproduction. Evolution is *performative*. Sometimes a revolution is required to accomplish this, and change is the result. Some other times shit happens. Conservative stasis should not be taken to mean "no change". Drift (microevolution) is expected if variety is to be maintained. Appearance may change but the general pattern oscillates within a recognizable range of parameters.

Neodarwinians (gradualists) think that this gradual drift ultimately leads to speciation in a regular, timely fashion. In other words, at some point, the differences which make a difference end up totally unrecognizable and the breeding population becomes separated (one group is no longer attractive to the other). This invites the argument of the missing link. As long as breeding (sex) is still going on in the interim, there will be a normalizing effect. This focal point also provides the racist logic of the nation-state.

The progressivists (gradualist reformers) see this problem in logic, and go on to say this is the source of increased complexity over time. In other words, increased variability requires new modes of organization in order to maintain coherence. This, it is thought, might account for the original development of social organisms, society, culture.

Both progressivist revolutionaries, Trotsky and Jefferson thought revolution must be a permanent (in the first case) or predictably repeated (in the second) condition to prevent tyranny. Trotsky killed anarchists and communists as counter-revolutionaries and Jefferson, who called Native American leaderless societies the preferable condition, went on to call for their extermination for the sake of the preservation of democratic progress and unity – "civilization".

The problem with these views is that inevitable increased variability often leads to factioning and social cohesion begins to break down. The drop out is a common event in evolutionary biology, although few biologists would use this term. Juveniles of sheep, horses, chimps, baboons, and Apache unwilling to compete for access to feed and breeding partners will go off to form their own bands, if the territory will afford it. Yet they rarely become reproductively isolated (this is the Romeo & Juliette syndrome!). If the territory will not permit it (territorial circumscription), conditions are ripe for revolution. (We often note the strife seemingly inherent to ghettos and refugee camps. The function of the police is to make sure this strife does not spill out). Often the juveniles will overpower the offending dominant male. When such insurrection is not chosen, juveniles may out-wait the offender, who becomes feeble with old age. In many species, the alpha male mellows out with age or experience soon after puberty. Sometimes a little personal conflict is necessary to return to or maintain a state of cooperative living. There is nothing inherently authoritarian about self-defense. Humans seem to be the only animal to have designed their social relations around power, submission and competition, but only during their most recent history, a mere fraction of the time they've been on the planet, the same period in which they discovered property and kings. We are starting to see that progress and unity may not be such grand assumptions after all.

("Speak for yourself" I seem to hear coming from the wings!)

If we think of biology as the observation of living organisms and ecology as the observation of the relationships between them, following Bataille we can see a 'bio-economics' of matter and energy cycling (the system of eating and shitting). In this context, even at the cellular level, all relations are predator-prey relations (the eaters and the eaten). The distinction between parasitism and symbiosis is not always clear. From this perspective, such relations are not examples of competition for or over resources, for like a killer virus (see [Burroughs](#)), the animal or plant which extinguishes its resource base (feeds on prey to its extinction, saps the earth of its nutrients faster than it can replace them through decomposition as seen in monocrop farming even with the addition of petrofertilizers) causes its own extinction.

From the ecological perspective, all predator-prey relations are also symbiotic relations between populations or between (especially in the case of plants) the organisms and the molecular matrix they are ensconced in (or more accurately, matriculated with). The less diversity (in tactics for living), the more important (or apparent) is symbiosis, and the less distinction between symbiotic organisms is meaningful (for example, the moth and orchid which have evolved together in such tight reciprocity that one cannot be described without reference to the other; the ruminant is both defined and enabled by the microflora inhabiting the rumen; a lichen is a tight symbiosis between an algae and a fungus, I am rarely seen without the presence of "my" dog, etc.). Without some kind of symbiosis, the slightest perturbation of relations can cause instability or even the death of the individual or the extinction of highly specialized species.

The entire process depends upon the maintenance of diversity. In fact, diversity can be seen as a result of the weakness or fragile nature of the relations between organisms. In fact, species itself, like "working class", is just a categorization with imposed boundaries. The world is always fuzzier than our classification systems imply, but they come in handy from time to time. Adaptation seen only in terms of specialization is fine in a world in which nothing changes, in a world without intervening variables. This is the view from a rock's perspective in a world without scissors or paper. Adaptability is the ability to roll with the punches, not to find a hole and hunker down (although this might be a very good short term strategy from time to time).

At the philosophical level, this also describes the relationship between diversity and flux. It is not a matter of give and take (economic exchange) but mutual influence (circular and reciprocal): diversity produces flux produces diversity. Mutual attraction keeps it all from exploding into space. Adaptation should not be confused with accommodation to existing conditions, which has submissive undertones. If the living we desire is a system of mutual (social) relationships, then our praxis for living should be directed toward destroying those conditions by creating new connections. The frog trick is to jump out of the pot *before* the water begins to boil. Revolution is always a matter of self-defense. The argument opposing revolution and dropping out is an absurdity. From a biological perspective, if the "end" is living over survival, letting nature take her course and revolution are one and the same. It's as plain as the nose on your face. Shifting one's perspective from dialectics, especially dialectical materialism to comple-

mentarity in no way weakens revolutionary theory, and in fact, just might help us see what it is we're trying to accomplish. Destruction and creation become mutually implicative. The same relationship will be seen between organization and disorganization: "the world is not binary!".

None of this is an attempt to discount the existence of competition, but that outside of our own manufactured world, competition is something to be immediately resolved or avoided. Competition is the source of dialectic friction. Property is the basis of its prolongation. Connections are made by cooperation, they are broken by strife. Our civilized history illustrates a prolonged counter system of power and competition which rents the weaker relations between organisms (particularly our relations with them and with each other).

Growing up with (or without) property, we have come to see competition as the normal operating procedure in life. As a starting point (in linear thinking) and in the manner of the self-fulfilling prophecy, we are directed more and more toward isolation, disconnection, anthropocentrism, alienation, egoism: the individual in and of itself. The opposite (reactionary) tendency is also seen: we disappear in the presence of the overpowering machine. The individual ceases to exist except as an isolated frustration of impossible desire. Suicide becomes the ultimate response. In either case, communism is the ultimate contradiction and logical impossibility. Where competition is the beginning (essential condition), community is unimaginable and the universe of organisms and ecology (the ecosphere) also disappears.

Linear thinking would see as a paradox a distinction (even with moral overtones) between the individual overpowering and consuming its prey (the gazelle eats the bush, the lioness eats the gazelle) and the behavior of species' interactions maintaining each other's populations, mutually enhancing each other. Because of our metaphoric capabilities in human language, we ought to be masters of jumping out of our own skin, of ecstasis, of alternating our points of view. But as civilization progresses, our view becomes narrower and narrower. It is because we have cut our ties with the rest of the cosmos. Everything becomes *Das Ding an Sich*, especially ourselves. Beyond objectivity, reality consists of observers and the observed. Light is *both wave and particle*, but only exists as an interrelation. Without the observer, the observed ceases to exist. But we must not forget that the inversion is also true: Without the observed, the observer also ceases to exist. We did not create the world. It continually creates itself. And we are not so much *in* it as *of* it.

It is true humans are an impressive lot, but we are also impressed with ourselves to the point that we are the only "subject", our capabilities (power) justify all that we do. Everything else (objective reality) is at our disposal. Our grandiosity is only a function of our anthropocentricity. We show off our power by annihilating the universe and call this "progress". When confronted with the "why" question, we speak as a mountain climber: "because it's there, because we can". When we systematically cause the extinction of one species after another, pour asphalt over most of the planet, we limit our possibilities. We reduce our options down to zero. Like Poe's Dupin, when we eliminate the indefensible we are left only with truth (and the only truth we know for certain is "death"). Yet Steven Hawking, the "smartest" among us, has announced we must speed up

progress so we can finally escape the planet and experience the final frontier. Our computer wizards tell us we must hurry things along so we can be downloaded into the machine, predicted to be the only survivor of an assured extinction of life on earth. If our knowledge is a reflection of the world around us, the more we eliminate diversity, the more stupid we must become. From this perspective, we cannot view capitalism as the agency of our alienation, but only as a symptom and accelerant of our stupidity and demise.

The one lesson from paleontology we should apply to ourselves is that increasing overspecialization (the accelerated reduction of ecological connections) has always resulted in extinction. To repeat Auntie Dave's question, "Do we even believe in life before death?"

Reinforcement theory and the non-ritualized viral infection of oral tradition among the literate civilized by way of the need to get laid

I've been thinking a lot lately, especially lately, about the genealogical tradition of radical thinkers and their schools, especially as it pertains to notions of drift, punctuation, and the inevitable return to the status quo. Where are the missing links? We occasionally find something ancient and obscure and wonder why the totality of a person's works are not available, did not go on to form the basis of a "school", why they seem to be totally unknown to the thinkers of the present and particularly ourselves, isolated textual ditties, artifacts consisting of isolated quotes often attributed to "anonymous" or "unknown author"? We find them attractive largely because we feel some sort of kinship; perhaps we thought something they said was our own idea. The structuralist in us posits this co-incidence as some shared set of conditions, a common background generating similar results. They are not known because they did not speak loudly enough, they did not know the right people at the right time, or were silenced by the "powers that be".

How did we come to the idea we have which they shared without ever having read them? The mystic in us blames the external muse, the zeitgeist, kulturgeist, the poltergeist. Sometimes quite the reverse happens. A name is dropped and we spout off their "truisms" (eg, a Nietzscheism) without ever having read them. There is perhaps another explanation: word of mouth. They have somehow become a major influence behind our backs, beyond our ken. They have infected the age, were downloaded into the collective unconsciousness as a complete anonymite. This is the process of viral infection. In other words, in our literate world, oral tradition still explains the spirit of the age, the reproduction of wisdoms and unwisdoms, but not in any coherent and consistent fashion, like we see among the "uncivilized" with their seeming unchanging forms, the conservative traditions wherein the story is told in a ritualized fashion. It is told "the right way" or it is not told at all.

Being good literate members of the peak of cultural evolution, we must use our own tools to understand our heritage, to answer our question, "where did we come from" (which usually is only a euphemism for "How did I get to be such a smartypants?") The tool, of course, is the library (or its modern, networked data-base equivalent) and the experts who educate us in its use – we are handed approved reading lists by the gen-

darmes of civilization. We disregard any other possible source of our wisdom because it is simply inconceivable. We can't invoke a spirit of the ages else we are accused of being hegelian and "living in the past". (I've yet to get beyond the halfway mark to Hegel's Introduction to "*Phenomenology*" – maybe I'll think about that tomorrow). It's just not scientific! It is old intellectualism, a good thing but we have evolved since then. That is, unless that ism is incorporated into a named modern school such as the marxist tradition, pro-situ, psychoanalysis, chaos theory etc. We give schools and traditions an air of scientific authority when we call them *theory* (Decadence Theory). In fact this vantage point of the school is an excellent platform from which to criticize those mad folk (we must be politically correct here) and their anti-intellectualisms. The mad-men have formed their own school to counter the assault: post-modernism, the garbage bin of the present (and I say that with all kindness and appreciation), the category for the left-overs. There is still the problem we have to face up to: Vaneigem was not the first who noted that everything that is said has already been said. My nephew informs me that Franz Boas is no longer a quotable source in American academic anthropology as he is one of those old dead guys who have no relevance to today's modern world. Shit, without Boas and Einstein, post-modern thinking might not have appeared 'til the twenty second century! (Well, actually they came out of a tradition of german historicists and linguists going back to Humboldt's relativity and to the 17th century Italian, Vico. Wittgenstein and Heidegger were also involved in this tradition – it was never a "school". Maybe they *are* irrelevant to the path of history).

Schools illustrate a progressive traditional genealogy. Yet the new wave of exponents themselves remain infected by previous (known or unknown) thinker's viral infections. I'll try to illustrate by way of example how this non-literate infection takes place. The process is not progressive. Neither is it conservative. Because there is no ritual behind the telling of tales, our knowledge is a cornucopia tending toward chaotic confusion. We eventually must give up, sell out or go mad. The easiest solution is to attach our self to a school or try to found a new one. We want to be a guru. We claim exclusive ownership of our own ideas and forget all about name-dropping. Guru, cult hero, it is our only option if we don't want to fade into obscurity or conform to someone else's school. The perk is that once the cult forms around us, we can proceed to say or write anything without actually thinking about it. Coherence becomes the task of your interpreters. This is the common route of more schools (and their celebrities) than we care to admit. They flow into dogmatic absurdity or their interpreters disband the school in lieu of killing each other.

So on to my example of the mechanism of civilized oral tradition. I was an adolescent during the late 1960's and early 70's when it wasn't hip to be square. The particular circle of influence I found myself in were the uncouth intellectual wanna-bes who had read maybe three books and so had all the answers. Not just any three books, mind you. The available authors included Ray Bradbury, Kafka, Camus, Richard Brautigan, Vonnegut, Alan Watts, Mao's *little red book*, you get the picture. Entry into the club didn't actually require reading anything at all, although our most radical member had read the Communist Manifesto and everything he could muster by Trotsky. These were required reading for the enemies of the *establishment* (capitalism, madison avenue, the world of suits and other squares), so made highly influential credential for membership

with the unread enlightened.

All we really knew of Leary was "turn on, tune in, drop out". The "turn on" part was especially appealing. We liked to party! "Drop out" meant we had ready-made strangers with whom to affiliate – the word "solidarity" was not yet in vogue, but we had "groove". "Free speech" from Berkley had progressed to "free love", so our main aspirations revolved around getting high and getting laid. How was one to get laid? By illustrating our depth. One way was to drop names (Nietzsche) or to keep quiet. Obviously, a quiet person was "laid back", too busy thinking to have time for speaking. That was me back then. I just really had nothing to say, and was usually too high to even be able to think. This is good too: you are perceived as one who "understands", just "takes it all in". Ignorance is so easy to camouflage!

To make a long story short, Nietzsche and crew had infected our minds with isolated quotes without ever having had read them. There was just so much wisdom passed around. Reading Nietzsche thirty years later brought back so many fond memories of conversations at "parties" consisting of creative ideas we thought we had invented, never knowing there was a collective source. We belonged to no school, but we were hip! Is it any wonder our nihilist revolution failed? We went mad, got religion, went back to school, sold out, got jobs, committed suicide. But we still are somehow able to pass on, even unconsciously, some of those fragments of RNA (Radical (unk)Nown Authors) to others who take those kernels and run with them so they can get laid too.

It seems to me this is all very reasonable, but might I not also acknowledge the more aesthetic interpretation that the viral infection metastasizing in my consciousness (in fact, my consciousness itself) is nothing other than the phantasmic presence of historical beings, freed from the context of *space-time*, standing upon my shoulder and whispering their secrets in my ear, their freedom, autonomy or independence seen only in the mathematical sense of a system of equations in which no single, precise equation is necessarily solved via solutions to any other, yet they themselves are encumbered by other phantoms upon their own shoulders because our problems are precisely *not* mathematical – that is to say, our hearing and comprehension are not equally all-embracing – and in turn making the elucidation of the reality (or fantasy) of these phantoms unnecessary?

It has been said of me "You don't know what the fuck you're talking about!" To this, is answered: "I completely agree. That, in fact, is precisely why I said it!" Whatever metaphor is taken – and what do we really have *but* our metaphors – the effect is the same, and if consciousness is not handed over to the mathematician as a problem to be solved, our simultaneous commonality *and* uniqueness does not present a contradiction, nor even paradox. When this strange effect is witnessed among our contemporaries, known or unknown, we cast out accusations of espionage, plagiarism, or proclamations of telepathy.

Or we call them "kindred spirit".

ch 27: What is Nature? – Post-Structural Structures?

Interregnum: the space outside the box & between the lines; that is, the world sans our established categories; circulation "transcendental" to established (modern, post-modern) distribution networks and practices.

Nature: If nature is, by definition, "the merely passive, inert, mechanical and material" [– Croce] or even the totality (or container-form) of such qualities (content), and if the supernatural is that which transcends nature, then "spirit" would indeed be the appropriate gloss for any entities, effects, anomalies or processes who/which reside in the semantic realms not defined by (which is also to say "not restricted to") "the merely passive, inert, mechanical and material". A kindred word often invoked by various cogs, minions and automatons is "delusion"! The delusion (obfuscation), of course, is that the universe, (or "nature & its nature") is the unified explication of the banal and mundane. The old Cariban suffix marking sacred phenomena translates to something like '*that which is unknown*', and in some (polite & joking) situations, '*not (as) grand (as it may appear)*'. *Geist* as used by Hegel and *noumena* by Jung refer to conscious apprehension, not '*phantom*' or '*ghost of a dead person*':

Man's mind and interest are so deeply rooted in the earthly [mundane?] that we require a like power to have them raised above that level. His spirit shows such poverty of nature that it seems to long for the mere pitiful feeling of the divine in the abstract, and to get refreshment from that, like a wanderer in the desert craving for the merest mouthful of water. By the little which can thus satisfy the needs of the human spirit we can measure the extent of its loss. – *Hegel*

About the time the structuralist psychologist, Jean Piaget published the final statement of enlightened structuralism in 1968, *Le Structuralisme*, the modern universe had collapsed on itself. He described structures as self-regulating wholes which are systems of transformation, both structuring and structured, and, unlike formal systems, exist independent of the observer. Structural laws (regulations?) are nothing but regularities observed through comparison. Structures maintain cybernetic equilibrium through the process of feedback. Systems make constant adjustments through assimilation and accommodation. Even in transformation, structures conserve themselves. Between 1968 and 1972, structuralism transformed *itself* and became post-structural, merely reflecting the decay of modern progressive thought which was starting to question not just our political assumptions, but all the underlying assumptions we hold about life, the universe & everything. Iconoclasy was not given birth, by any mean(ing)s, but started to spread, infecting each and all. The spectacle was not quite forced into hiding, but reacted by becoming even more spectacular, until it discovered cowboy-disco, the "moral majority" and the god-state of the new science of economics. Ironically, this most modern age of morbid progress is the result of possibly the most conservative move ever made by Madison Avenue and Hollywood, giving us Bonzo the clown and Margaret Thatcher in 1980 as chief spokespersons for progress through a "decadent" fundamentalism. Iconoclasts are only just starting to recover.

A juxtaposition of post-structuralist thinkers within biology (attempting to preserve their status as biologists following a historical tradition) suggests that all structures *emerge* from organization and all organizations follow similar (commensurate) patterns, or organizing principles. Organizing principles are patterns of relationship, of flow, even exchange. Even when elements come and go, the structure stays the same if organization (reciprocal relation) is maintained. A structure is a matter of affiliation and engage-

ment, connection and flow. Tight connections are strong and lasting, such as seen in a rock. We say molecules have bonded to form a structure. There is still flow, but largely at the molecular and especially atomic level (atoms might share electrons and thus bond to form a molecule). Even so, certainly rocks are subject (or change in relation) to erosion (eg., weathering) and accretion (eg., external pressure) – we cannot say a rock does not tolerate demographic flux in its constituent membership: all *things* move, all moving *things* change. From the perspective of classical physics, one can say liquid and gas behave according to the same principles. From one external factor or another (such as temperature or pressure – not simply "forces" but products (resultants, emergents) themselves of other relations beyond our view), their difference from each other is a matter of tightness of connection and response to external conditions (adaptation). One can equally not say a rock has no influence on its surroundings. Think about this the next time you pass a sign reading "watch for rolling rocks" and then think about your own adaptation! Watch the bubbles disappear when you toss a cold stone into a pot of boiling water and feel how warm the stone has become when you extract it!

Obviously, the autonomy or closure of any structure is relative. The autonomy of a rock or any other structure does not mean there is no mutual influence with its surroundings. Mutual influence is ubiquitous or the rock not only ceases to exist, it was never born in the first place. A lake is only a liquid structure in companionship with surroundings which are solid and gaseous (the shoreline, the lake-bed, the sky). The points where the liquid communicates with its surroundings is its boundary. All structures are matrices of organized communication, unlike logical systems which proclaim boundaries from reference to an imposed, imaginary center. For this reason alone, logico-mathematics is not a "natural language". We call this process of "natural" or "organic" communication "systemic relation". Thus, ecosystems are sets of relations of communication. "Structure", "organization" and "system" are nouns, abstractions meant to communicate process. They do not refer to objects but to abstractions from a vast multidimensional array of comings and goings, attractions, engagements and connections, reformations, revolutions, disenchantments, rearrangements, assassinations ... every verb in any language is appropriate to fill in this sentence yet are still inadequate to complete it. There is no simple answer to life, the universe and everything. As Arthur Dent and Ford found out, "Its going on all around us!" – *Douglas Adams*. Obviously, this assemblage is not restricted to the material, as just as obviously, organisms affiliate, engage, connect, flow, as well as do the resultants and emergents of their relations – ideas, projects, babies...

From the above, we should be able to see that those *things* displaying looser connections move faster (or more "freely"), they are more fleeting. Observe the almost Brownian motion in a flock of swarming Sandhill Cranes flying overhead compared to Canadian Geese. Direction and speed is maintained in the long run whether in formation or out. Neither can be said to be more or less efficient. That is a moral assessment. The goose pattern is merely a mutual aerodynamic communication which is not forced, but accommodating. It is not the only way to fly. Cranes do things differently, yet they still communicate an aesthetic to us while getting where they want to go when they want to get there. One cannot really say the goose is less free. Aerodynamic adaptation allows the goose to relax a bit and enjoy the scenery. Adaptation, or communication with

(immersion in) one's surroundings reduces struggle. The goose is no less an anarchist than the crane. The difference between them is a matter of historical (genealogical) connection, surely, just as much it is a matter of structure. They represent different constellations of connections of ritualized performative behavior. These constellations we call species.

A species is a class, a product of classification. Observers classify, ritualize, and then they remember. This is a matter of repeated generalization among friends, and friends are only affiliations of folks imitating each other. Imitation is found in the giving and receiving of gifts. Now we have come full circle to affiliation and engagement, connection and flow. Genealogy adds another part of the pattern – reproduction. Organic systems are subject to erosion as much as are rocks. We are talking death here. Unlike rocks, organics produce new constellations to take their place. The individual is no more nor less a constellation than a species, it merely exhibits tighter connections. We think it more "real" but that is only an optical illusion.

A species is both objectively real and subjectively ideological. The ideological "component" only reflects the looseness of connectivity. What is fleeting is considerably harder to pin to the table and examine through a magnifying lens than a butterfly caught in the hand. As said above, loose connections allow more movement. That does not necessarily mean a lack of fit, except from the goose's perspective when contemplating a crane. Where connections loosen, everything comes to be seen coming together and falling apart. The crane lets us know that this "falling apart" does not necessarily mean death. This is cognition's limitation as a method of "discovery". We cannot claim absolute knowledge of the "sacred", of that which is complex, of general abstraction. We do not even agree on the mundane and simple, the specifications. We create and adapt words and connect and share them in order to navigate life, not to outwit it. But ideologies emerge which take on a life of their own. Thought comes to out-live the thinker.

In our case, thought can rule our lives, even if we claim no kinship to it. Obviously, it is not thought which has come to life (except in the poetic sense) but behavior (navigation) imitated is continually reproduced not so much in formation (isomorphism) but as a matter of conservation. Ideology is a matter of habit, and those habits have consequences we may not be aware of. What idiot gave us the idea we could manage and administer life? Master the universe? Conquer nature? Administrative decisions kill everyday. Management is exploitation and destruction. Should we try to rehabilitate death? Management is the attempt to achieve immortality, to turn ideas into stone idols, to create permanent organizations of control immune to fluctuation. Permanent organization creates the heretic and the terrorist, the suicidal depressive and the schizophrenic. Survivors evolve from living organism to unthinking, intractable machine, "desiring machines" still open to passive reception of information keeping them in formation. Even the radical philosopher, Deleuze conserved the notion of a *machinic* universe.

What appears an unconscious process is still a sort of ritual behavior. To avoid confusion and perhaps unwanted connotation, *iterable* is the new name applied. There is a certain value to metaphor (like viral infection), particularly when incommensurable processes seem to share similar patterns. Sometimes we just need to use new words for old ideas, especially when those ideas have passed right over our heads. Schools, and more loosely, traditions supply a

consciousness to the ritual process. Information cannot be force-fit.

"I think there is a lot in ordinary language and in received grammar that constrains our thinking – indeed, about what a person is, what a subject is, what sexuality is, what politics can be – and that I'm not sure we're going to be able to struggle effectively against those constraints or work within them in a productive way unless we see the ways in which grammar is both producing and constraining our sense of what the world is".

"Those intellectuals who speak in a rarefied way are being scapegoated, are being purged, are being denounced precisely because they represent a certain anxiety about everyone's effect – that is, what effect are any of us having, and what effect can we have?" – *Judith Butler*, [wikipedia](#)

Language: class and other categorizations: If we think of information (god, I hate what that word has become, but it has its uses) instead of molecules, the kind of closure Maturana discussed with regard to organisms also applies to communication events, and language itself. Any way you look at it, classification and categorization are products of (actually, mutually involved with) labeling, and as was mentioned by the BIP ("Black Iron Prison" [project](#)), the labels we come to agree on act like cell bars in that they set the world in stone and often have the effect of barring further investigations into meaning. If phonemic language is one of our particular means of living, I would expect to see a recapitulation of living processes observable in language itself. There is a certain reality (or should I say "poetry"?) lurking under all our metaphors.

"Class", and more specifically, "Proletariat" are productions of classification. This should be news to no one. Many years ago, I noticed that in Polynesian languages (in this case, Samoan) a single term would be used to "designate" (correlate with) some very different ideas. For example, '*Ai'oga*' meant in one case, 'family' or 'house', another 'village', another 'local group' (of villages) and another 'island' (Samoa) as well as the "platform" the chief sits upon. Of course, reference derives from the context of the speakers (semantic environment) and there is no confusion among the speakers (what distinction is unnecessary, is unspoken). Linguists referred to this as polysemic hierarchy. I called it "shifting levels of abstraction". This phenomenon is very widespread (beyond Polynesia, particularly in those "kin-based" societies with cognatic kinship terminologies – classifying relations and organizing through both the father's and mother's "lines") and never problematic except to translators unfamiliar with the local culture.

I would say it is less hierarchic than a reflection of linguistic ("meaningful") patterns turning up at every "level" of the culture. In English, *class* is such a word. There is some sense of meaning shared among many uses. It is more than a mere mathematical container (information set) or group of 'objects' which share an informational marker. We used to think of social (or economic) class as objective groups of real people mutually antagonistic with (but dependent on) each other within a single society. This used to be more true (empirically verifiable) than it is today. While the antagonism and interdependence is still visible, the *classes* are not quite the objective, member-defined groups they once were. Today many see class composition as a continuum in which opposition is readily observed when viewing the end-points. At the very least, this perspective (A rather than THE class analysis) is very important in order to even perceive that there is something to bitch about.

With so many positions, roles, functions inherent to "complex" society, it is often diffi-

cult to abstract beyond one's own terrain, and when 'physical' movement is restricted (for example, from the ghetto to the country club), next to impossible. Specialization (or bureaucratisation and its cubicle isolation) is the death of polysemy and the birth of reification – we must be specific, yet we can't ourselves specify. (Generalization only surfaces as "over-generalization" and requires medication.) Cognition actually becomes a fetter to our everyday (working) lives. *The proletariat* is merely *class* observed from the point of view of work, logically, if not consciously opposed to *the capitalist* ("upper management"). Originally, "work" in this context referred to industrial/factory drudgery. Today, *the worker* refers to anyone forced to sell labour in exchange for bread. Many revolutionary thinkers use the term "proletariat" to refer to workers who share some bit of revolutionary consciousness. A good argument could be made that the so-called ruling class (ceo's of corporations, the "privileged") also sell themselves, but their loaves of bread are bigger and more abundant. Some of them from time to time express a level of disgruntlement as to almost suggest revolutionary desires – mostly not and certainly not in the direction many others would wish, where "revolution" is only another name for *coup d'état*.

I would say in this day and age *class* is not an objective, measurable phenomenon, but a pattern of (pathological) relationships recapitulated in every aspect of our culture, whether at a conscious level or not. From the point of view of the household before mothers became liberated to engage in more "legitimate" forms of prostitution (we're all prostitutes), the father/patriarch represented the ruling class (power-that-is), the wife and children the proles. When he caught the train each day to go to the factory (or office), he was the prole (and damned proud of it!). When he was smothered in a drunken slumber by his wife's pillow, from the kid's place of observation, she became the new autocrat (gradual evolution) unless she was able to undergo a complete transformation. Mostly this did not happen because there was a reciprocal relation between the husband's sense of abusive authority and her own sense of submissive helplessness. In fact, many more mothers died from abuse than retaliated, and those who did strike back ended up in prison on manslaughter charges and the kids were taken by the state. There was, however, a transformation (punctuation in the equilibria) which many women saw as liberating. Divorce became the defining marker for marriage. Unfortunately, this transformation was not in the direction originally hoped for. One kind of slavery only replaced another, albeit with fewer bumps and bruises seen from the outside.

"In changes of state the operational characteristics of the system change while it conserves its class identity. In disintegrative changes, as the original system disappears, something else arises in its place." – *Maturana*

The "revolution" ("disintegrative change") was perceived by the kids who no longer had a full time parent at all. The implications of brief periods of so-called "quality time" are only now coming to be observable. Unfortunately, no one is quite sure what this "quality" means or entails. Our levels of abstraction change with our shifting positions. Our subprograms (linear, objective assessments) prevent us from seeing the world as anything but set in stone. Successful viral inoculation can only be accomplished at a gut level. Logic and reason do not move stones. If we happen to see similar patterns, we relegate them to "interesting coincidence" unless we are seduced by them, and seduction is always a bodily (emotional) function. Outside of the mechanistic details of a job

description, dynamite can neither be invented nor utilized without a certain investiture of passion.

Community and the Class War: Community was destroyed through the process of disorganization. What goes by the euphemistic rubric, "global community", is just a "regime" by another name. This new regime can only be destroyed in the same manner. If this catastrophic, planet-killing regime is a recapitulating pattern of social relations, and we have any agency at all, it will be witnessed only in our simultaneous disengaging (de-regimentation) from one and reconnecting in another kind of relation. Maletesta and Landauer said much the same long ago.

Today's iconoclast is in search of uniqueness, but must be careful of what s/he wishes if one's own final know-nothing alienation and death is not considered part of the nihilist project. Uniqueness is not something one can search out or discover, it is the starting point for all searches and discoveries.

*Without uniqueness, there's no difference;
Without difference, there's nothing to communicate;
Without communication, there's no community;
Without community, there's no commonality;
Without commonality, there's no synchronicity;
Without synchronicity, there's no meaning.
Without meaning, there's no association;
Without association, there's no knowledge.*

The virus of discontent was initiated (emerged) somewhere in antiquity by folks who could recognize some patterns in the world around them, even if they were ignorant of many others. No one can predict the future since at this point, it does not exist. We will not know the resultant of a revolutionary emergence until we have already replaced the normal with the different. Supersession is only the relative proportion of the supersedent to that superseded, between the new and the old when a virus goes dormant after a period of metastasis. In this case, the cancerous virus is a pattern hiding in the unconscious (whether individual or collective), an archetype. The pattern comes to merge or incorporate itself in a symbiotic fashion into all the organs with which it comes into contact. Archetypes are rendered harmless when there is no niche left within which they might "fit" or are recognized and then detoured to such an extent that their original meaning (or emotional impact) has been lost.

If stasis lives along the lines, an adequate critique must come from a position between the lines. Revolution is a commitment to that "interregal space". (see [On Interregal Chance & Ultra-Left Condottieri](#))

In this day and age, community can only exist between the lines, outside of institutional habitats. It has a suppressive effect on the kind of conflicting class identity which infects us. Recognition of affinity (kin, friend) is probably unavoidable in social animals (perhaps in life itself) as is its counterpart, "predator", "enemy", "outsider". Community offers a degree of closure. Revolutionary consciousness is always possible (by virtue of our "loose" connections – we are not functional telepaths!) and this is accommodated by communities by various means, including marriage outside (affiliation with a different community), forming new "renegade" communities, accommodating itself to (incorporat-

ing) differences which emerge (the rapid diffusion of "inventions") etc. All of these means require a certain amount of choice. If choice is not taken, ostracism of the different is a common result for that which refuses to share in this mutual relation of mutual influence, this communication. "Authentic community" annihilates the dialectic friction between subjective self and objective other when self and other, subject and object are seen as merely different (exchangeable) points of view. Only then can the iconoclast take a break from h/er established routines.

The state takes an adversarial stand and has the opposite effect. Any attachments deemed necessary (such as productive relations) must initially be forced. Afterwards, dissent becomes a dormant virus through the habit, routine, iteration of the imposed patterns. If dissent starts to show itself (Poe's "imp of the perverse"), it is forced back into hiding by rational justification in order to conserve established routines. The disorganization of community itself is the source of alienation. We no longer know who our friends are, we classify and then only show solidarity with the "class" – reified objects don't bite back in a war of all against all.

We have finally come to the point where there are only two choices left to us: revolution and auto-extinction. Unless the revolution takes the pattern of forming organic communities which recapitulate the "natural" (at least "less pathological") patterns operating all around us, extinction is certain. "*Go with the flow, daddy-o*" does not mean "*Follow the lemmings over the cliff*" in the spirit of anthropocentrism. We need to do more than merely re-think our social relations, we need to start relating differently. There is no "How?" Only a diversity of options will ensure our continuation. As Maturana said, the thing which life ultimately conserves is living, and what else is life than a splendid display of diversity.

A human being is part of the whole, called by us "Universe"; a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

The delusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.
– Einstein

ch 28: Rethinking The Origin of the State and Civilization

In his book of nearly the same name, Elman R. Service gave us a defining statement of civilization as incorporating a state socio-political organizational structure, the institution of centralized authority coordinating largely the economic comings and goings of society beyond the local group. There remains discussion whether this resulted in or resulted from a division of labour. Whichever side one takes, this social division controlled distribution and labour in public works projects in what was essentially a lopsided condition, putting an end to the economic egalitarianism and local autonomy witnessed in all other social systems.

This "local autonomy" shouldn't be viewed as a rock. While it's likely true that prior to civilization, people followed resources, they did this within local territories. People did not migrate across the earth in search of a living. The movement of territories and population expansions across large regions took generations, not lifetimes. The idea of populations expanding until a niche is established (most say "filled") is attractive, but should not be taken as a static process with an origin and terminus. Nor should we see autonomy as "stop here!" As much as we understand that territories, climates, seasons are subject to variability, we should expect to (and do) find networking between communities. This is established by overlapping territorial utilization and the reckoning of affinal and consanguineal relations as well as competitive rivalries. The state solidifies and expands these networks with grand socio-political integration. The state provides for a command and control system never before witnessed on such a scale.

What is most notable when looking at the state is the separation of society into dominators and the dominated collocated with the included and excluded. It would seem domination is required to achieve civilization, and certainly with few exceptions, we see archaeological evidence of force and control within the local (sedentary) population. One comes to the conclusion that if force as a means is necessary, people would naturally resist its ends. Civilization functions to break people of this resistance.

Pierre Clastres said we study the origin of the state in order to uncover the conditions around which it will meet its demise. People other than those who rein and benefit from 'power' have always tended to be against the state. Ironically, hardly anyone is against civilization. Maybe it's not irony in operation. Our short-sightedness prevents us from seeing that the two cannot be extricated from each other. Civilization is a command and control (regulatory) system composed of rigid institutions. The state institution provides the control function. The one (state) is the necessary condition of the other (civilization) to the point that their distinction is often only a matter of semantics. Those who sense an hypocrisy rather than internalize obedience very often view life in terms of a choice between the lesser of two evils (obey or starve). But our short-sightedness is not a lack, it is a biological given. We are creatures of habit, not gods. We easily fall into the notion of victim, and prey to the idea of progressive (just) laws. We are trapped in the self-fulfilling prophecy. But a trapped animal is always a potential revolutionary.

The state must provide something beyond fear in return, else it would face revolution

at every turn. Divorce from access to food provides the first justification or rationalization to set aside one's discontent: necessity. This was accomplished with a praetorian guard protecting the grainery (or the fish cannery). At some point, this was not enough and we witness the investment of labour in temples. Divinity became the second great rationalization preventing revolution. This was still not enough, however, until workers discovered the cost-benefit ratio. Work as the lessor of many evils became desire itself when the poet-salesmen, who's chief product has always been desire, portrayed the entire planet as god's factory-farm. Sacrificial workers helped the gods out with their divine plans. Generations of iteration (habit, custom, tradition) meant one no longer even had to think about or justify a status quo of slavery.

Colloquial wisdom still agrees this was all a result of the invention of agriculture³⁵ which allowed folks to stop wandering in search of food and settle down into great cities living the life of luxury "we" all enjoy today. With so much food, struggle nearly disappeared and leisure time, population size, and a sense of cosmetic beauty grew. But many folk still resented work, so technological progress was commenced in order to achieve a work-free life of unadulterated (that is, no adults telling you what to do) luxury, the utopian future. The more population grew, the more productive society was forced to become. Eugenics was what one practiced on enemies who might someday compete with us, not what one did to one's neighbors.

The fact is that most do not enjoy a life of luxury, even in the so-called "heterarchic" civilizations where we see largely egalitarian relations (more like bureaucratic socialism) in the cities but shade our eyes from the relations with the largely peasant countryside. It would be hard to imagine a civilization which arose without a social division between producers and the wealthy who exploit them. This has led me to posit (and in fact often insist on) an answer to Clastres' question of origin as the normalization of psychopathy – social control by a gang of bullies.

But this is only another example of uni-linear, cause-effect thinking like calling on an inherent Malthusian model of population-growth (the 19th and 20th century solution)³⁶ or the interpreters of Zerzan who "put the blame" for our current predicament on agri-

35 Animal domestication (other than the dog) is dated fairly coincident with settled agriculture, 6-8,000 years ago, and this, in fact is also when we find the earliest cities. Evidence of timing is from comparative DNA studies between domestic and wild species. Would one expect genetic divergence to appear prior to fenced enclosures restricting genetic communication? Most agree that the dog appeared with the advent of Homo sapiens as the first domestic animal. Yet, as "companion", it never became genetically isolated from wild species (wolves, coyotes) as we see in cattle, sheep and goats. DNA studies can only date to the beginning of enclosures keeping the domesticates separate from their local wild counterparts, which allowed rapid evolution through cultural selection. It cannot posit this date as the origin of domestication itself.

36 Even Carneiro admitted that population levels did not significantly raise till some 8,000 years ago. It is still argued that the increasing rate of population growth was made available with sedentary agriculture. This is the position I dispute, and as he said himself, it is population pressure, not growth per se, which "triggers a series of events that culminate in the surmounting of local autonomies and the creation of large, multivillage polities" (Carneiro, 1988). While his circumscription theory may be valid either way, it seems not enough to posit an unchecked increase and accelerating growth rate made possible only by settled agriculture and warfare, after 2+ million years of adaptive homeostatic populations. Something seems missing.

culture by way of the symbolic thought inherent in language (the pessimistic 21st century solution resonating with an ancient "bad seed" human ontology). To say we can only communicate about the world symbolically and therefore shared experience is mediated through symbolic thought does not necessitate the conclusion that language (symbolic discourse) is the source of alienation, objectification and domestication, only that we are capable of imagining almost anything and go on to become trapped by our thoughts. Some are even capable of imagining infinity, others a fiery hell, others autonomous, self-producing flying machines!

It could very well be that on occasion civilizations did not start out when a local thug took control of food access and divvied portions out in exchange for favors. This would be especially true if it is also true that people naturally resist this sort of thing and that Clastres is correct when he says cultures have built-in (institutionalized) mechanisms to prevent an imagined *or* historically experienced state of affairs. How then can we account for civilization's beginning and the transformation which replaced sociality with antisocial behavior in statistical significance? What follows shouldn't be taken as a definitive reconstruction, but a possible scenario based on a series of "what if's". First off, what if our standard assumptions about the origin of the state are simply wrong?

We have actual documentation of the development of historical kingdoms in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central-Asian nomadic "empires" and the first nation-states in Europe. In every case, they were defensive postures against empires or conservative postures, adjustments to maintain in the face of imperial encroachment, but ultimately incorporated into empire. We have only more evidence of a conservation through change which went on to take a bad turn – a "best laid plans" sort of scenario. Could it be that the original civilizations (or at least some of them) were only attempts to make the best out of a bad situation, to maintain something threatened with extinction or even renew something lost? This would surely fit with what we are coming to understand more and more about human psychology – we are basically conservative creatures. What if *King Thug the First* was not the first king, but the first thug-king, coronated after anti-social behavior had already gained a foothold on statistical predominance?

The correlation between the end of the Pleistocene and rapidity of the Younger Drias (culminating in rising sea levels inundating most human territories and desertification of the rest) and the so-called Neolithic "revolution" makes Fredy Perlman's theory of the first cities arising from what were essentially refugee camps highly attractive. At the time, catastrophe was ubiquitous on the planet. One can imagine scattered groups with diverse customs and even languages converging on oases in search of dry land and fresh water. It wouldn't be unreasonable to think groups of individuals got together and started projects (dikes, clearings for farmland, food storage structures), and their example followed, all with the best of intentions. Wouldn't this be just another case pushed for environmental determinism? Another example of evolution or revolution as crisis management which linear thinking has always predicted?

Outside of the box of linear thinking, the environment is merely the conditions of existence. Conditions of living both limit possibilities and open up possibilities. Results are only actualities – fertility should not be confused with fecundity. Diversity should be expected, but so should be commonalities or patterns. Conditions of living change life,

living diversity changes conditions of living. Sometimes asteroids strike the planet and everything gets shaken. Ultimately, all we can say is that everything, every process connected is a cause, a mover. There are no "prime movers" although there are more and less significant influences. We perceive patterns and sequences, but the further from here and now we look, the less dependable are our rational assessments. Our agency is equally limited, even though there is potential seen around every corner.

It should be obvious that since semi-sedentary farming cultures did not produce civilization and its state, agriculture must have predated civilization. It was not an invention by the civilized but rather, earlier (semi-nomadic or "shifting") farming practices adapted to the new sedentary living arrangements³⁷. The so-called "invention" was sedentary farming, not farming itself, and even this is not sufficient to produce a state. Irrigation came much later when it was seen that permanent fields could not be sustained. Progressive crisis became built into the system which required increasingly progressive responses, all in the name of conserving the status quo. What they did not understand was that there was nothing left to conserve but progress itself. A mix of several social adaptations taken out of their historical contexts made earlier arrangements no longer appropriate. Removal from the context meant the diversity of earlier adaptations was irrelevant. The condition must have been perceived as ultimately chaotic. Settled agriculture didn't provide for the increased (and increasing) population. Enclosures were erected to restrict additional immigrants. Very likely, one crisis after another appeared as well on the social level. Social organization disorganized. Times had never before been so nasty, brutal and short. Property and its authority established a new social order³⁸.

As Kent Flannery and Marshal Sahlins both said, the trick to producing a surplus is found in getting people to work more, and more people to work. Even in conditions of starvation, all it takes to increase population growth is to increase birthrates beyond attrition. Creation of a surplus, in this case to adequately survive in the first place, a premium is placed on increasing reproduction to increase the labor force. This may not even be a conscious process. Many species experience increased reproductive rates when faced with the possibility of extinction. It may be simply a matter of relieving stress.

37 If anything, domestication as the establishment of a symbiosis with other species should facilitate nomadism. It allows one to take food along the way (live animals) or have ready fields waiting ahead in one's "seasonal rounds". I don't see sedentism made possible by agriculture so much as sedentism necessitating agriculture if local resources are not already abundant. Again, one has to stay put in order to practice settled agriculture. You have to be there first before you can farm. The environment must be insufficient to support your numbers else you wouldn't bother with farming. Any way you look at it, the population concentration in one place had to precede agriculture in one place. We are looking at refugee camps whose inhabitants are looking to counter conditions of starvation.

38 What settlement did provide for were water privatization, immigration policy, and an administrative bureaucracy and border patrol to enforce it. The entire early history of civilizations is rampant with land shortages sparking warfare. Before warfare, raids were not about land acquisition or conquest. This should be obvious if property is not institutionalized. Raids were dangerous, full contact sports which got rough when motivated by vengeance. Raiding was circular, that is, without, in the long run, winners or losers.

On a conscious level, the need for more, smaller (younger) workers creates a productive, macho, almost catholic mindset. Women lose any control over their own reproduction. Weaning takes place at an earlier age. Birth spacing contracts. A man's status is measured in the number of children, whether from his own spouse(s) or those of his compatriots. Rape is institutionalized in the forms of contract marriage (a property arrangement) and the privileged warrior-police. Wars abroad bring in even more workers as well as fields to work. Bureaucracies must grow to regulate and manage this out-of-control system. Even so, the Malthusian exponential growth rate did not become established till the industrial revolution.

If there is a prime mover to increasing rates of population growth over and above natural and cultural limits to growth such as abortion or infanticide, predation, birth spacing, taboos, fertility resonating with local resources, etc. (epidemics, lethal sanctions and wars of conquest and annihilation should have an even greater limiting effect), that mover would have to stem from property, coercive authority to enforce it, labor to produce it and cosmetics to justify it in no particular linear order of primacy. This is still [autopoietic](#), but pathological civilization. It is pathological because it is unchecked.

When the environmental (geo-climatic) conditions had settled back down from rapid change, thriving ecosystems began to re-emerge but not within the enclosed cities and their surroundings³⁹. What had been erected to keep others out now fenced people in. It's like trying to survive in a ghetto without the benefit of a social welfare infrastructure. Yet they survived, but only at the expense of their neighbors. Conquest or abandonment were the only options. Archaeology provides numerous examples of just such abandonment. It should be obvious as well that this was the birth of revolutionary consciousness, renegade and dropout sentiments for political or economic reasons. It would take quite some time before desire for abundance was superseded in preponderance by the satisfaction with the merely adequate in the producer classes. This desire was never reduced (in fact it was enhanced) in the aristocrats, now in a situation where abundance is not revealed in nature but must be appropriated from within the community and from neighboring communities. Warfare and class struggle arise as alternative viewpoints of the same process. They are only the in and out of the matter. Progress becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, equality and justice for one and all becomes a pipe dream.

We normally think of civilization as the sublimation of aggressive tendencies, we can

39 As ecological relations are simplified (eg., intensive mono-crop farming) or negated (e.g., animal and plant extinctions, permanent cities, pollution, asphalt), socio-political relations become more complex, especially if there is no territory available for a society to fragment and expand into. (note that I am not thinking of "cultural complexity" beyond the increased bureaucratization of life). This is the main illustration of circumscription theory. The more influential factor is sedentism combined with growth, not agriculture in and of itself. Again, the civilized did not invent farming, they adapted it to sedentary conditions and in this created a positive feedback loop with unsustainable ecological implications no one could have foreseen. Socio-political complexity must be a matter of control, management, authority, the law. It cannot be other than coercive, no matter how well intentioned in the beginning. The reason ecological approaches are insufficient to the study of civilizations is simply that civilizations are not systems of ecological adaptation. Civilization negates ecology. It is not because state socio-political systems are too complex, it is *because they are!* No state can match the complexity of ecological relations involved in something so mundane as, say, pond scum.

see that it actually exacerbates them by institutionalizing these tendencies in specialized occupations – the police and the military. When territorial unification is complete, we witness prolonged periods of peace and an absence of fortifications, but this peace is enforced by internally deadly means. Police Force. The "police" logic is recapitulated in all institutions, including child-rearing. Strife is actually the mainstay of civilization until its own spectacle is sufficiently developed and behavior is sufficiently a matter only of habit, or unthinking (meaningless) ritual by the majority of the population. Only at this point do we see democratic and "self-managed" institutions. Self-management is only the management of one's own exploitation. Democracy is only the collectivity of self-managed individuals in a state of mutual influence. It in no way should be confused with liberation.

Gifting is not a Magic Weapon: Rethinking "Primitive" Agriculture

Before or outside of civilization (as we know it), people we now call "primitive", lived in what 19th century American anthropologist, Lewis Henry Morgan, called a "state of primitive communism". This was to him the primary "stage" in human cultural evolution, corresponding to earlier notions of cultural "progress" from simple to complex, "savage" to "civilized". Even prior to Spencer, Darwin & Wallace, existing "primitives" were thought to be "frozen" in a state of "arrested cultural development". Morgan himself, not wishing to chastise them (he in fact "went native" himself after dropping out from a promising career in law to live with the Iroquois for a time – he returned to academia to share his insights from them), still saw in them a lack. One can see the importance he placed on private property, instrumental in the development of civilization, by his focus on "primitive communism" itself as a lack tied to kin-based societies. To his credit, he had no great praise for our alienating "solution", but true to enlightenment thought, a result of his *Ancient Society* academized the notion that primitives lived in a state of ignorance, to such a point that later thinkers thought them even ignorant of biological reproduction. Freud called them "children". Nearly a half century after Morgan, Margaret Mead dispelled this rumor of ignorance for any who wished to listen. To think the "uncivilized" cannot make the connection between fucking and children is ludicrous, to say the least. This is what is meant by "armchair theorizing". It turns out biologists today are only starting to come to some notions these "children" understood about biology for many thousand years, not perhaps in the cognitive, philosophical sense today's scientists go on about, but tied into ritual practices, such that, as long as rituals were performed and reproduced, such discourse was unnecessary. This does not mean it was unavailable. We see that ritual is a fail-safe to maintain relationships of existing conditions which work. Frozen indeed! This is what is meant by adaptation.

But we were talking about agriculture! Well, it was these "children" who "invented" agriculture in the first place. It was not a progressive new development so much as a means of continuation when the population grew, not from increased production, but when the numerous coastal dwellers moved inland and upland from the rising sea levels from post-Pleistocene glacial melt. (We do not know, but there may just have been sustainable "farming" on the continental shelves in lower latitudes during the "ice age". We are in less foreign territory when we suggest a well developed coastal fishing industry – agriculture would be minimal given the abundance from rivers and sea).

It was civilized progress which re-made farming into one of the most environmentally destructive practices we have yet to produce behind the weapons of war and industrial pollution. We now see this destruction all around us, and some, not wishing to go forward (but unable to see far enough "backward"), think those "children" may have made a huge mistake. Well-meaning others looking only at the future, think we can come up with a progressive new & improved sustainable farming. Little do they know this is a very old idea.

Here is what Heidegger said about modern agriculture after the war (ww2), perhaps the most damning statement yet:

Agriculture is now a motorized food industry, the same thing in its essence as the production of corpses in the gas chambers and the extermination camps, the same thing as blockades and the reduction of countries to famine, the same thing as the manufacture of hydrogen bombs. – *Heidegger, 1949*

Mono-crop farming, whether it was developed with this in mind or not, has the effect of rendering community autonomy impossible. It demands the extra-local integration of a state for local nutritional requirements to be assured. Obviously, no matter which crop is planted or how abundant the harvest, it can only be utilized in an extra-local exchange network to achieve dietary sufficiency at any level. The attribution of wheat agriculture to the spontaneous generation of civilisation is refuted in the ancient saying, "man does not live by bread alone".

Even in medieval times "peasants" were left alone to produce all their nutritional requirements. Labour was introduced in production of specific crops determined by an extralocal feudal bureaucracy to enter into extra-local distribution. This labour was performed during what was before "leisure time". This gave birth to the creation of supply-and-demand manipulated economies. The dislocation of peasants from the land, only accomplished with the Bolshevik revolution (the last major battle or extension of the bourgeois revolution, also called "WW1"), allowed global mono-crop farming to ultimately put an end to community everywhere.

There are a few holdouts today, but they are increasingly under attack to "reclaim" land "for the greater good". Dislocation becomes the new watchword. Nutrition is mass-produced in factories from coal and petroleum-derived chemical syntheses to supplement food commodities which increasingly tumble in nutritional content, not only through processing, but as an organic response to accelerated harvests, that is, soil exhaustion and injection of toxic growth-stimulants. We call this technological progress.

Modern agriculture, because it is tied to property (commodified) is more properly called "gang rape" than farming. Without property, uncivil farmers know ahead what they will need, and when that is collected the harvest is over. If there is accumulation, it is only to provide winter stores or "material" in the production of parties (feasts, potlatch, give-aways). Little distinguished from "gathering", there is no accumulation for accumulation's sake. The distinguishing character is what some have interpreted as the birth of "sacrifice". In the context of 'uncivil' society, this is ridiculous. Is seed returned to the earth to bring forth a new "crop" a sacrifice? Is the first fruits ceremony returning the first pickings to the ground? Is releasing the first salmon from the trap to continue their reproductive cycle a sacrifice or the necessary maintenance of salmon demographics?

Haven't we learned by now that predation of any sort provides a 'natural' limit to Malthus' notion of exponential population growth because all life has more abundant reproductive potential than actual conditions of living permit? Does leaving the "baby" potatoes undisturbed in the ground during potato harvest represent a wasteful or negligent practice, or an assurance that the plants will return next season without planting (generally in even more abundance than this year's growth)?

Just how sure are we that we are at the "top of the food chain"? Does it matter what the "native" interpretation of the practice is as long as sustenance (a word derived from *sustain*) remains? Hierarchy does not allow for sustainability. You can see I am not restricting this notion to the realms of politics or economics.

Archaic farmers knew the importance of diversity in diet as well as in their "gardens". Not only allowing, but encouraging diversity and return (seeding, leaving or putting back part of the "harvest") is a common feature of "primitive" farmers as well as foragers. The distinction between farming and gathering is one of degree, not kind. Nor is it a matter of quantity. Even up to historical times, there have been numerous examples of pretty large-scale farming villages (although not quite the sedentary ones we are familiar with from Hollywood) incorporating the notion of ecologic succession without destruction (ecological succession provides for the incredible variability & flux of life, not its destruction – at some point, everything dies!). Peasant villages far removed from cosmopolitan hustle and bustle lived in symbiosis with nomadic pastoralists ("fields on the hoof"). A certain amount of autonomy was preserved yet they could still afford to pay the annual tribute to heavily armed (civilized) tax collectors. It takes progressive civilization (a kingdom or empire) to produce a radical and destructive transformation – from our limited sedentary perspective, we only see apples and oranges.

Another practice uncivil farmers incorporated was the maintenance of "*refugia*". When notions of property were enforced (by the propertied), *refugia* became known as "the commons" but lost some of its important meaning. Once we have commons, we already have a gang rape in practice in the form of "community property". Let me explain. The institution of commons was the birth of the trickle down theory of economics. Commoners (not quite slaves) were granted usufruct rights to the left overs, what the fat cats (nobles or "big chiefs") could not consume without bursting. The "liberal" enclosure laws removed the distinction between commoner and slave. We were moving to "equality" and once this set in, it was only a matter of time before the abolition of slavery was in everyone but the most die-hard conservative's mind. Equality was finally achieved with wage labour.

The myth of freedom of opportunity was born once rulership was expropriated from "noble" lineages and all remnants of feudal living were removed in the countryside by the elimination of share-cropping and private indenture of peasants (previously, peasants were inalienably attached to the land, even if that property changed hands). This has only recently been universally achieved in the livestock business. The opportunity for any to farm resulted in the gradual destruction of tradition – knowledge and practice handed down from one generation to the next maintaining more (relatively speaking) locally sound ecological practices. What was unsound of the civilized practice was the result of a gradual distancing from rotating fields (swidden or "shifting cultivation") to ro-

tating crops in a single field circumscribed by property relations. Industrial farming even did away (by necessity because the technology could not cope) with companion planting, something some few hobby gardeners who don't mind a little dirt under the fingernail still appreciate.

Before property instituted the commons, *refugia* were areas not utilized at all. They may have been very rich in resources, but were not used except during periods of extreme hardship. Implicit in this is the understanding of seasonal, geographic and climatic fluctuation. These wild "fields" as well might be rotated. *Refugia* was even practiced in most circumscribed Polynesian islands. This is a much bigger concept than "fallow", which refers to a period of unuse because it is in fact used up. Only weeds survive. Fallow is demanded by the gang-rape methods of intensive (modern) agriculture. We think of weeds as invasive intruders. They are plants which only thrive after a catastrophe, and that catastrophe is almost invariably disturbed soil produced by the plow or road equipment or pesticides which kill off natural aerators and cultivators. Weeds function to bring back the health of an overused landscape. In our own ignorance, we usually kill everything in order to destroy one pesky varmint. It is akin to carpet bombing villages to assassinate one tribal "warlord" (a common practice by the liberal-minded military, where "liberal" means the same as "use liberally" when applying sugar to oatmeal mush).

The argument that modern techno-chemical farming feeds greater numbers of people is like saying that we should all be content to survive with a dialysis machine or breath in an iron lung plugged into an oil well, coal generator or hydro-electric plant and call that living. That is, living until no amount of chemicals will any longer bring forth crops from a field of asphalt or barren strip mine we used to call the Earth. Is it such a good (humanitarian) idea to promote this kind of thinking when we are already concerned with the effects of overpopulation? Like our economy, technology must always borrow from the future to pay today's debts. That future always has consisted of people condemned to poverty as a result of action taken in the present. More and more people are coming to see our modern diet is ever more toxic. It is in fact profitable for us to know this as it provides incentive for bioengineers and pharmaceutical companies to come up with even more toxified food (soon entirely in pill form), commodified as a "cure". I'm sorry, but if you get a deep enough gash, no amount of band-aids will prevent Mr. Death from hauling your sorry ass away. But don't let's talk about overshoot and system collapse!

Only an idiot posing as a primitivist or a clever fascist would promote eugenics as a solution (in fact, the mother-fuckers do this on a daily basis, they don't merely promote it). Die-off is the ultimate in progressive thinking. It allows the continuation of existing conditions! Like they used to tell my old man at the factory, "workers are a dime a dozen; the plant is all that matters!"

Permaculture? I seriously doubt our brightest minds (remember those guys in white lab coats who created this mess in the first place?) will be able to come up with a salve to obviate our distress. As the philosophers in Hitch-hikers Guide said, "perhaps our minds are too highly trained!" I used to think gifting would solve the problem, which is just another economic solution. I still think it is damn necessary, but we will need more

than a mere change in distribution practices to avoid the destruction we're doing to our home, no matter how much we can put a stop to exploitation of each other (fat chance!) Interesting how we call archaic (but locally responsible) farming wisdom "subsistence" when it is us who sub-exist. Shouldn't we begin to call it "sustenance"? "By any means necessary", lets put an end to gang-rape. This is not a matter of destruction or even creation but of "doing things differently" here and now. Here's where I'll get into the biggest trouble: "What the fuck's wrong with learning from folks who already know (knew) how to do it?"

ch. 29: Aesthetics and Tao: Reflections on Asger Jorn's *Luck & Chance*

Aesthetics is the ceaseless hunt of the universe, nature and humanity to prove that nothing supernatural exists, for the truth of aesthetics is namely nothing other than the naturalness of the unnatural, the humanity of the inhuman, the health of the anomalous and sick, the clarity of the darkness, the good-fortune of misfortune, the competence and power of the incompetent and powerless, the significance of the insignificant, the track of the trackless, the reality of the unreal, the rightness and the truth of the intolerable, of dislike, nastiness, faithlessness, lack of respect, disobedience, injustice, recklessness, cynicism, distrust, insincerity, falseness, immorality, irresponsibility, crime and lawlessness, the order and utility of the capricious, the ephemeral, the terrible, the awful, the doubtful, the uneven, the unusual and misplaced as well as the unusable, useless, inept, disordered and impractical, in short, all that is not interesting except in its immediate effect, the new, the radical, the original and experimental, the fertility of the earthquake. – Asger Jorn

Both dialectic analysis and existentialist phenomenology have a profound aesthetic value to us most precisely when they reflect our alienation. The first resonates with the day-to-day friction we wish to overcome – the hypocrisy of everyday life – struggle. The second resonates with the fact that we have no concept of just what our life should rather be. We did not come into the world separated and alienated. We come into the world moving, unfolding, becoming. But the world we find ourselves in once we discover that we *are* selves, prohibits us. What we have can be taken away, and usually is. What we need or want can be withheld, and usually is. We are told what we want, what we need, who we are. We no longer unfold, we are folded, spindled, mutilated. We are told "Stop! You've arrived! This is where it's at!" We acquiesce all too readily because it is all we can know once we've stopped to face (this) reality and decide to "settle down".

Asger Jorn suggested all learning comes from struggle. Is this necessary? If struggle is the correspondent of friction, of dialectic conflict, of alienation, the assumption would be that revolution as "conflict resolution" is impossible in any age or condition of "humanity". This is the ultimate in depressive ontology. Having been through major depression, I refuse to believe in this pessimistic presumption of "human nature". Life itself becomes a perpetual condition of struggle and survival. Madness is guaranteed, as there is no other 'reason' for our discontent than our own nature. There is contained a certain paradoxical demand: "Life is struggle, so quit your griping, acquiesce!". In a state of constant friction, all one can do is scrape and resist! The widest question becomes, "Can't we end struggle?"

Jorn suggests the arts are tools to achieve aesthetic effects. If we can approach the sublime, or merely appreciate beauty, is this not an end, if only a temporary putting-off of friction? A tradition from Dante to Poe to Jarry and Artaud illustrates an equally powerful aesthetic corresponding to the grotesque, macabre, and dark. Aesthetics is not found in the object, is more than a matter of subjective judgment, but is found in our experiencing itself. Obviously there are ways to experience a reprieve from struggle without resort to sublimation or ethical/moral/legal imposition – certainly themselves provocateurs of stress. Aesthetics is a matter of subjective value, yes, but also a value which only inflates when shared. It is an emotional attachment. Wouldn't the revolutionary moment be a matter of escalating the sublime, increasing the moment, opening up a space, a tear in the anti-social fabric, a stitch in the social, a "ceaseless hunt" for the

novel which might captivate us? Is this why Emma Goldman demanded to dance to the revolution?

If the individual judgment necessary to construct an aesthetic doctrine is to be coordinated with the aesthetic judgments of other individuals, then this can only happen by getting behind these judgments in order to analyze the common preconditions reflected in the internal psycho-physiological similarities and the bio-sociological dependence of the individuals, as is done, for example, in medical science, to discover the common human subjectivity or the community of inter-humane interest which is a bio-physiological, sociological and cultural fact.

The wider question then becomes whether this organic community of interests extends out over the human into the vegetable and animal kingdoms, whether the whole biological world can be perceived as a collective interdependence, a fellowship of interests, an organic subjectivity and mutual necessity, and historically as an evolutionary unity, or, in short, whether we can make aesthetics relate to the natural sciences.

However, to achieve a real objective aesthetics it is necessary to demonstrate a casual unity between the forms of reaction of the organic and the inorganic worlds which reaches from the macrocosmic aesthetics of the universe itself to the atom's microcosmic relations of an aesthetic character. If this is not possible, then the results of both subjective and objective aesthetics are worthless and the establishment of a scientific aesthetics impossible.

The synthesis for which I am here the spokesman definitively breaks with the intermixing of aesthetics and art theory, a break which is based upon new experiences and arguments, the most weighty of which is perhaps the recognition, derived from the development of modern art, of the value of so-called primitive art and the consequent understanding that aesthetic recognition and any acquaintanceship with the idea of beauty, the understanding even of the difference between the thing and its depiction, is quite meaningless for elemental artistic creation. As, into the bargain, it is apparent that modern aesthetic education, as known from the art academies, is directly restrictive to creative ability in art, these facts demonstrate that not only is the aesthetic knowledge of our time worthless but also directly damaging and thus, in other words, false. ... *aesthetics should not be understood as a phenomenon exclusively connected with the fine arts. On the contrary, it represents one of our forms of existential experience – Asger Jorn*

If there is anything to Asger Jorn's "objective synthesis", it would seem struggle need *not* be a given in nature. Aesthetics is not merely experiential effect, but motivating "impulse" of inquisitive learning itself: aesthetics relates to the unknown, unexpected and novel. A word I've used elsewhere to describe this value, or rather, *valuation* is "humour", reflecting Einstein's least famous dictum: "when all is said and done, the only sense left is nonsense". Like the raised eyebrow, a chuckle is the world trying to tell us "Look! I'm here! Wanna play?" From this perspective, art and empirical science are indistinguishable. Aesthetics is an invitation to get a little dirt under our fingernails in the process, letting us know that living is a participatory event and not just a figment of the imagination or what goes on on the other side of a double-pane storm window.

It will be very hard indeed to find a higher animal that does not play and joke in a way incomprehensible to us. Notice the monkeys at the zoo, or domestic animals – dogs, cats, horses, pigs, goats, cattle – how they enjoy fun and games. This playing cannot be seen as a training or preparation for the struggle for existence. It involves something that in itself has the effect of life; indeed, perhaps its most intense and inspiring nature, renewal. Can we call this aesthetic?

... Men have wondered how man learnt to walk on two legs and have tried to give to the phenomenon a practical explanation. Far more sensible is the assertion that the first real anthropoid apes were "singing" apes; having developed jaws allowed good room for the tongue. Singing encourages dancing, and this entertaining occupation separated man from animals

and gradually trained dancing and singing apes to move lithely on their hind legs. This is the story of the genesis of homo ludens.

It is said that man wants to be fooled. This is a lie. Man wants to play. Play with or be played with or play for. The opposition between play and seriousness is false. Play seems to be the only thing taken really seriously. This is denied because one can thereby play unobstructed with people without their knowing it – *Asger Jorn, Addendum 1963*

I don't see that struggle need be invoked at all. The ultimate dialectic we face, the basic (and only essential) mathematical equation, the source of balance is between desire and compassion. This should not be a struggle, but where it is so, we find the birth of property, authority to administer it, and ethics to regulate it. Stirner was able to, at least theoretically resolve the dialectic with an egoism which derives pleasure *from* compassion for the other:

Am I perchance to have no lively interest in the person of another, are his joy and his weal not to lie at my heart, is the enjoyment that I furnish him not to be more to me than other enjoyments of my own? On the contrary, I can with joy sacrifice to him numberless enjoyments, I can deny myself numberless things for the enhancement of his pleasure, and I can hazard for him what without him was the dearest to me, my life, my welfare, my freedom. Why, it constitutes my pleasure and my happiness to refresh myself with his happiness and his pleasure. But myself, my own self, I do not sacrifice to him, but remain an egoist and – enjoy him. –
Max Stirner

Swedenborg, via Asger Jorn, resolves the dialectic with "love":

Did you not see recently how eagerly the dove there over the treetops beat the air with its wings? He had seen his mate and the nest with the young: that was the reason for his quick flight. It appeared to him that it was under his own power that he moved his wings and took the shortest way, but it was love, his downy young and his beloved that awakened his soul, and this that thereafter moved his wings. Love is like the coachman who looks after the reins and controls us as the rider controls his horse. He obscures our soul and convinces us that we sit as chiefs or coachmen.

"The circle of interest dominates the cycle of materials and life", says Jorn, where interest, that is, aesthetics is always in the different and unknown. One could say that life itself is "drawn" to as well as "motivated" (or "driven") by diversity. Without opposition, desire and compassion merge. From the standpoint of capital as the van guard of civilization, this is clearly impossible as struggle is the preferential condition. It is the precondition of property and the state. Desire and compassion must remain separated – "detachment is the key to objectivity". Can this phrase be inverted to "immersion is the key to aesthetics"?

Aesthetics is the praxis for living. It is *lief*, a word once residing in the semantic territory between *live* and *love*. It is the driving motivation for knowledge. One interpretation of *Genesis* states that the search for knowledge (the ownership of ideas, or *intellectual property*) and the forsaking of life originated the first sin, giving birth to civilization and its alienating force (property & its authority – its *administrators*), spawning Engel's dialectics of nature, metamorphosing life into survival, living to struggle. Can a new-found or 'authentic' passion for aesthetics, replacing disgust for the novel with wonderment and amusement, put things aright? This was supposed to be the project of "arts & sciences", not the construction of planet killing machines with euphemistic designs to save labour – "labour-saving devices"!

Stirner might say the normal is represented by "I". Jorn tells us "No one shows wonder at the normal. But where does the abnormal come from?" Might that be "The Other"?

It may be true that change can be ugly and in fact, scary. But this is only true until we have "constructed" and *then* experienced it. "Where's your sense of adventure?" we are asked. For the already detached, when "home" is a sense of security found in a situation of precarity, the symptoms of culture shock never appear until one returns from an adventure into the unknown, no matter how unwillingly that adventure was initiated or whether "home" is always considered the final destination. Odysseus & Ulysses were no **Huck Fin!**

"I realized either I was crazy or the world was crazy; and I picked on the world. And of course I was right... We were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, (to) 'move'... We were a generation of crazy, illuminated hipsters, suddenly rising and roaming America: serious, curious, bumming and hitchhiking everywhere. It never meant 'juvenile delinquents.' 'Beat,' doesn't mean tired or bushed, so much as it means *beato* the Italian for beatific, to be in a state of beatitude, like Saint Francis: trying to love all life, trying to be utterly sincere with everyone, practicing endurance, kindness, cultivating joy of heart – the subterranean heroes who were taking drugs, digging bop, having flashes of insight, experiencing the derangement of the senses, talking strange, being poor and glad."⁴⁰ – *Jack Kerouac*

Is it a contradiction to suggest movement to those only interested in conservative stasis? No. The problem is not found in conservation or stasis but rather, in the sedentary, the fear of movement, the apathetic (without feeling) rejection of the novel or different. There can only be a stasis of movement when objective destinations (destined objects, commodities?), fated arrivals also cut and run. We *should* be afraid of the isolation chambers, of prisons! Pathos annihilates apathy. Compassion is pathos shared – collaboration outside of institutional discipline, movement neither toward nor away from

40 "Beat" has always carried multiple entendré:

"The origins of the word 'beat' are obscure, but the meaning is only too clear to most Americans. More than mere weariness, it implies the feeling of having been used, of being raw. It involves a sort of nakedness of mind, and, ultimately, of soul; a feeling of being reduced to the bedrock of consciousness. In short, it means being undramatically pushed up against the wall of oneself. A man is beat whenever he goes for broke and wagers the sum of his resources on a single number; and the young generation has done that continually from early youth." (– *Clellon Holmes, 'This Is The Beat Generation', 1952*).

This can be increasingly said of every age, every "post-war generation" where nothing means anything anymore, when romance is found in mutual disillusionment which is immediately renamed "curiosity". When we name our own generation, our own *movement*, we forget history and think we've discovered something *new*. Our difference is only a matter of style and its preponderance. On the other hand, there is as well an unfortunate, unrevolutionary quality going along, as Rexroth says,

"because all life has become an amorphous simile of nothing else. Where if you can't make it, you split, and where everybody splits, like, all the time.

1. It is a real art to convey this wistful terror of those for whom there is not, and never can be, any *I* and *Thou* at all, ever, and where God is the last, craziest Kick of all, and when you've dug, like, you cut, dig? For those people, whom Allen Ginsberg pathetically called "the best minds of my generation," there has been a complete breakdown of the organs of reciprocity. There is nobody out there at all — nobody. The unpeopled night is not "cool." It is empty and at the temperature of absolute zero." – bopsecrets.org

prearranged situations like "employment".

"It is impossible to go on indefinitely saying: "I am proud to be a delinquent," without destroying all civilized values". – *Rexroth*

I'd like to take non-objectivity out of hiding in the worlds of "fine art" and quantum physics so we could see that art (Heidegger's *poiesis*) truly is the world trying to reveal itself to us between the lines, unfolding before our eyes. Our grandiosity (born of alienation or *sedentary objective detachment*) prevents the aesthetic experience. This is why I attach so compellingly to the idea of *autopoiesis*: our character is created by the world around us, we create our character by our own experience in the world around us, the mutual interaction recreates the world around us.

... But we have to move about from time to time for all this to work.

*When people see some things as beautiful,
other things become ugly.
When people see some things as good,
other things become bad.*

*Throw out holiness and wisdom,
and people will be a hundred times happier.
Throw out morality and justice,
and people will do the right thing.
Throw out industry and profit,
and there won't be any thieves. Lao-tse*

*Laughter and tears belong in the same bag.
From children and drunken folk shall one hear the truth. – Asger Jorn*

ch 30: The State and Progress or Civilization and Selfactualization?

Following Service and a growing consensus in political anthropology, I have identified (or at least, connected) the state and civilization, feeling justified by historical and structural evidence. A long tradition of anti-civilization thinkers, largely within anarchist theoretical orientations have done the same. But this is only a stand. It is an easily justified position from an empirical and rationalist perspective which nevertheless goes against the grain of colloquial thinking, even (and perhaps especially) within Marxist as well as anarchist traditions. What results is largely a battle over semantics, or what I've elsewhere described as a divergence between our dictionaries. I believe a re-examination of Maslow's concept of self-actualization might help defuse the dispute over colloquial uses of the terms "progress" and "civilization" and resolve some of the seeming hypocrisy comparing our notions.

In *The State: Its Historic Role*, Kropotkin follows a colloquial usage distinguishing the state from civilization, even to the point that it is the state itself which produces decadence to civilization. In this etymology, the latter is synonymous with what anthropologists, particularly in the American "tradition", call "culture" and this, in fact, makes most of civilization's proponents among radicals rationally and empirically coherent.

Maslow's theory of self-actualization, based on Kurt Goldstein's ideas of gestalt organism over isolated mechanism (which also influenced Bertalanffy's *General Systems Theory*), applies to individual motivational psychology. It refers to the potential for possibilities, even probabilities to become realities. Somewhat encumbered by progressive thinking, he goes on to posit stages. This is not necessary except from within a materialist, structural framework: for any potential to be realized, certain environmental conditions must be in effect. One cannot build a steam engine in a kiln designed to turn out clay pots. Progress need not be invoked at all except in terms of a sequence of steps or sequences in the process, and their elucidation is usually a matter of historical reconstruction (*a posteriori*) rather than a teleological futurology. In other words, while conditions are required for certain resultants, they do not necessitate or predict their emergence.

That there may be an intended goal does not discount the fact that innovations are contingent on existing and historical conditions – the environmental context. Self-actualization, on the other hand, is not a project like a technological invention. It is the ability to actualize one's imagination only possible in an unhindered, or alternatively, facilitating environment. While mimicing, innovation and experimentation are essential, it does not produce a product. It produces living. The endpoint in life is death, and that is a project few willingly entertain. If the goal of life is considered akin to any goal-directed behavior, that is, its completion, suicide would be the most logical option. Fueled by functionalism and Hegelian dialectics, it may be this absurd question of purpose which led Freud to posit the death instinct to explain behavior which cannot be explained in the context of a drive toward pleasure.

According to Kurt Goldstein's book *The Organism: A Holistic Approach to Biology Derived from Pathological Data in Man*, self-actualization is "the tendency to actualize, as much as possible,

[the organism's] individual capacities" in the world. The tendency to self-actualization is "the only drive by which the life of an organism is determined." Goldstein defined self-actualization as a driving life force that will ultimately lead to maximizing one's abilities and determine the path of one's life. – [wikipedia](#)

Not to invoke a "natural hedonism" or the argument of "selfish genes", the idea of actualization might also be attributed to cultures. Self-actualized cultures are typically described as experiencing a "golden age" or "classical epoch". They are eulogized as prime examples of civilization at its peak. At a gut level, we associate this with "freedom". This is a good intuition, since it takes a certain degree of freedom to meet any desire. It makes horse sense.

Kropotkin pointed out the fact that most of what we consider the greatest achievements of European civilization came from a period which, in fact, had no state or rule of law, the period we call "medieval" and "dark". He pointed out that the so-called "dark age" is the result of historical revisionism: darkness didn't begin to fall until state bureaucracies began to meddle in everyone's affairs and existing chiefdoms federated in the same fashion by which tribes network bands through affinal relations overlaying the consanguineal, producing transgeographical or extralocal social relations. With the military aid of the church and an aristocracy which traced its heritage to the Roman and Byzantine empires, "noble chiefs" reasserted their own priority over the networking "guilds", repositioning craftsmen and kin into government bureaucrats and workers, necessary to the industrialization which was to come and quite unbeknownst to any involved.

Maslow's interpretation of self-actualisation can be summed up with this quote: "intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately of what is the organism itself. ...self-actualization is growth-motivated rather than deficiency-motivated". Obviously then, we are talking about a desire for freedom (unencumbered living) as well as Heidegger's "openness to being". It is interpreted as sitting atop a hierarchy of needs and inserted into a progressive framework, but as Maslow explained, it is less an hierarchic stage than an appreciation that it cannot be expressed unless more immediate needs are fulfilled. He called these "lower order needs". Self-actualisation thought of as realisation of possibility points out to us the obvious fact that there is no progress or predetermination (stage theory) involved whatsoever. That forced labour camps (slave plantations, capitalist run factories) minimally provide for basic needs, specifically inhibits self-actualisation through their own necessarily imposed constraints. Self-actualisation addresses what's on all our minds: the difference between survival and life.

Thus, we tend to think of civilisation (the social infrastructure) supplying lower order needs without seeing how it does this through constraint, as if civilisation is somehow isolated from the state (government), that eliminating the latter will allow the former. Kropotkin's portrayal of early medieval life paints just such a picture. It is the peasant manorialism and cross-cutting artisan/craft guilds Kropotkin described *sans* feudal meddling which provides the basic structure for anarcho-syndicalism as well as council communism during the twentieth century.

HUMATA, HUKHTA, HVARSHTA: AESTHETIC PLEASURE AND BULLSHIT

"Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshta" is the Zoroastrian motto, the theory put into practice by Job before the ever-meddling judaic god and christian satan wagered on his fall from his path. It means something like "good thoughts, good words, good deeds".

The aesthetic sense is that which, following the logic of Asger Jorn, produces arousal. Disregarding the notion of value (quantified morality) and its consequences to meaning, we are left with an identity (or commensurability of pattern) between truth and bullshit experienced as states of arousal (interest) variably leaning toward such "subjective" feelings as disgust or euphoria. This would explain the colloquialism that the brain does not process negatives, that memory does not occur as negative assessments. Interpreted within use-value, revulsion is restated as a positive: "I hate pineapple" is a positive statement of the inversion of "use". Perhaps a more relevant example? Unless one already has "positive" anarchist leanings, the negation implied by "Anarchy" carries little meaning; its semantic context is colloquially thought absurd. This colloquial negation of the negation establishes the position: "I hate anarchy!" "Don't rock the boat!" "Stop with the negative waves, Moriarity!" "Think positive and you'll get positive results". Reform movements always command the most followers, even when this "positive" is logically positioned as support of the negation of self-actualisation. Reform becomes a logical absurdity.

The value, "hate", is meaningful only in terms of action: conscious avoidance or destruction. One cannot negate pineapple, only one's relationship to it. The behavioral subsequent, avoidance, is no longer seen in terms of negation, but positive action. An authentic distaste must of course, be initiated by trial (or experience), otherwise it is only a matter of persuasion or propaganda. Very small children have no fear of the unknown, which is merely unexperienced context. They will taste everything. Fear and rejection of the unknown, of the unexperienced is an overreaction to an overwhelmingly distasteful environment or is imprinted by means of the imposed scarcity of the novel – the overwhelmingly boring environmental field. The one thing infants do fear is isolation, translated as darkness or social alienation. Chickens are a bit more fortunate: when the lights go out, so do they. Should I write a letter to my congressman?

Each congressman has two ends: a sitting and a thinking end.
And since his whole career depends upon his seat,
Why bother, friend? – *Chad Mitchel Trio*

Purist revolutionaries who call for a total negation of capitalism or even the negation of the totality of existing conditions, who call all other approaches "half-baked measures", are on a fool's quest. All measures are half baked – a potato left too long in the fire becomes inedible charcoal. The totality is unapproachable. One can only change the conditions of existence within one's own field of experience and hope for mimesis or reiteration by others beyond the event's horizon. Our thoughts are ever toward extralocal networks, but still under the influence of Aristotle's "Greater Good" philosophy of the state. In the process we lose sight of the locality, of the self. Our motto remains "Sacrifice!"

There is no negation, only a change in probability or frequency of distribution, a

change in the more immediate conditions of living. A bird does not negate gravity, yet a bird still flies. In the same way, defiance does not negate tyranny, only its pull.

Tyre was the name of the central ruling city in the Levant once the Phoenician "trade network" (a maritime potlatch culture) became politicized (or "civilized"). Tyranny is a synonym for the centralized state. Tyranny is always possible and is reborn from immediate social relations. Uncivil (that is, "primitive") institutions, as has been said before, function to keep it at bay. The civil protest this distinction with "rules of etiquette" – the moral code lived. The shared etymology of civil and political suggest an identity with cities, but the more reasonable intuition suggests it is the complexity of social relations within (and between) cities which produces tyranny, not architecture.

To sum up, a negative position (refusal) is actually a positive affirmation. Flight and militant attack can be seen as related, and without irony, "negation" is always a positive response, an "action", unless left at the intellectual level (theory without praxis) – resignation, acquiescence (labeled "adjustment") or frustration and repression (labeled "neurosis"). Without action, theoretical negation must exist side by side with acquiescence, and we protest, "We've been recuperated!" or "Life is struggle!" One must be on guard to avoid public displays of frustration.

Even a child's temper tantrum is becoming less and less tolerated, more and more medicated. But after a certain age, temper is always suspect and subjects one to long term medication for what was a short term outburst. It is no irony that what was an "intellectual" operation may be experienced as a heightened emotional state, possibly witnessed as disabling euphoria (manic episode) or depressed helplessness by onlookers with a democratically moral (or is that "political"?) bent. Our unquestioned distinction and theoretical isolation of intellect, emotion and action provides the diagnostic criteria for a bipolar episode or a psychotic ("thought disorder") break when referred to the specialists who, informed by scientists working for pharmaceutical companies, tell us our revolution is "directed inward" and hand us a pill and explain "You have a brain-chemistry imbalance which accounts for your troubled thoughts and feelings; you'll probably have to take this medication the rest of your life". Most "symptoms" are currently treated with the same medications. The always fashionable *ennui* is simply the lack of arousal which antidepressants and antipsychotics provide through the overall inhibition of the "central nervous system", accentuating the effects which post-modern architecture and hospital-sterility in the physical (uninteresting) environment have on those less prone to experience a "break".

Outside of potentially dangerous metabolic changes, the major side effect of antipsychotics (especially when combined with SSRI antidepressants) appears as forgetfulness, inability to concentrate and lethargy (even more ironically, these are symptoms of depression!), but that is only a matter of a general interference with processing and lowered states of arousal. Obviously beneficial when one is experiencing an acute state of subjective terror, the prolonged use is an exercise in chronic brutality. The prescription for health becomes proscriptive of life, making constraint appear the most natural condition for living. Through "liberal social progress" and "improvements" in neurochemistry, prisons will become a thing of the past. So we are told.

This is how Aldous Huxley's *soma* works, by providing a simulacrum of pleasure. This kind of 'pleasure' can never lead to euphoria except in the religiously devout – resigned to the simple world of immediate appearances. For most, medication is not required, but this has been changing in the last few decades. While the current period might not be seen as one of social unrest, even less so of "social upheaval", there is little doubt that it is a period of increasing "social unease". The voluntary "patient" on medication experiences "improvement" largely because the original symptoms or complaint are forgotten or subsumed beneath conscious contemplation.

The self-fulfilling prophesy of psychopharmacology follows closely the broader penal logic: If one is incapable of self-control, self-censorship, constraint by other forces produces contentment, for one and all. Is it ironic that the proponents of civilisation point to "improvements" in medicine as the most obvious justification for their progressive stand?

Both sensory deprivation and information overload can have a similar effect on the "mentally healthy". The inhibition of the aesthetic sense (itself allowing the emergence of "the bullshit detector") may be pharmacologically enhanced, but essentially recapitulates (as in pattern matching) the effects democratic (moral) mass society have on malleability or gullibility on a large scale, often confused with mimesis or even trust. I say "confused" but that is far too gentle a term to describe a process which denies personal experimentation and induction which not only reveal possibilities, but fuel personal choice. It is the negation of a questioning attitude itself and necessary to maintain the status quo. Beyond the statistical measure of central tendency, the estimation of probability, the standard becomes a moral prescription in a competitive environment. Recognition of the novel or different, its consideration or evaluation and finally choice are all constrained. "The more things change, the more they stay the same!" This is the nature of progress.

Wouldn't all this make "poetry" a discourse on the possible, mistakenly translated as "mysticism" rather than an "appropriate scientific attitude"? Is the peer-reviewed article in a technical journal rife with mathematical illustrations and esoteric statistics experienced by the colloquial non-specialist as any less a display of gibberish than the schizophrenic speech is to the psychiatric specialist or *Language Poetry* is to the English professor specializing in Victorian era texts and calling the latter "poetry *par excellént*", the standard by which all else must be compared, to which all else must conform?

I think Maslow missed one antecedent condition for self-actualization: environmental stimulation! Everything about our culture seeks to eliminate that condition, to call it "environmental constraint which produces struggle". Why should we persist in thinking that influence and constraint are the same beast? Communism favours mutual influence. Anarchy decries constraint. There is no contradiction, only the expression of two sides of a collectively imagined possibility.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY: EXPRESSIONS OF POWER?

Forever hung up in our own dictionaries, the history of radical movements illustrates

the politics (or dialectics) of struggle. Where radical subjectivity might be rephrased with the motto, "Express yourself", even this is politicized since there are vast social forces which (actually, who) would suppress all expression but the commonplace and predictable. This is the force of democracy, which turns the would-be expressionist into a militant (unless the expression is sold on the market, in which case the militant is now called "artist").

Politics always involves struggle. Resistance to the field effects of "mass" is to face accusations of "bourgeois individualism" or "avant gardism" when among friends. Politics requires one to make a stand, and militancy itself is provocative. The revolutionary who seeks a unified assault must always be discouraged as democratization will always lead to factioning or "sacrifice for the greater good". Is it only me who sees a contradiction between sacrifice and actualisation? No matter how much it is imagined or desired, unity is never witnessed outside of virtual reality, and there is little which is "virtual" in that place, a place where reality itself is artificially constrained. The power maintained within "mass struggle", the idea of "power in numbers" allows power itself to metastasize within the group and express itself as power points, internal conflict, power relations between "comrades". The militant and activist are the same entity. If the stand is for self-actualization, the realization of imagined possibilities, we should all have such aspirations. Most do, if only secretly. This is not "bourgeois individualism" or "self-indulgent purism", just as a mutual (that is, "social") relation is not a power relation, despite its potential for energetic effects – the realisation of possibilities.

In fact, the individual/social schism need not even be entertained. The human beast is a social animal and is not actualised in isolation. We've only been "socialized" to perceive society and democracy as the same thing. Democracy is always the mechanism for some to make decisions for others, who must then accommodate to the mandates of the group, whether that democratic process is representative or universally participatory.

In all of nature, unifying forces such as gravity (in physics, a near synonym of mass) is countered by the electric force of diversification. One could say it is not a dialectical struggle between unity and diversity, attraction and repulsion, but that gravity is only the "force" which keeps diversification from explosion, a big bang in stasis, also known as "death". Gravity has been described as a weak force. Hence, like "love", its effects wane as distance or diversity increases. But like capital, power is not a separate reality, an autonomous entity. It is an effect or non-linear (multilateral) series of effects. At least within the metaphor of gravitational attraction (and unlike capital), energy (potentiality) is a quality of all existence. One might say unity and diversity are the same; one is the equally existing condition for the other, neither antecedent nor anteceded. "It all comes together; it all falls apart" (– *Ronald Sukenick*). All unities must eventually either collapse, explode or transform: immortality is just another pipe dream. As might be accepted when its synonym, "energy", is evoked, power is *patamimetic*: it is the expression of that which does not yet exist as well as that which maintains existing conditions. That it is a "potential to do work" is only a narrow, culture-bound functionalism (the utilitarian work ethic), yet energy is certainly always a potential.

If there is a potentiality for constraint (force), there is always likewise potential release. In dialectic terms, *patamimesis* is the emergent quality of mutual arousal, attraction, interest. In biology, it is autopoietic. It is an iteration without reproduction of identities which provides for local commonality, also known as "organism", "culture", "species". It creates patterns within diversity and is founded upon mutually disposed attraction without disposing of mutual differentiation. Some call it "freedom". Naturalists call it "Law"; politicians (among whom are the theologians or philosophers of the state dogma of "law and order") call it "absurd". Commonality is not a synonym for unity!

IS THIS THE END?

Collapse is perhaps the prime upshot of the amalgamation of environmental determinism and cultural pessimism in the social sciences. It epitomises a new and burgeoning doctrine expounded largely by disillusioned left-wingers and former Marxist intellectuals. In place of the old creed of class warfare and socio-economic driving forces that used to explain every single development under the sun, environmental determinism essentially applies the same one-sided rigidity to historical events and societal evolution (Peiser, 2003).

As a final point, I would argue that Easter Island is a poor example for a morality tale about environmental degradation. Easter Island's tragic experience is not a metaphor for the entire Earth. The extreme isolation of Rapa Nui is an exception even among islands, and does not constitute the ordinary problems of the human environment interface. Yet in spite of exceptionally challenging conditions, the indigenous population chose to survive - and they did. They tackled the problems of a difficult and challenging environment which both geography and their own actions forced upon them. They successfully adapted to changing circumstances and did not show any signs of terminal decline when they were discovered by Europeans in 1722.

There is no reason to believe that its civilisation could not have adapted and survived (in a modified form) to an environment devoid of large timber. What they could not endure, however, and what most of them did not survive, was something altogether different: the systematic destruction of their society, their people and their culture. Diamond has chosen to close his eyes to the real culprits of Rapa Nui's real collapse and annihilation. As Rainbird (2003) aptly concludes: "Whatever may have happened in the past on Easter Island, whatever they did to their island themselves, it totally pales into insignificance compared to the impact that was going to come through Western contact." – *Benny Peiser*

What Peiser has not considered in his otherwise excellent critique of Jarred Diamond's portentous premises on the collapse of civilization on Easter Island is that, while Easter Island is certainly not the Earth, neither is the Earth an island from which one can escape, nor is it something which can be disregarded beyond "something useful". I seriously doubt that any space-ships will come to our aid when things get tough. The hope for either a political or technological solution to our plight, that is, reliance on the future to solve today's problems, is no advance over the messianic thinking displayed by cargo cults we ridicule as "magical". At any rate, the demise of Rapa Nui's culture is still described as anthropogenic, Diamond's very point clarified.

Whether we call it "civilization", "empire" or "society with a bureaucratic state organization functioning to maximize personal profit for some at the expense of others", it is in our present nature and has been for some time to use up and discard not only the products of our environment, but its inhabitants as well. This much, Peiser has aptly demonstrated. The progressive movement portrayed in our history books suggests at some point, we must use up and discard the environment itself – the conditions of our own

existence. Globalisation of our culture, the grand project to unify mankind, ensures that this will at some point come, if not today, certainly tomorrow. This is no morality tale!

Whether we call it collapse or a minor set-back in the global capitalist economy, there is little doubt that it is our own collective behavior which is causing our current mess, just as surely as the democratic revision of our dictionaries will put no end to any other of our arguments. The frigid North Atlantic paid no heed to the sink-or-swim, survival-of-the-fittest and classist attitudes of the upper crust of the Titanic's residents: there were no survivors but for the efforts of mutual aid. The greatest plans of conscious agency to master the sea culminated in the Titanic. The simplest acts of human instinct procured the possibility of life for its survivors. Peiser's declaration of the Easter Islander's "choice to survive" is no revelation nor a proclamation of "indomitable human spirit". Those who choose the only alternative given commit suicide! Or they fight back for something other than mere "survival" in despicable conditions.

Like the proverbial "stupid question", there is no metaphor unsuitable to our investigations. Metaphors point us to possible connections within the expanses of the interregal unknown. Null or not, this is the function of all hypotheses. It is not curiosity which kills cats, but arrogance. Few would contend the idea that a 'bullshit detector' is aroused when we are confronted by contradiction. Might it also be that this aesthetic, that thing or event which "captures" our attention, is not a recapitulation of a "dialectics of nature", but rather, a hint that *there is something fundamentally wrong with our "rational" construction of the world*, a hidden error in our *traditional* processing?

*The more things change, the more they stay the same.
It all comes together, it all falls apart.
Progress is only a matter of "keeping up with the present".*

Patamimesis

Patamimesis: the sublation of pantomime and transgression, where the relation, *aufhebung*, is the reality, the contradictions on either side, the poles in supposed opposition, the autonomy of "objects" in struggle are only figments of imagination, theoretical constructs, dichotomous phantoms, constraining categorizations. With patamimetic reality, there is no opposition, no immanent struggle, no hypocrisy we are bound to. We agree with Pascal when he deduced that only faith can actualize a phantom menace (or a god). We agree with Kropotkin when he says:

Fine sermons have been preached on the text that those who have should share with those who have not, but he who would act out this principle is speedily informed that these beautiful sentiments are all very well in poetry, but not in practice. "To lie is to degrade and besmirch oneself," we say, and yet all civilized life becomes one huge lie. We accustom ourselves and our children to hypocrisy, to the practice of a double-faced morality. And since the brain is ill at ease among lies, we cheat ourselves with sophistry. Hypocrisy and sophistry become the second nature of the civilized man. – *Kropotkin*

Without a heritage of the compete-and-struggle-for-survival ethos, the logic of the slave and master, the antagonism or precarity built into the exchange paradigm, politics itself disappears. Patamimesis is the anarchist-communist ethos. Every child understands it: informed dissent! Dissent first requires a shared language – pantomime. Transgression both allows and requires a redirection of pantomime, a shifting of

attention to different points of interest, a new aesthetic (one's confrontation with novelty as well as one's novel perspective of the familiar provided by communication). Pantomime is also, therefore, the iteration which provides both renewal as well as the possibility of change. Patamimesis allows for recognition of the difference between security and constraint, choice and compulsion.

Contrary to Hegel's dictum, reflective thought is to be embraced due to its circularity⁴¹. What is the Hegelian *absolute* other than a *philosophia perennis*?⁴² The only required universal agreement for sociality is that there *is* a reality, not that we can know or master it. In line with Bataille and Maturana, since there are no closed systems within the biosphere, renewal is only possible if at some point, the energy required for growth is redirected into reproduction and excess is either given away or exuberantly destroyed. This is the *Potlatch*. The singular accumulation of energy will always result in explosion. This is the second law of thermodynamics. Without space-travel, growth of immortal beings (*sans* reproduction) as well as permanent (reproducing) organization expending individual expression necessitates death or at least the limit to its own growth – it is a self-negating process. This is (or should be) the first principle of cultural ecology: the biosphere is a finite space containing an infinite number of relations. Imagine the possibilities? You can't!

That two contradictory elements do not destroy one another in the process of sublation⁴³ illustrates only that the contradiction was an illusion in the first place. Dialectic tension is seen only as the result of self-fulfilling prophecy: the necessary and real consequence of an "irrational" construct – a political opposition, exchange value, poverty & wealth. I have already suggested that politics itself is an emergent of economic scarcity imposed with the invention of property. This sentence can be easily inverted since politics and economics are only two perspectives of the same set of relations which we habitually miss-gloss "social". This is ultimately why political means towards a social revolution is an absurdity. Politics reproduces politics. The social revolution can only be seen as the re-emergence of sociality superseding politics in statistical distribution. Otherwise, we will have to wait for politics to negate itself. Unfortunately, this path will likely negate ourselves along with it.

"The contradictions of capital point to the abolition, not the realization of the Subject" – Moishe Postone.

41... as long as one is not constrained inside a box. Reasoning which always leads back to the same categorical assessment is more properly called a "tick" – a looping which when made conscious, should be a signal to leave the confines of the box. Dogma reinforces the tick by renaming it "truth". It is in fact, not a kind of reason but a compelled obsession. The "circular reasoning" I would embrace is in fact inductive since it directs one's attention outside of boxes to witness the renewal which goes on all around.

42 ... the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being; the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the perennial philosophy may be found among the traditional lore of primitive peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions. – *Aldous Huxley*

43 "Symbiosis" is a beautiful analogy in biology.

Postface: Fin, or Growing up with George Carlin

F.I.N.E. When the flashing blue and red lights appear in our rear-view mirror, we often say to ourself "I'm finished now!" In the context of a book or essay, we are often quite content with the idea of its conclusion. It is at least appropriate to declare an end to our project, either as reader or writer. When we agree that a project is finished, we might congratulate the author with "It was fine!" Ironically, we might intend with this statement that it was merely adequate, but certainly not exceptional. On the mental ward, however, "Fine" is an answer to the question "How are you", meaning "fucked up, insecure, neurotic & emotional". In this case, we feel (or have been repeatedly told) we have lost possession of our faculties.

Possession and property revisited In a language, its syntax consorts with its semantics or meaning, which as elsewhere suggested, provides the muscle of our cultural context. Linguistic possessive case is illustrative of the conceptual (semantic) difference between possession and property, at least in its etymology if not in our consciousness. In the context of property, the sentence, "this is my car", cannot be reversed. As an attribute of "me", it is only metaphoric, whereas the sentence, "this is my arm" is less an attribute than a substantive: it goes without saying. As a statement of property, "my steering wheel" is meaningful only by extension of ownership of the car. One cannot suggest it is my attribute except in medically rare cases. Statements of attribution are usually hierarchical, which is to say "taxonomic" – the car is neither part nor sort nor stage of it's wheel, although a car and its steering-wheel may be part of the history or process of the wheel as technological invention or production.

A statement of property is always unilinear. "I own this car" is not reversible to "this car owns me". The latter is only meaningful in poetics – it implies that there is something wrong with your relationship with the car, perhaps that it feels like the car seems to control your life in the sense that it has become central to or dictates your functioning. There are many meanings which might be inferred, but none of them refer to 'property rights' unless one's belief system infers consciousness and volition to the vehicle. In some circles, the statement would not even raise the occasional eyebrow, but those circles are increasingly rare or isolated in wings of institutions, buildings or temples to which the general populace has limited visitation. As a statement of possession, on the other hand, the sentence is quite reversible: "my car crashed and I was thrown through the windshield" becomes "the car's driver was ejected through its windshield". "My house, which I occupy" becomes "The house's occupant". This reversal of subject and object is merely a change of perspective, and few in our culture would even think to raise an eyebrow. The point is that possession is a concept of mutuality and reciprocity, not hierarchy, exclusivity or attribution. The institution of property by King Thug and his henchmen was unintentionally accompanied by linguistic confusion: "My house" became "No trespassing!"

Concluding logic "Finish what you started" is the statement of all parents, teachers and bosses. It is a particularly strong edict of mathematicians and logisticians and factory managers. It expresses the desire for a finished product. Even the empiricist and cop demands "proofs" to put an end to discussion – "Just the facts, ma'am". Facts are, of course, absolute and permanent, and therefore indisputable. In this way, they are

much like our ideas, products of logical deduction. But if our logic comes to question the very notions of absolutism and permanence, we might just come to view phenomenology and empiricism equally absurd. But I go too far. We must draw a line in the sand and say "Enough's enough!"

If all logical projects must be carried to their conclusion, the conclusion of all philosophical, religious and scientific discourse is unity – the grand unified theory which will produce peace on earth. R.I.P. Conclusion is an appropriate synonym for death. It is the end of all inquiry, the end of everything, the collapse of the universe. We've played our last move, the game is over. "Ah, but you go too far!", I again seem to hear from across the room. "If we don't conclude the anarchist or revolutionary project, we'll be stuck with these miserable conditions forever". Perhaps if we end the game, we can start playing again, and the point of play is not it's conclusion. The revolution has always been with us, and perhaps we should not look to it's conclusion. We all agree that something is terribly wrong. Perhaps we could set aside our differences and rather than await the perfect alternative (or set of alternatives) given by some astute social planner, get our lives rolling again by refusing that which we reject and taking personal responsibility to achieve that which we desire. This requires a certain sense of iconoclasy.

Iconoclastic critique of social planning We've been offered many excellent analyses and critiques of our situation There is probably no better analysis of capitalism than what is provided by Karl Marx, nor critique of the state than by Josiah Warren (who was trapped in the exchange paradigm) or Renzo Novatore (who wasn't), both usually considered individualists *against society*, but probably more appropriately seen as iconoclasts with respect to social demands:

An impression has gone abroad that I am engaged in forming societies. This is a very great mistake, which I feel bound to correct. Those who have heard or read anything from me on the subject, know that one of the principal points insisted on is, the forming of societies or any other artificial combinations IS the first, greatest, and most fatal mistake ever committed by legislators and by reformers. That all these combinations require the surrender of the natural sovereignty of the INDIVIDUAL over her or his person, time, property and responsibilities, to the government of the combination. That this tends to prostrate the individual -To reduce him to a mere piece of a machine; involving others in responsibility for his acts, and being involved in responsibilities for the acts and sentiments of his associates; he lives & acts, without proper control over his own affairs, without certainty as to the results of his actions, and almost without brains that he dares to use on his own account; and consequently never realizes the great objects for which society is professedly formed.
– *Josiah Warren*

We have seen the disastrous effects of attempts to build a Marxist state and Warren's Equitable Communities. Novatore spawned a new age of reactionary individualism, suggesting an agreement with Freud that society itself is the problem (cf., [*Civilisation and its Discontents*](#)). The best analysis or critique will generate any number of different plans, depending on one's own, *individual* values, desires, or more commonly, pre-existing, habitual *societal* values and desires. In Ken Knabb's [*Joy of Revolution*](#), a book which could be considered a cookbook (like [*Joy of Cooking*](#)), his excellent analysis is followed by a plan almost religiously incorporating direct democracy with responsibilities for complex projects relegated to specialists chosen by some sort of consensus He predicts a future portraying diversity, but then goes on to portray all other alternatives "absurd" and not well thought out. Like Bookchin, Vaneigam, Syndicalists and almost everyone on the left, he has become a social planner.

All social planners operate under pressure. To convince others that a change in circumstances is needed (and almost no one disagrees with this), they have always been faced with the question "But what are the alternatives?" Rather than perceive that this is an absurd question because it removes the onus of responsibility from the dissenters, suggestions are presented as possibilities derived not from analysis, but from one's own set of emotional attachments. There is also the pressure of competition between different social planners who are doing their best to win over the audience. Again, we are presented with the retort "Yes, but what are the alternatives?" or "What then should be done?" Novatore chose not to answer the question:

You are waiting for the revolution? Let it be! My own began a long time ago! When you are ready (god, what an endless wait!) I won't mind going with you for a while. But when you stop, I shall continue on my way toward the great and sublime conquest of the nothing!

Any society that you build will have its limits. And outside the limits of any society, unruly and heroic tramps will wander with their wild and virgin thought – those who cannot live without planning ever new and dreadful outbursts of rebellion! I shall be among them! – *Renzo Novatore*

Some have suggested "Let nature take its course" but are shut down with "But we'd all die!" One line of thinking from Kropotkin has been almost entirely neglected when he compared events after a revolution to people's almost instinctive behavior following a natural disaster or the behavior witnessed before the revolutionaries (social planners) have taken charge – spontaneous mutual aid. One cannot plan spontaneity nor impose a sense of community.

Very different will be the result if the workers claim the right to well-being! In claiming that right they claim the right to possess the wealth of the community – to take the houses to dwell in, according to the needs of each family; to seize the stores of food and learn the meaning of plenty, after having known famine too well. They proclaim their right to all wealth – fruit of the labour of past and present generations – and learn by its means to enjoy those higher pleasures of art and science too long monopolized by the middle classes.

And while asserting their right to live in comfort, they assert, what is still more important, their right to decide for themselves what this comfort shall be, what must be produced to ensure it, and what discarded as no longer of value.

The "right to well-being" means the possibility of living like human beings, and of bringing up children to be members of a society better than ours, whilst the "right to work" only means the right to be always a wage-slave, a drudge, ruled over and exploited by the middle class of the future. The right to well-being is the Social Revolution, the right to work means nothing but the Treadmill of Commercialism. It is high time for the worker to assert his right to the common inheritance and to enter into possession.

...That we are Utopians is well known. So Utopian are we that we go the length of believing that the Revolution can and ought to assure shelter, food, and clothes to all ... If only the Jacobin bayonets do not get in the way; if only the self-styled "scientific" theorists do not thrust themselves in to darken counsel!

Give the people a free hand, and in ten days the food service will be conducted with admirable regularity. Only those who have never seen the people hard at work, only those who have passed their lives buried among documents, can doubt it. Speak of the organizing genius of the "Great Misunderstood," the people, to those who have seen it in Paris in the days of the barricades, or in London during the great dockers strike, when half a million of starving folk had to be fed, and they will tell you how superior it is to the official ineptness of Bumbledom.

...In any case, a system which springs up spontaneously, under stress of immediate need, will be infinitely preferable to anything invented between four walls by hide-bound theorists sitting on any number of committees." – *Petr Kropotkin*

Kropotkin is one of the few anarchist thinkers who acknowledged an association between human society and biological (ecological) communities. Murray Bookchin followed this line to great effect (at least on a theoretical level) but had to give up notions of anarchy to maintain his emotional attachment to social planning. By all means, don't just wait to see what happens, which is the usual interpretation of "let nature take...", but don't let incapacitating fear of the future, like a fear of the gods, prevent us from finally starting to live. Social meddling will not become a thing of the past till we stop expecting others to solve our own problems and realise that society is not something to be engineered but, given the opportunity, is a matter of spontaneous generation.

Communities are not buildings requiring architects and tradesmen to bring the architect's dream to life, no matter how collectively or consensually decisions are made. The social relation cannot be planned, constructed, coordinated and implemented, nor is it bound up in notions of exchange and cannot be quantified.

Demand the time to think, form meaningful relationships, and enjoy the journey. For any chance at success, we must love each other more than our enemy hates us. To these ends, our inefficiency is our weapon – curious george brigade.

Appendix: A Dropout Manifesto: Rethinking Ecology & the Drop-out

Some things we see as facts, or at least statistically significant:

- 1) There are more vacant houses, apartments, warehouses, office space, all of which might accommodate various functions (especially housing) than there are homeless people. Progress (as in "growth & development") is not necessary from a housing perspective (nor for any other function);
- 2) There is more space in cities taken up by parks, lawns, parking lots and outlying farmland than building structures;
- 3) There is more raw and agricultural land than urban;
- 4) More of the population lives in than outside of cities;
- 5) Most of those would prefer to stay in cities;
- 6) With the help of pre-existing bulldozers, diesel and dynamite, gentrified rural developments and factory farms can be reclaimed (by the environment) in as few as seven years, whereas existing cities would take hundreds of years (or more) if abandoned, with or without help.

With these in mind and an ecological perspective, one can see that the mass refusal (or collapse) of capitalist civilization would not only *not* require any die-off, but negate the die-off we currently witness on a daily basis (particularly in the so-called third world/global South). If those "indigenes" dispossessed of their homes and forced into ghettos by the conditions of capital ("development") were 'allowed' to return, the interlopers and carpetbaggers would themselves be forced into a position of "dropout" without the authoritarian backing of the state.

An ecological perspective should be inherent in a green or primitivist position. It is also found lurking under progressive pro-civ politics looking to sustainability & justice.

When anti-civ greens become political (an oxymoron?), solutions offered might be demanded of everyone, everywhere (just as they are from their progressive counterparts). Both want an end to the capitalist mode of production and hopefully, capitalist 'social' relations. Those who do not have even a semblance of an ecological perspective are capitalists and technologists who do not think beyond their own nose, such that implications of their own actions and desires affecting others are made invisible. These are the people who invented the ideology and practice of "rape of the commons". These people have always existed and always will. Similar behavior is seen from time to time among animals other than humans. There are three alternatives for those who would proclaim "But I am not an animal!": "I am an unmoving rock!", "I am a vegetative plant!", or "I am god!". The point of a revolution is to make this phenomenon of ignorance of consequences and implications a rarity rather than the standard operating procedure we see today.

Politics represents/promotes all or nothing thinking. The class war position married to the guillotine calls for a die-off as loudly as does the totalitarian state. Politics suggests the solutions contemplated are necessary for one and all, whether those politics

are democratic or not. Politics is an arrogant standpoint which forecasts the failure of all other points. We would call it a particularly civilized notion. Others call it uncivil. What we call it is unimportant as long as we understand what it is and resist it.

There is a position which does not concern itself with notions of progress/anti-progress or forward/backward or city/country or individual/social or population growth/die-off or politics/antipolitics. This is the perspective of the dropout with an ecological view. As any practicing revolutionary or insurrectionist, the dropout starts from a position of intended refusal. The argument that no one can, in this day and age, cut all ties to capitalism, that a change must be transcendental (progressive), is also a matter of all or nothing thinking. It is political in that, reifying revolution, it must be everywhere or nowhere. This allows a split between theory and practice the dropout is not concerned with because the dropout has no demands on others, only hopes for them. The dropout weakens those above-mentioned ties by offering resistance. With the electrical metaphor, a resistor is still in the circuit, but renders the power less fatally shocking. Unlike the electronic component, we are also perceivers and observers, making us unlike the reformers and "sell-outs" only looking for a safe niche in order to go on, themselves unseen.

Sometimes it is the flight side (cf draft resistors) of the fight-flight scenario. The guerilla tactic of hit and run, the "Seattle'99" tactic of swarm and disperse is the only option for survival as a low power resistor on the "fight" side. The insurrectionist will recognize this immediately. In the electronic metaphor, that is a diode. The Situ "*détournement*" is represented by a transistor (switching the current of meaning along different paths) or capacitor (taking a charge to be used against its source in later bursts). Old style "solid state" electronic circuits were always composed of resistors, diodes, transistors and capacitors. There is always the possibility of attack, creating a short circuit by diverting power to ground (the earth). By itself, this last diversion is also a metaphor for nihilist destruction. Outside this metaphor, it takes an initial dropping out to form a resisting "underground", producing what HPWombat elsewhere called an "invisible network".⁴⁴

The dropout is not against the attack side of this *fight-flight* equation. That is the pacifist position. Not being political, the dropout respects diversity in connections, conditions, tactics, choices. Like relations in an electrical circuit, tolerance is a necessary attribute, even a synonym for function. This does not mean "anything goes". If we were to

44 "I'd like to point out that "invisible network" can be, but is not necessarily an underground ... The ideas of the invisible network are tied more strongly to the conception of anarchist pluralism. It is, for lack of a better word, the brotherhood of anarchist identity, why calling yourself an anarchist means something. It is a conspiracy without words. If our invisible network is operating correctly, then it serves as a path of escape in hard times, an underground railroad. It also means that a level of trust can be given between anarchists, the sharing of resources despite differences in theory or strategy.

"In relation to an offensive strategy, the invisible network can be called into being. A sympathy strike can be launched by anarchists that have no other connection than a shared identity. The invisible network is a support network for anarchists that have been black balled, giving reason for the creation of collectivism, to host a rebel workforce. It is the practice of mutual aid in resistance...The platformist attack on primitivists [& dropouts] is them wanting to exclude primitivists [& dropouts] from the invisible network." – *HP-Wombat*

take that attitude, we would have no reason to dissend, revolt or drop out in the first place. We are neither electronic nor mechanical networks. We are organic. We can in fact begin to disengage, refuse connections and establish new ones! (at least we can try). It is a matter of ethics and vision (in the sense of 'seeing a bigger picture') which defines dissent in the first place.

The dropout would wish for nature to take her course, so would *not* call for the destruction of cities. In fact, there are probably more dropouts inside than outside of cities (although many have aspirations to leave). The dropout recognizes s/he has little power or agency over others so (not even wishing it) does not tend toward arrogance or moralistic demand. The dropout would wish that, if folks want to build power-metal cities, let *them* do so underground (where the ore belongs!), leaving the topside to earthlings (cf. *Tim Leary*).

If there is a *will to power*, the dropout will see this word, "power", as a synonym of "freedom" or even "living". It is the source of a live-and-let-live attitude. If the dropout is heard to say "let nature take her course", it is said with the intention that there are consequences to our behaviour which should provide a learning experience. Even though we must remain ignorant of all the implications, we, seeing some of them, should aspire to do something differently. With an ecological perspective, one would wish those well who would keep civilization and its cities (as the environmental damage is already done and will remain done for longer than we can imagine) and who would say "goodbye" to exploitation and destruction in the endorsement of a spirit of experimentation, as long as they do not wish to spread out and conquer (or pave) any more of the planet. If civilization could become sustainable (live within its resources without demands on everyone else born or yet to be born), we would no longer call it civilization, but we will not try to impose on other's language lest we become too civil (political) ourselves.

We said above that the ecologically mindful dropout is not concerned with a place in the individual/social dialectic. To drop out is ultimately an individual decision, a choice not available to an individual revolutionary until her/his comrades also make that choice (social revolution in its most rigid sense thereby resides only and ever in the future). On the other hand, there have been dropout communities since there have been societies, and this is not restricted to our "species" of social animal. Society always creates dropouts if it is to remain social. The dropout is an important source as well as result of diversity. This autopoietic diversity is the only weapon against unified totalitarian power. The community is the only base from which to make an effective stand. This stand need not be restricted to physical territoriality – that created the first European nation-state in Bohemia-Moravia from a ("successful") federation of resisters to empire. When Leary called on us to drop out, he did not intend for one to isolate from others like the hermit alone in his cave. Anyone with a sense of rebellion has, in fact, already started on the path of dropping out. An ecosystem is a community or it is nothing. An ecological approach for communism sees in a community reciprocal social relations before any consideration of the flow of materials. The latter view alone is mechanical, not ecological and certainly not social.

Like our own death, we *know* catastrophes will happen, yet we do not believe in them until they occur. Equally, we *believe* in the future but know it not to exist until it

does so and ceases to *be* the future. Because of this, crisis always takes us by surprise. The probability of catastrophe is zero until it brings itself into existence, and by then, it is too late to do anything about it. Unaccustomed to making connections (or accepting responsibility), prior planning (or at least consideration) and follow-through in preventing this possibility is always abandoned when the program's efficacy proves the impossibility of the catastrophic event. We continue to focus on the fix or cure *after* we've broken 'the machine' rather than what we need to do to sustain our own health and the creation & maintenance of healthy relationships. Unable to predict the future, we can prevent exploitative and destructive consequences to the future only by limiting their practice in the present. If we consider the future (if we "desire"), that future receives agency from the present and emits it toward the present. This enframes ethics in a creative-created feedback loop. This is time travel or it is nothing. We are not talking of "ethical uses of power" (the approach from the left), but of returning power itself to ground.

Who are we?

We have become equated with being defenders of lifestylism and primitivism and are therefore counter-revolutionaries. We accept this, but would not accept the labels to describe ourselves – we are not religious ideologues.

We are less eclectic than lacking faith in the human capability to formulate a completely coherent body of theory, so we caution against general adherence to any particular 'ism'. We would like to see less antagonistic factioning among ourselves, a result of all-or-nothing, either/or, my-way-or-the-highway thinking.

When one looks at the history of failed revolutions, one could easily come to the conclusion that the function of the revolutionary theorist has been to end the revolution in favor of the state. The only successful revolutions from which the theorists derive their heroes only replaced the monarchy with parliamentary government of the bourgeoisie (the "democratic" plutarchy of the powerful), or replaced both with Stalinist bureaucracy – the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat". Revolutions have always been wagers, waged to control commerce, to protect the commercial treadmill. Like the capitalists they oppose, revolutionary theorists borrow from the future in order to pay for (or justify) the present, representing the psychology of catastrophe⁴⁵ at its finest. Jefferson was correct when he stated that periodic revolution is necessary for the continued maintenance of civilization, the status quo of the spectacular!

We do not seek organized unity but disorganized solidarity. We search not for consensus but communication. We do not have consensus ourselves, nor do we need it. We take pleasure in diversity and therefore wish to maintain our autonomy. We are criticized for not coming up with a plan. We would wish the revolution success, but in the mean time, we also wish to live. That is our plan.

So while we wait for the revolutionaries to revolt, we others drop out. This does not mean we consume less to do damage to the capitalist effort (although we may change

45 See Dupuy (<http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1303/1303dupuy.htm>) for a "leftist" approach to the psychology of catastrophe.

our patterns of consumption) but we share more (opposing the capitalist ethic) and obey less (opposing the authority of the state).

We do not damage property to bring down the system, nor to send a message of inspiration to the masses, nor to bring the rulers to the negotiation table – we do not negotiate with terrorists. We do this because we have no respect for property, especially that which destroys our home and alienates us from living. This does not mean we want to turn the world into rubble. We do not damage those things which give us pleasure, but this does not mean we may not. Does not all consumption, even of that fine meal prepared with subversive love, necessarily entail property destruction?

We drop out as individuals and when we are joined by others, we are partners in crime, for we also have no respect for law. Our respect (or concern) for each other makes the idea of property meaningless, and our respect for ourselves and our own capabilities makes laws unnecessary.

We do not want to take power. It is power which we reject.

Respectfully,

Comrade Hordrik, IFINSITURCON – PAC (SS)

(The Inconsistent Federation of Inaccessibles, Scornful Iconoclasts, Tramps, Unique Ones, Rulers Over the Ideal and Conquerors of the Nothing – Persistent Anti-Collective of Spontaneous Subversives)

About the Authors:

Not to be confused with the famous Discordian, Fenderson, Professor Fendersen is a fictional Icelandic character from a [play](#) which I, a sheep herder by profession, "wrote". He was gracious in lending me his name for this project. Carlos Pedro Dufús acted in the role of Fendersen in that play. His mother was an Ecuadoran intellectual and he was fathered by a French peasant. They had met in a labor camp in Chirskiy, Siberia. Carlos was named for his father's heroes, Charles Darwin, Peter Kropotkin, and his mother's patrón, the pirate king, Daniel Defoe. He was raised, cared for and educated by his elder sister, the illiterate Pamela, and spent his young adult years almost entirely in Hipple's Pub in Liverpool, where he was eventually arrested for presumptuousness. This, then, is largely a work of non-fiction by largely fictional author