

In the suffocating grip of our daily routines, what space do we find for spontaneity? For wonder for this Earth we share, even as it is diminished? For companionship not relegated to sharing in the misery of (alternative) consumption, the segregated couple, the nuclear family? For the power of self-creation and subsistence outside the markets that are imposed?

The hurt and absences of this way of life too often become turned inward, a shame we carry as if it were our own. We are sold pre-packaged aspirations – always to be a little deferred so as to respond to the requirements of the dominant reality – when we want immediacy, heroic lives of adventure, belonging, caring and daring; life not survival. Always, the desires of those who exploit, imprison, toxify and repress us are posited as above those of ourselves, those for revolt.

We are kept on edge yet always distracted, close to breaking point, cowed and disempowered by disciplines or puffed up by divisions, mesmerised by the enforced idiocy of the spectacle in which even the drama of a dying world has been turned into a sort of reality TV series, portrayed as completely out of our hands.

The figureheads of economic growth and 'development' would have us turn a blind eye to misery that can't be portrayed in statistics. We have become determined to overturn their calculations. Our visions are of full unemployment, zero voter turnout, continual hi-tech breakdowns instead of breakthroughs, a rampant outbreak of the 'crime' named freedom; until we forget these categories and many more. People emerging from their different cages, forming face-to-face affinities to relearn the art of gifting not just competing, of respect for the more-than-human, of dignity and rebellion. A landscape wild with life again beaconing us to rejoin the dance, the blurring or dissolution of borders, genders, roles and prescriptions. Life without deadtime. And these nascent visions, however partial, are perpetually becoming armed. **The only question is where they will find breath next.**

Feel that breath, let it awaken in you.



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NOTHING NEW BENEATH THE SUN [Editorial]

“Out of this confusion will one day come formulations capable of firing point-blank on our enemies. In the meanwhile, let sentences remembered here or there have what effect they may.” – Raoul Vaneigem

We once read that the root of the word amateur is *amātor* (lover). What has reached your eyes here is for sure no more than the work of amateurs; but those in love with the wild forces which make our presence on this troubled Earth worth the pain, romantics in search of relationships and moments of rebellion or revitalisation. We can't pretend to be the most cutting-edge project in the world of anarchist thought or activity, rather, this is a fanzine in the classical sense of the term – **a collection of what moves and inspires us to continue the dialogue with others who share some of these minoritarian perspectives.** From the fountainhead of subversive literature we find time to encounter as it comes out, here we reserve some choice morsels for wider consumption (especially when they previously only appeared online to our knowledge).

We are an internationalist project. We find it important to arm ourselves with the divergent but informative experiences which those overseas have chosen to share (to the degree that they enable us to also analyse our local conditions or act in tandem), translated by accomplices and released into the world, while never forgetting regional specificities.

Resurrecting materials from our collective archive can serve as a nod to influences on the personal thinking behind this project, as well as an intergenerational lens we can evaluate the older texts by. **What's different in the conversation from then to now? What's the same? What can this tell us?**

We'd be naive to assume that our choice to print in paper form (though we always also make an online edition sooner or later) breaks us out of the increasing phenomenon of ghettoisation of marginal conversations via subculture or internet reliance. But we do think, from personal experience, that a print copy offers a different method of engagement for whoever does come across it. We have no idea where or who this reaches, given autonomous and usually unconnected comrades who do print runs. We can't expect quantifiable 'results' of what we release into the world but while for now we make no plans to revise the aesthetic and tone which enlivens us personally, we do aim for the diverse content gathered within to be explicable to readers without (too



much of) an assumed 'background' in these topics or circles.

With quite a few of the pieces within, we tried to explain via introductions why they were chosen. The text frames we've affixed amongst the articles are editorial decisions, not those of the original authors (unless written by an editor). Where we've included a listing of rebel acts along the lines of the question at hand, they weren't selected as the most spectacular or 'hard-hitting', but as a mixture of intensities, methods, ideas and stated desires.

The largest editorial contribution this time – 'Caught in the Net', on the neuroses of the digital age – will accompany this volume (and, eventually, its online edition) as a separate companion piece. If you didn't get it, email us at returnfire@riseup.net and we'll send a copy.

We'd like to take a moment to thank the German comrades who took on the task of translating our main work 'The Veil Drops' from our previous volume (apparently as well as the essay 'Smarter Prison?', by Radical Interference, which we released as the companion piece for that issue). Props also to the folk of the Fenrir publication, who rendered 'Sealife Deformities from BP's Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill' (from back in Return Fire vol.1) into both Italian and Castellano Spanish versions, and also extended the critique with a chronology of petro-chemical atrocities. Cheers to those who've transcribed and/or reposted parts of our own contributions to Return Fire (namely Rabble with their own editorial summary for 'The Veil Drops'; In the Belly of the Beast; The Acorn; Anarchist News; 325; and anyone we've missed out), and of course those who widen the print distribution in a self-organised way.

We'll soon be uploading more text from this and older volumes to join that by us already available to individually reproduce via the invaluable Anarchist Library archive, as well as copies of translations which we published for the first time in some cases. Previous volumes in their entirety can be downloaded in PDF form

from several sites; trying searching actforfree.nostate.net for "Return Fire" or email us directly at returnfire@riseup.net for download links, to submit material for future issues, or to communicate about the topics raised or other directions (or barriers) to an anarchistic life in the largely un-anarchistic worlds we inhabit today.

So, through this channel and project or another, we will continue reaching for those whose practices, wants, feelings and ideas resonate or inform the sense of self, pride and the impulse to walk along a similar path of struggle and confrontation, of desires and creation, that we treasure in the diverse anarchist project of joyously living despite everything we are born amongst. **It strengthens us to know of others treading this path, with all the ups and downs, contradictions and successes that come from rebellious decisions and wills.** We're thinking of those who join our random conversations and bear witness to one another's grievances in the more-or-less intimate spaces of our lives, those who we feel an insurgent closeness to despite being separated by many kilometres or the walls of the jails where they have fallen prisoner, or the encounters that surprise us most with those who have never considered themselves anarchist or such... We know that even here in the open prison atmosphere of the stifled British metropolis-isle, this nameless spirit lives on; although it often finds difficulty in expressing itself, we always keep an ear open for when it passes.

In a global moment where some prospects of insurrectionary ruptures seem tantalisingly immanent, yet elsewhere almost unimaginable, and where all the other aspects of a subversive practice (however necessary they still are) are threatened with disarming and commodification, we'll continue to use this journal to promote conflict and sabotage, raising a voice for the unknowable and wild things we want to honour and also realise.

For disruption of the industrial supply chain and the metropolitan system of normality.

For active negation of the rule of civilised law and moral authority.

For attack on the production centres of gender, human supremacy, nationalism.

For the ones in the same struggle on the street and interpersonally, or in the clink; also for the ones who came before us and those who will come after.

For our personal joy and liberation.

Always in defence of the Earth.

Insurrection, memory, freedom, life.

To all those whose hearts are beating faster...

R.F.



'WHETHER TO ACT OR MERELY DREAM'

The present social organisation is not just delaying, it is also preventing and corrupting any practice of freedom. The only way to learn what freedom is, is to experiment with it, and to do so you must have the necessary *time* and *space*.

The fundamental premise for free action is dialogue. Now, any authentic discourse requires two conditions: a real interest in the questions brought up to be discussed (the problem of content) and the free search for possible answers (the problem of method). These two conditions should occur *at the same time*, given that the content determines the method, and vice versa. One can only talk *of freedom in freedom*. What is the point of asking questions if we are not free to answer? What is the point of answering if the questions are always false? Dialogue only exists when individuals can talk to each other without mediation, i.e. when they relate reciprocally. If the discourse is one-way, no communication is possible. If someone has the power to impose the questions, the content of the latter will be directly functional to this (and the answers will contain subjection). **Subjects can only be asked questions whose answers confirm their role as such, and from which the bosses will draw the questions of the future. The slavery lies in continuing to reply.**

In this sense market research is identical to the elections. The sovereignty of the elector corresponds to the sovereignty of the consumer, and vice versa. TV passivity is called *audience*; the legitimization of the power of the State is called *sovereign people*. In either case individuals are simply hostages in a mechanism that gives them the *right* to speak after having deprived them of the *faculty* of doing so. What is the point of dialogue if all you can do is elect one or the other? What is communication if all your only choice is between identical goods and TV programmes? The content of the questions is meaningless because the method is false.

'Nothing resembles a representative of the bourgeoisie more than a representative of the proletariat,' Sorel wrote in 1907. What made them identical was the fact that they were, precisely, *representatives*. To say the same of a right or left wing candidate today would be banal. But politicians do not need to be original (advertising takes care of that), it is sufficient for them to know how to *administer* that banality. The irony is that the media are defined a means of *communication* and the voting spree is called *elections* (which in the true sense of the word means free, conscious decision).



The point is that power does not allow for any other kind of management. Even if the voters wanted it (which would already take us into full 'utopia', to imitate the language of the *realists*), nothing important could be asked of them from the moment that the only free act – the only authentic election – they could accomplish would be **not to vote**. Anyone who votes *wants* inconsequential questions, as authentic questions deny passivity and delegation.

[...] Take the example of the housing estate. What would happen if the inhabitants were able (once again, we would be in 'utopia') to express themselves concerning the organisation of their own lives (housing, streets, squares, etc.)? Let us say right away that such demands would *inevitably* be limited from the start, because housing estates are a consequence of the displacement and *concentration* of the population according to the needs of the economy and social control. Nevertheless, we could try to imagine some form of social organisation *other* than such ghettos. [...] **How, under the present social order, do you reconcile the inhabitants' desire to breathe with the interests of the bosses of the motor industry? Free circulation of individuals with the fears of the luxury boutique owners? Children's play areas with the cement of the car parks, banks and shopping centres? The empty houses left in the hands of the speculators? The blocks of flats that look like army barracks, that look like schools, that look like hospitals, that look like asylums?** To move one wall in this labyrinth of horrors would mean putting the whole scheme in question. The further we move away from a police-like view of the environment, the closer we get to clashing with the police.

How can you think freely in the shadow of a church? wrote an anonymous hand on the sacred wall of the Sorbonne during May '68^[1]. This impeccable question has wider implications. Anything that has been designed for economic or religious purposes cannot fail to impose anything but economic or religious desires.

A desecrated church continues to be the house of God. Commodities continue their chatter in an abandoned shopping centre. The parade ground of a disused barracks *still contains* the marching of the soldiers. That is what he who said that the destruction of the Bastille^[2] was **an act of applied social psychology** meant. The Bastille could never have been managed as anything other than a prison, because its walls would have continued to tell the tale of incarcerated bodies and desires.

Subservience, obligation and boredom espouse consumerism in endless funereal ceremonies. Work reproduces the social environment which reproduces the resignation to work. One enjoys evenings in front of the TV because one has spent the day in the office and the underground. Keeping quiet in the factory makes shouting in the stadium a promise of happiness. Feelings of inadequacy at school *vindicate* the insensate irresponsibility of a Saturday night at the club. Only eyes emerging from a McDonald's are capable of lighting up when they see a Club Med billboard. *Et cetera*.

You need to know how to experience freedom in order to be free. You need to free yourself in order to experience freedom. Within the present social order, time and space prevent experimentation of freedom because they suffocate the freedom to experiment.

[...] Only by upsetting the imperatives of time and social space will it be possible to imagine new relations and surroundings. The old philosopher said one can only desire on the basis of what one knows. Desires can only change if one changes the life that produces them. **Let's be clear about this: rebellion against the organisation of time and space by power is a material and psychological necessity.**

[...] Curiously, those who consider insurrection to be a tragic error (or an unrealistic romantic dream) talk a lot about social action and areas of freedom for experimentation. One only has to squeeze such arguments a little, however, for all the juice to come out of them. As we said, in order to act freely it is necessary to be able to talk to each other without mediation. And about what, how much, and where can one engage in dialogue at the present time?

[...] We forget we are all living in a ghetto, even if we don't pay rent and every day is a Sunday. If we are not capable of destroying this ghetto, the freedom to experiment will be a poor thing indeed.

Many libertarians believe that social change can and must come about gradually, without any sudden rupture. For this reason, they talk of 'areas free of the State' in which to elaborate new ideas and practices. Leaving aside the decidedly comical aspects of the question (*where* does the State not exist? *how* do you put it in parentheses?)... [t]o say that all the changes that are necessary could be done gradually merely confuses the issue.

Change cannot even begin to take place without widespread revolt. Insurrection is the *whole* of social relations opening up to the adventure of freedom once the mask of capitalist specialisation has been torn off. **Insurrection does not come up with the answers on its own, that is true. It only starts asking**

questions. So the point is not whether to act gradually or adventuristically. The point is whether to act or merely dream of acting.

[...] To act when everyone advises waiting, when it is not possible to count on great followings, when you do not know beforehand whether you will get results or not, means one is already affirming what one is fighting for: a society *without measure*. This, then, is how action in small groups of people with affinity contains the most important of qualities—it is not mere tactical contrivance, but already contains the realisation of one's goal. Liquidating the lie of the *transitional period* (dictatorship before



communism, power before freedom, wages before taking the lot, certainty of the results before taking action, requests for financing before expropriation, 'ethical banks' before anarchy, etc.) means making the revolt itself a different way of conceiving relations. Attacking the technological hydra right away means imagining a life without white-coated policemen (i.e. without the economic or scientific organisation that makes them necessary); attacking the instruments of domestication by the media now means creating relations that are free from *images* (i.e. free from the passivity that fabricates them). **Anyone who starts screaming that it is no longer – or not yet – time for rebellion, is revealing the kind of society they want in advance.**

programme) can only act on detail, emptying actions of the strength of putting forward questions that cannot be reduced to a separation into categories (students, workers, immigrants, homosexuals, etc.). All the more so as reformism is less and less capable of reforming anything (think of unemployment and the way it is falsely presented as a resolvable breakdown in economic rationality). Someone said that even the request for nontoxic food has become a revolutionary project, because any attempt to satisfy it would involve changing the whole of social relations. Any demand that is addressed to a precise interlocutor carries its own defeat within it, if for no other reason than that no authority would be capable of resolving a problem of general significance even if it wanted to. *To whom* does one turn to oppose air pollution?

“The problem with positive anarchist projects of self-organization is not simply that they propose an alternative to domination, but that they are often separated from a relationship of social conflict. A community garden can very easily be incorporated into the project of gentrification, but it is an altogether different project when it takes a conflictual approach to legality, property and civil society. The problem with anarchist proposals of direct democracy and social justice, isn't simply that these are alternatives, but that they are alternatives that try to make us legitimate to civil society. Our positive projects are vital in proposing and practicing a manner of living that breaks from the structures of domination, meeting our individual-collective needs and desires; driving wedges between the identity of the rebel who desires another life, and that of the productive white person or citizen who wants to make society more caring and fine-tuned. [I would propose] that we seek to spread subversive relationships of conflict at whatever level, for the personal joy we may get out of seeing domination lose its grip across every social terrain. It is also helpful to point out that like repression, recuperation can always be a consequence of our actions. These are the two favored responses that power has towards rebellion. Since the nihilists would not have us stop the attack for fear of repression, does it make any sense that we stop experimenting with any other self-organized activity, simply because power will always respond? [...] Anarchy requires strength, vision, knowledge and care as much as it does rage and destruction. It requires that we do not fall into the despair that so many others have. It requires that we practice social revolt in the face of social control. That we do not allow technology and the dumbing down of society to strain our relationships, and our capacity to dream.”

– *Resignation is Death*

The workers who, during a wildcat strike, carried a banner saying, '*We are not asking for anything*' understood that the defeat is in the claim itself ('the claim against the enemy is eternal'). There is no alternative but to **take everything**.

1. ed. – See *Return Fire vol.2* pg96

2. ed. – *The prison of Bastille Saint-Antoine, in Paris, was stormed by a crowd in search of gunpowder on July 14th 1789 in the French Revolution. Seven remaining prisoners were found and released (one of these, the notorious libertine Marquis de Sade, had stoked the link between the revolution and the Bastille, addressing the public from his walks on top of the towers and, once this was forbidden, shouting from the window of his cell) and the Bastille's governor, Bernard-René de Launay, was killed by the crowd. The Bastille was demolished, and souvenirs of the fortress were transported around France and displayed as icons of "the overthrow of despotism".*

AUTHORITIES FINALLY CONFIRM STINGRAY (IMSI) USE IN PRISON ISLAND – IN SCOTTISH PRISONS

The Scottish Prison Service [SPS] has confirmed that it used IMSI [International Mobile Subscriber Identity] catchers (aka "stingrays") at two prisons in Scotland. This is the first confession of official stingray use by UK authorities, though they are almost certainly being used elsewhere in the country as well.

The SPS are using both mobile and static stingray devices at HMP Shotts in Lanarkshire and HMP Glenochil near Alloa. The SPS spent more than £1.2 million spying on both prisons. **It appears that the SPS were trialing stingray tech at Shotts and Glenochil before potentially rolling it out to other prisons.**

While stingrays can be used to snoop on conversations or otherwise gather intelligence, it appears that in this case the SPS were using IMSI catchers to stamp out mobile phone use at the prisons (it's supposedly a crime to use a mobile phone in prison). **IMSI catchers work by tricking nearby mobile devices to connect to them, rather than an official base station.** The stingray can then be used to triangulate the user's location, or to simply block the connection [ed. – or record calls].

Somewhat amusingly, despite the rather expensive roll out, it seems the system wasn't all that effective at finding phones or blocking calls. *"Prisoners have developed innovative countermeasures to current*

arrangements[...]" The SPS recovered significantly fewer mobile phones at HMP Shotts in 2014 (282) than in 2013 (352). *"Some of this decline is due to the increased introduction of smartphones which use 3G technology, these 3G smartphones transmit on very low power levels and so are more difficult to accurately detect and locate."* Back in 2010, when the prisoner phones only used 2G, 1417 handsets were tracked down at Shotts alone.

The report notes that the SPS wanted to use stingray tech at HMP Edinburgh, but it lost out to the rural prisons for two reasons. First, the UK's mobile carriers had already started rolling out 4G in Edinburgh. Second, if they had used IMSI catchers at HMP Edinburgh, which is within Edinburgh's urban area, there would've been a "high risk" of interfering with mobile users outside the prison.

There have been various reports of stingray use by the UK authorities as far back as 2011, but this is the first time that it's ever been confirmed. **Last year, the mainstream media reported that it had found widespread use of IMSI catchers across London, after fake mobile masts where discovered. Over in the USA apart the usual monitoring of criminal/terrorist elements, it is now becoming common for major protests to be spied upon in case of an outbreak of disorder.**

Obviously the fear of uprisings such as those which occurred around the UK in 2011 [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg61**] & in Baltimore^[1] & Ferguson [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg76**] in the US are on both governments minds. The state might try justify the use of IMSI to tackle crime or terrorism but increasingly this technology can be used to quell disorder [ed. – and has been noted so far at demonstrations in Germany and Turkey as well, including a body-worn type for agents walking amongst the crowd]. What is also apparent from the information gathered by the media is that the technology can be used not only to track but to listen into phone calls, not just of the specific targets but also the general population in the vicinity, as can be seen when HMP Edinburgh was rejected for Stingray tests.

Surveillance technology is vastly increasing around prison island, it does not shock us that they would be tested in actual prisons first, the most concentrated form of oppression, the testing ground for many forms of control through out society. The prison system was the first place to test the idea of unpaid work, then it was rolled out into society for jobseekers. New glass apartment blocks resemble more a prison complex with security doors and CCTV in every corner, the difference is that the gullible upstanding citizens imprison themselves. It will not be long before IMSI becomes a norm just as much as CCTV did, further limiting the possibility of dissent in this corner of the world.

What is clear is that there needs to be a backlash against the prison society, that it can never be reformed and will involve a complete eradication of the technology that makes it possible. The ultimate culprits are those companies that make it possible.

In the mean time, attack the prison society at its sources and maintain a vigilante security culture with phones. The police state is tracking & listening, let's claw out their eyes & cut off their ears!

1. ed. – Multi-day April 2015 rioting and looting with many vehicles burned and cops injured in the U.S. state of Maryland after police killing of black youth Freddie Gray, provoking state-of-emergency powers in the city and deployment of the National Guard.

How a 'Stingray' Cellphone-Tracking Device Works

Law-enforcement officials are quietly using gadgets referred to generically as 'stingrays' to locate cellphones as part of investigative work.



1. Often the device is used in a vehicle along with a computer with mapping software.



2. The stingray system, which mimics a cellphone tower, gets the target phone to connect to it.



3. Once the cellphone is detected by the stingray, the phone's signal strength is measured.



4. The vehicle can then move to another location and again measure the phone's signal strength.



5. By collecting signal strength in several locations, the system can triangulate and map a phone's location.

PANOPTICONS THEN & NOW

[ed. – One of two essays on surveillance released simultaneously by the Institute for the Study of Insurgent Warfare, an anarchist thinktank, along with their introductory text.]

SURVEILLANCE // PANOPTICON // SECURITY CULTURE // PARANOIA

“Why hammer out concepts – be it speculative, critical, or pragmatist – if there is a meta-authority overseeing it all? Why conspire in the light? [...] We need to develop dissident knowledge of how to bring down drones, detect sensors, hack servers, distort GPS signals, and disrupt Google by fooling its algorithms. Forget the next innovation cycle. If the common hacker’s paranoia informs us correctly, we lost the war years ago and are surrounded. Soon we will be called to surrender, one by one.”

– Geert Lovink “Hermes on the Hudson: Notes on Media Theory after Snowden”.
e-flux.com/journal, April 4, 2014.

A culture of security is one which enhances an organization’s capacity to determine its interests and act on them in spite of another organization’s opposed interests. Corporate workforces and law enforcement agencies both cultivate cultures of security, as do management teams, investment rings, smugglers, unions, militia men, and academic researchers. All of these cultures are supposed to control flows of information (trade secrets, exclusive suppliers, price indexes, strategic plans, etc.) and restrict communication in furtherance of an organization’s interests.

Among dissident circles, the term Security Culture has been popularized as a response to the absence of organization and shared organizational interests. Security Culture carries a few hard and fast rules (don’t talk to cops, need-to-know basis, interrupt gossip, etc.) which have established a rough outline of best practices when daily life and sensitive operations overlap or are indistinguishable.

Best practices are fundamental to the Insurgent, who frequently operates without clear structures of command and communication, enjoys limited operational awareness, and can hardly imagine an everyday life divorced from sensitive operations. The Insurgent, however, should not be confused with a dissident or “common hacker,” as Lovink puts it, and the conflation of Security Culture with Operations Security carries heavy tolls.

Before it has a chance to protect our shared interests, Security Culture without organizational imperatives invites paranoid speculation into our attempts to determine what shared interests we might act upon. Without shared interests to balance security protocols we lose doubly, once for refusing to trust one another and ourselves enough to build power, and again for failing to connect with our comrades who lose patience with our dedication to self-policing and exclusivity.

From the Insurgent’s perspective, policing limits possibility, and possibility is a condition to be exploited and multiplied.

A common hacker is familiar with the State’s unscrupulous pursuit of persons who register on their threat spectrum, but hasn’t learned enough about the State, capital, or policing to glean how that spectrum might be composed.

A “common hacker” is also familiar with an illimitable list of methods for gathering information in the digital age. The list is illimitable (instead of just long) because known unknowns breed unknown unknowns. Assuming that such an unlistable list is in the possession of a meta-authority, and distributed to just the right hands at just the right times to prevent an eco-warrior from spiking a tree is a paranoid and debilitating procession of thought.

A “common hacker” has noticed that American people discover another egregious violation of their civil liberties and rights to privacy every few years. A common hacker assumes that this is evidence of a meta-authority orchestrating a grand coup or seizure, but an insurgent understands that managing crisis and maintaining business as usual are the only organizational imperatives shared between every federal agency and every corporate interest in the first world.

From a common hacker’s perspective the end is nigh, from the insurgent’s, it is ongoing.

It is closer to the ISIW’s business to hammer on concepts than to hammer them out. Not so much to shape or refine them, but to see what they’re made of.

We propose that the umbrella category of Surveillance, while of great concern to issue-based electoral debates, has little to offer our understanding of Insurgency. It’s a test to see the forest for the trees, but effective policing does not follow from increased surveillance, nor does frightening our friends into placidity make us safer, stronger, or smarter than we were ten years ago.

We understand most flavors of Anarchist and many political dissidents would like to contribute to decentralized resistance to policing, but every headline and announcement with regard to State and corporate surveillance, every leak, every stuttering admission, every investigative report, every sting, every declined opportunity to comment... too often these messages reinforce the common hackers’ paranoid conception of the State (or whatever) as an omniscient and cohesive entity, one for which every badge, snitch and suit is directly employed. **Security Culture could be a clever precondition for minimizing risk while building decentralized resistance to policing, broadly, but it manifests more often as a herd mentality, offering its most vulnerable constituents as sacrifice while the herd reproduces itself.**

The Paranoid’s shadowy network, the telos of the global Panopticon (a solitary warden who controls an entire prison) has an analog under CCTV. It is characterized as the omniscient and personified puppet master who is so often invoked in dissident circles. The growing reception of onlookers – Facebook laborers and survivalists alike – have assigned some marketable celebrity to the act of pointing cameras at rifles, trying to get a better close-up. *Look how shiny, their boots.*

Our inquiry must favor concepts which invite indiscernibility, opacity, camouflage, and noise in order to assess the State’s logistical capacity to stifle dissent, and the Insurgent’s opportunities to further attack those capabilities. The following [addresses] dragnet data capture, information gathering, intelligence gathering, and the deterrent effects of associating contemporary surveillance techniques with the edifice of the Panopticon.

These concepts are broken and reassembled within conceptual categories more useful to the Insurgent.

Please note that the following pieces do not address communications forensics, targeted intelligence operations, or profiling, among other considerations commonly associated with Surveillance. We eagerly await your contribution on those topics.



In his essay *Hope in Common* David Graeber describes the system of social control under capitalism as a “a vast bureaucratic apparatus for the creation and maintenance of hopelessness, a kind of giant machine that is designed, first and foremost, to destroy any sense of possible alternative futures.” In their quest the machine’s operators are aided by the hopeless themselves, for one simple reason. Being proven wrong is irritating in general, but in the question of hope it would be utterly devastating. What if hope turns out to exist after all, after one had given up on it forever? How miserable would you feel if after abandoning your most cherished dream, you discovered years later it had been within your grasp all along, if you had only had the courage to reach for it? Desperate to avoid such a fate, legions of amateur doom sayers labor tirelessly to convince the rest of us that all revolution is bound to fail and we might as well give up now. Their patron saint is Henry David Thoreau, who in his celebrated work *On Civil Disobedience* made a cogent and brilliantly composed argument for the abolition of government – only to dismiss the idea with a breezy “*But that’s never gonna happen, so let’s just do random minor things the government doesn’t like and hope they don’t shoot us.*”

Thoreau's intellectual descendants continue his quest today. Some among them like to point to the massive firepower wielded by the US military as proof that no "alternative future" could ever come to pass. More sophisticated pessimists, perhaps aware that seemingly invincible armies have succumbed to revolution many times throughout history, prefer to focus on the psychological and propaganda weapons of today's ruling class. **In any screed from this latter group one will more likely than not run across Jeremy Bentham's infamous^[1] Panopticon.** This was a prison design in which many inmates could supposedly be controlled by a single guard because, due to the layout of the building, the prisoners could not tell when they were being watched, and would therefore have to assume that they were always under observation^[2]. Multiple jeremiahs would have us believe that the current infestation of surveillance cameras, databases, smartphones, and NSA monitoring constitute an impassable barrier to uprising through the imposition of Panopticonesque uncertainty on the entire population. The original Panopticon was a complete failure as a prison (a fact the Jeremiahs seldom mention). Yet Bentham's invention still contrives to carry on his mission in a way he could never have imagined, by providing rhetorical ammunition to pretentious armchair theoreticians endeavoring to persuade us that resistance really is futile.

Unfortunately for the theoreticians (not to mention the nation's retailers), most shoplifters have never read Tiquun [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.3 pg58*]. Untroubled by half-baked quasi-philosophical jargon-mongering, these folks manage to pull about \$13 billion worth of merch a year, in the US alone, out from under the mall surveillance cameras that are supposed to leave them paralyzed with doubt. **This is in spite of warning signage, uniformed guards, and public displays of live surveillance footage – all intended to reinforce the message of deterrence. We should not be surprised that none**



STEAL YOUR LIFE

of this works very well. Any loss prevention professional will tell you that the cameras are mostly useful only for preserving evidence in those rare cases when someone gets caught, not for preventing attempts. **The Panopticon relied not only on the lone watchman, but on close confinement of the prisoners to isolate individuals and ensure that anyone not being watched at a particular moment didn't cause trouble.** Absent these strict conditions, the rough equivalent of today's supermax prisons, the Panopticon effect crumbles rapidly. Were Bentham's inmates allowed to congregate in common areas, or even housed two per cell so that one could screen the other from view, his system would break down, while if they were locked alone in their cells 24/7 the Panopticon would be unnecessary. After all, it would hardly matter whether the prisoners were being watched if they couldn't escape no matter what they did.

Out here in minimum security the Panopticon's deficiencies multiply exponentially. The requirements of selling mass surveillance mean that much of it is voluntary. If the government tried to force everyone to carry a monitoring device with them at all times that reported their location and most of their conversations to a central authority, the outcry would be deafening, no one would comply. The only way to pull it off is to throw in Candy Crush, charge 100 bucks a month, and wait for the suckers to roll in. But iPhones can be left at home, cameras can be smashed, communications can be encrypted, Facebook accounts can be closed. Even a relatively small minority who see through the authorities' bluff can make life very difficult for them.

Worse, in any attempt to institute a real-life Panopticon uncertainty works both ways. The prisoners may never know when they're being watched, but neither can the guards ever be certain what the prisoners are getting up to in their unobserved moments. The natural response is to monitor as much activity as possible at all times. In the digital age this urge manifests itself in the massive data harvesting programs carried out by the NSA and other intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Sadly for them however, while capturing and storing data is easy, **data by itself is not information.** The NSA's enormous capability to intercept data has not been matched by any corresponding ability to analyze it, much less to act on whatever information is extracted. Data mining has shown some promise in keeping track of known suspects, but has been nearly useless at uncovering new ones. The forces of order are therefore left to wrestle with unmanageable masses of data on people who are little threat to them, while those harboring nefarious intent can slip

“[Born of] paranoia about surveillance apparatuses like the NSA's, which seems to have unfortunately gotten worse since the Snowden leaks [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.3 pg48*], the idea that the state is all seeing, completely functional in all space and invincible strategically has begun take root, and has generated a passive sort of waiting. [T]his idea of the all powerful state tends to concentrate around the concept of panoptic power, the ability of the state to see all action in all moments. But, this understanding of the Panopticon is fundamentally misinformed, relying on the notion that the concept of the Panopticon can be equated to actual surveillance, and that this forms the basis of mass surveillance initiatives such as bulk metadata collection by the NSA. [...] It is fundamentally important to differentiate panoptic deterrence from actual intelligence gathering, which not only attempts to remain secret, but also attempts to *weaponize information operationally*. When we are speaking about actual intelligence gathering, entrapment operations, undercover work, signals intelligence and so on there is a very different goal in mind, the gathering and use of information through the maintenance of a certain clandestinity, through the ability to monitor without being detected, and this is what we are seeing currently from organizations like the NSA. For example, the purpose of the geolocation of cellular phone SIM cards is not to allow the one being monitored to know that they are being watched, at which point countermeasures can be introduced. Rather the point is to actually gather location data and use it within a structure of increasingly fluid, small force footprint counter terrorism operations, and this necessitates the actual gathering of intelligence to go undetected. In this sense, deterrence becomes a hindrance to the attempt to gather and weaponize information, generating a focus on countermeasures among targets, rather than maintaining clandestinity and operational secrecy. [...] As such, we cannot analyze the scope of state force capacity merely through the lens of information gathering, but have to analyze it on the basis of information becoming weaponized, or processed and made into the basis of actual material operations. When we add in this plane of analysis the picture of state force capacity changes dramatically.”

– *Some Thoughts on the Limits of Surveillance*



beneath the radar merely by taking some basic precautions.

Interestingly enough, the history of the Panopticon actually does reveal a useful lesson for insurgents, one which has predictably been lost on the jargon-mongers. Bentham pitched the idea as a money saver, a way to replace a large workforce of guards with a single volunteer (yes, really!) warden. While the English government ultimately turned him down, modern capitalists have not all shown the same good judgement. Despite that \$13 billion, some retail chains have reportedly been cutting back on loss prevention personnel and relying more on technology in a misguided attempt to reduce expenses. A similar tendency has cropped up in municipal budgets, which have been slashed in many cities to the point that even police departments are coming under the ax. Federal grants for surveillance systems are available to local police, and surplus military equipment can be obtained from the Defense Department, but funding for basic policing functions, such as officer salaries and patrol cars, is scarce.

The poster child for this trend is Oakland, [California,] where the municipal government is developing a network of high resolution surveillance cameras, combined with various tracking tools such as license plate recognition, aimed at suppressing mass protests. Christened the Domain Awareness Center [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg66*], the project is drawing loud squawks from civil libertarians and progressives. Few seem to recall that the city cut its police force to 696 officers the week after the Oscar Grant verdict^[9] came down, losing much of their capacity to respond to anything seen in the footage. The department has since declined to 624 officers, a 20 percent reduction from mid-2010. **That's not their only problem, either.** A recent survey of OPD rank and file cops reveals severe deficiencies in operational logistical capacity, including broken radios, deteriorating patrol cars, and police stations so dilapidated one officer referred to them as "Section 8 housing." Department morale has been eroded by infighting, mandatory overtime, and the withering contempt in which many Oakland residents hold cops, among other factors. Officers are quitting almost as fast as they are recruited, exacerbating the personnel shortage. Oakland's police would be a lot more dangerous if the \$12 million being spent annually on the DAC had gone toward addressing these problems, instead of generating countless hours of video

footage that no one will have time to view or analyze.

And finally, leading the charge into this technological quagmire we find the Pentagon, who have been putting "toys before boys" for years now, with disastrous (for them) results. Decades of increasing expenditure on fancy weapons systems while cutting back on readiness and personnel have produced a military that has in the last 60 years proven incapable of successfully occupying any country more formidable than Panama.

The true takeaway from the Panopticon then, is that it doesn't work, that clever schemes and high tech gadgets can never effectively replace boots on the ground. **The former East Germany, where nearly a sixth of the population had been coerced into informing for the Stasi, gives us an example of a genuinely effective use of uncertainty in social control.** Rebellion was nearly impossible, not because one might be recorded on video, but because there was no way to find comrades who could be counted on not to snitch.

The Stasi had an advantage, though. They didn't have to deal with computers. Relying on paper files right up to the day the Berlin Wall came down, their data overload problems never became too unmanageable, their sense of possibilities constrained more or less within the bounds of feasibility. Today Moore's Law^[4] and multi-billion dollar black budgets combine to appeal irresistibly to the most treacherous of authoritarian instincts – the pipe dream of complete control, no uncertainty required, all transgressions seen and punished. Attempting this by recruiting more guards for one's Panopticon only reproduces the original problem at a higher organizational level, as Edward Snowden [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg48*] demonstrated so graphically. **But what if you could find guards who never took bathroom breaks, never slept, never decamped to Hong Kong with 58,000 of your most sensitive operational documents? The**

problem with people is getting them to do exactly what you want and nothing else. Computers, or at least computer salesmen, promise to do away with this annoyance forever.

They can't of course, not really. Any programmer can testify that all programs have bugs, that getting a computer to do precisely what it's supposed to and no more is functionally impossible for any non-trivial task. Cops presented with an opportunity to fulfil their deepest held control fantasies tend to overlook this little inconvenience, which is why they keep spending money on things like facial recognition software. Facial recognition made its public debut at the 2001 Super Bowl in Tampa to the usual chorus of dire warnings by privacy advocates. They needn't have worried – at the time it didn't work well enough to threaten anybody's privacy. But that didn't stop the Tampa police from adopting it that summer to surveil Tampa's Ybor City district, although they abandoned the project after only a few months. It's easy to guess how they were taken in. Some stories are too good to check, and the ability to do instantaneous automatic mug shot look-ups on anybody who turns up in their surveillance footage is near the top of any cop's Christmas list.

Facial recognition doesn't work a lot better now than it did in 2001, even though its adoption has mushroomed. A 2013 article from Ars Technica explains that far from the process being automatic, most images have to be hand tweaked before matching is attempted. Differences in camera angle, lighting, makeup, facial hair, glasses, and other variables also reduce accuracy. The technology is effective in situations like preventing drivers license fraud, where the photographs in the database were taken under the same conditions as the picture to be matched. However, facial recognition in high-profile criminal cases is still mostly done the old fashioned way, by publishing photographs of suspects and waiting for someone to recognize them and rat them out. Both digital and human approaches are far too labor intensive to be useful in large scale tracking efforts



(although masking up thoroughly is still highly advisable in certain situations).

Comparatively few radical analysts bother to investigate these sorts of technological underpinnings, even when they're writing about technology. A case in point, Naomi Klein, whose otherwise informative 2008 article for Rolling Stone decrying the rise of state surveillance in China included what amounted to an advertisement for the capabilities of the facial recognition software sold by L-1 Identity Solutions, a US vendor of security technology. Klein's main source on this subject was a salesman named Yao Ruoguang, whose company was peddling L-1's software in China at the time. Yao trotted out what was probably the standard demo he showed prospective customers – taking his own picture with a laptop camera and comparing it to a database of a claimed 600,000 images. Supposedly the search returned several correct matches in about a millisecond. Klein took Yao at his word, even though such a test could easily be faked, and Yao had every incentive to do so. Even if the demo was otherwise legitimate, the conditions under which the sample picture was taken – good light, a closeup frontal shot, and presumably no facial adornment – were far more favorable than those typically found in the field. Klein apparently never asked about any of this. She also accepted Yao's implicit claim that the only technological obstacle in the way of widespread use of facial recognition in China was the low resolution of existing surveillance cameras. As we can see from the Ars article linked above, this is hardly the case. At this point it seems relevant to mention that Yao's company also manufactured *high* resolution surveillance cameras. It is not known how much his sales increased as a result of Klein's article.

Klein's error is representative of more than just technological cluelessness and inexperience of industrial salespeople (which could have easily been cleared up with an email to a digital rights group such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation). **Like too many other critics, she rejects the police state's claims of motive, but swallows whole their claims of capability. Countless essays and articles describe various aspects of state repression, but present them, a la Klein, as inescapable *faits accomplis*. Analysis of strengths and weaknesses with an eye toward resistance is comparatively rare. Perhaps the authors fear that any admission that the state is vulnerable would imply a responsibility to attack it?**

In any case, cops and critics alike agree that the state's efforts to maintain and extend their control of society are, if not perfect, at least logical and purposeful, that

repression is targeted at those who pose the greatest threat, that if you have nothing to hide you have, perhaps not nothing, but at least very little to worry about. It's a highly suspect assumption. Jeremy Scahill and Glen Greenwald's report *Death by Metadata* reveals that US drone strikes in Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen and are mostly targeted using phone metadata obtained by the NSA, with very little human intelligence (of either sort) involved. The result is pretty much what one would expect. "Real terrorists" who know they're targets change phones and SIM cards regularly to avoid detection, while victims of strikes often include random bystanders and uninvolved users of the same phone. This situation will only get worse for the NSA as word of Scahill and Greenwald's report spreads and more people start taking appropriate precautions.

One's chances of not being killed by a Hellfire missile in Yemen would therefore seem to depend about as much on luck and knowledge of cell phone security as on abstinence from anti-US activity. This is unlikely to be the result of a deliberate strategic choice. The fundamental dilemma of any counter terrorism operation is eliminating existing enemies without creating more new ones, and indiscriminate killing of random civilians fails on both counts. Yet Scahill and Greenwald make it clear that accuracy is not a major consideration when targeting, that the main focus is on "feeding the beast", i.e. keeping the drone operation running at full capacity. It is telling that reviews for civilian deaths occur only *after* strikes occur, not during the planning stages. US drone tactics thus appear to derive more from bureaucratic inertia, extreme resistance to admitting error, and an abiding fascination with the idea of soldier-free warfare than from any deliberate plan. These afflictions are far from unique to the NSA.

The NSA's drone difficulties highlight another aspect of mass surveillance seldom noticed by radicals – the difference between a Panopticon and a failed intelligence operation. It is axiomatic that the value of any intelligence source plummets once the adversary finds out about it. British intelligence in World War II went to great lengths to keep the Germans from realizing that the Enigma code [ed. – used by the Nazis for communications transmission] had been cracked, even refusing to share decrypted messages with the Soviet Union lest the Russians' own leaky codes expose the secret. The problem is compounded when the "adversary" is the population of an ostensibly democratic country, since discovery means not only loss of effectiveness but loss of face as well. Unlike Walmart, the NSA has no interest in publicizing their surveillance efforts. Their



Against the world of control and surveillance
LET'S BE WILD

aim, however clumsily pursued, is to discover useful information without being detected, not to deter resistance by projecting the illusion of omniscience. **Yet Snowden's revelations have apparently led many to conclude that NSA surveillance is inescapable, instead of examining them in detail for ways to defeat it.**

We can also see parallels between mass data collection and drone strikes. Both projects are carried on because they're technically doable, and appeal strongly to the authoritarian mindset, not because they work particularly well for their ostensible purposes. In both cases public exposure alone threatens to cancel out any minor benefit generated. In both cases

"I would like to dwell on another aspect that seems to be an obstacle to our action: the analysis of the effects and transformations of dominion. Far too often it seems that this analysis is useless and doesn't give us the ability to affect reality; on the contrary it feeds fear and sense of impotence in the face of the magnitude of the challenge and the monstrosity of the harmfulness to be opposed. [...] I'm not saying that we don't need analyses but that they don't have to become an end in themselves, exercises of intellectual skill detached from direct action. What's the use of publishing endless lists of companies responsible for the destruction of nature if nobody attacks them? [...] In spite of everything we are not helpless. Bare instruments of analysis, direct action and the determination of the few can demonstrate that we are not all resigned to accept passively and at the same time they show to the other exploited that it is still possible to fight back."

– *The Urgency of the Attack*

government agencies are trying to accomplish a Herculean task with laughably inadequate resources. "Eliminating all enemies of the US in three separate countries one explosion at a time" vies with "establishing a real-life Department of Precrime" for the title of most ridiculous government boondoggle ever.

There is good reason to believe then, that the security establishment's surveillance and monitoring plan, to the extent they even have one, not only isn't working, but can't work. If they are running a Panopticon it's only a byproduct of the impossibility of their true goals, and therefore far less effective than it might be. **It's not difficult to peek behind the curtain to see the flaws in its inner workings and tailor one's tactics accordingly. That few of us do so is more of a testament to the enormous weight of propaganda and indoctrination imposed by the media and school system than to any actual invulnerability of the surveillance state.** When supposedly radical analysts take the propaganda at face value and repeat it the impact is doubled. After all, if one's friends and one's enemies are both telling the same story it must be true, right? *Not necessarily.* The first step in fighting the hopelessness machine is not believing everything it tells you. Or failing that, at least not repeating it...

1. *Infamous literarily, that is – no actual Panopticon was ever built. [ed. – Bentham, a utilitarian philosopher writing in the late 1700s, based his panopticon ideas on his brother's ideal regime in Russia; where he was running the first factories in its early industrialisation. Prison wings based on the Panopticon design do indeed exist today, but only long after Bentham's death.]*

2. *ed. – From the start, Bentham suggested the panoptic model be deployed in non-prison institutes also, as follows: "No matter how different, or even opposite the purpose: whether it be that of punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, instructing the willing in any branch of industry, or training the rising race in the path of education: in a word, whether it be applied to the purposes of perpetual prisons in the room of death, or prisons for confinement before trial, or penitentiary houses, or houses of correction, or work-houses, or manufactories, or mad-houses, or hospitals, or schools" (Panopticon Letter I).*

3. *ed. – Oscar Grant III was shot dead by a transit cop in Oakland, U.S.A., 2009, sparking a few nights of rioting and looting. Over a year later, the cop was absolved of murder (declared guilty instead of involuntary manslaughter). As predicted, more disorder followed the ruling.*

4. *ed. – Moore's Law is the observation that the number of transistors in a dense integrated circuit doubles approximately every two years.*

'EDUCATION CENTRES' PLUNDERED & VANDALISED, SANTIAGO

[ed. – From the capital of Chile, anarchists taking responsibility for participating in various moments of occupation and looting early this year during the long-running student struggles in that country, which have frequent anarchist participation with a discourse critical of the education complex at base and the societies which need it; see **Return Fire vol.2 pg30**. Our one point of contention with these authors would be on their identification of their actions as "political exercises", against "promoters of inequality, morality and power" etc.; we think equality is a democratic imposition of 'rights' (necessarily implying a universal 'authority'), itself a morality, and politics is the art of deceptions and representation. We find our stance on such robberies as closer to the author of 'Nomadic Insurgence', who asserts that "[t]he insurgent outlaw is amoral – he rejects law in all its forms, because it restricts her life and limits his possibilities. An insurgent outlaw may destroy a stolen item, sell it on the black market, keep it or share it among friends – as it pleases her. He may rob a bank and use the money for a project, squander it on friends, take a trip or burn it. [...] The insurgent outlaw is consciously trying to increase her power of self-creation..." With that minor quibble aside, we salute those keeping up an ungovernable presence within the student struggles and beyond.]

We are part of what the press call 'vandalism', we are part of what citizens call delinquency, we are the individuals who tend to break the murderous routine with small actions – individuals for whom self-compassion and mercy have given

way to tangible reality, a reality that shows its worst face in everyday life; a life that is crying out for destruction so as to give space to the overwhelming impetus of autonomy and total freedom.

In a context of struggle, plunder and destruction become essential for insurgents, rebels and anyone who is against the system; undoubtedly its spontaneous and organized practice will always be there. As secondary school, technical and university students are begging the State for improvements in education, the minorities that long for sedition continue to annoy the authorities and to foment widespread disorder^[1].



A historic bust of the crucified Jesus is seized by masked fighters while sacking Santiago's Gratiud Nacional cathedral during student demonstrations, and destroyed in the street, 08.08.16

"[Occupation is useful] not because of the facilities it procures for us but for the faculties it builds in us: the capacity to take over space, and within that space to destroy and create as we see fit, which means to self-organize, and to attack and erode control. All the better that occupation should be temporary, then, because knowing that we cannot, in the short-term, win any material prize, we may be all the more cruel with the infrastructure we take hostage. What we win we take with us, and can use again wherever we go: what we win is the capacity to occupy. This is another way of saying that we must be the first real Vandals, the first real barbarians, the first real horde. Because the truth of the matter is, thus far, everyone who has sacked Rome has been seduced by it. The pacifists would misquote Nietzsche [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg52**] and suggest that to fight a monster is to become it, but they have simply been seduced by the democratic myth of dialogue, and they don't realize that they are already monsters. So too were the barbarians already Romans. Those who marched through the marbled gates were not savages still green from the forest, rebelling viscerally against civilization. In fact they had already served in the legions, and were now turning on the aging Empire in order to cut it up for themselves. [...] Therefore, to sack Rome, we must do so as a horde, and never as an army, in every way possible. We must smash the fortifications without planning how they might be repaired, should we ever need to close them again behind us; we must walk naked before the clothed, without feeling shame; we must talk loudly among the educated, to teach them our words; we must burn their holy books without the least awe or ceremony; we must open the prisons, walk through them until we are sure they don't contain a soul. We must burn the libraries and museums, but let the curious and romantic among us first take out any treasure they want, to fill the streets and homes with, for we have no plans and no prohibitions.

[...] The question is how, then, to become a horde?"

– Here... at the Center of the World in Revolt

Without thinking twice we take advantage of certain situations in which we've been targeting for a while – at different times and contexts – the 'education centres' in Santiago of Chile, we plundered them, destroyed them and occupied them in order to spread the seed of anarchy in many ways; we took advantage of this for individual purposes and also – and mainly – for political anti-authoritarian projects. **There was no exception this year, we plundered electrical appliances and various equipment which will help us in future political actions.** We stole them from the promoters of inequality, morality and power^[2]. For our part we're satisfied, even if we will aim higher and higher, there are plenty of places.

Plunder and destruction are political exercises that make us smile in complicity with our affinity ones as we put them into action against the target chosen during the organization of an action. Routine is being broken up, we leave no space to authority's lovers or those who play politics and go to the police and protect the property of others who ruin their lives with huge debts.

It's time we became faster, we expect nothing nor do we have anything to expect from education and its puppets (comrades, leaders, directors, politicians); we negotiate nothing nor do we have anything to negotiate with the State/Capital; we need to start acting towards the exacerbation of the conflict with power so as to see it being destroyed in front of our eyes.



During one march, anarchists fire upon police with high-range pyrotechnics, linking their struggle to the "war without truce on any form of authority, whether speciesism, patriarchy, the academic monopoly of knowledge, the state, the destruction of nature, the family structure..." etc., 21.04.16

In memory of anarchist-nihilist comrade Sebastián Oversluij Seguel, who together with unknown persons emptied a room of a great many computers and electrical appliances for political purposes in the Juan Gómez Millas campus, Universidad de Chile, on 19th November 2010.

Without any doubt such an inspiring story calls us to dedicate our raids and

destructive gestures to *Pelao Angry* [ed. – as *Sebastián was known*], who fell in an expropriation action in Pudahuel on 11/12/2013 [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg26*].

SEBASTIÁN O SEGUEL ILLEGAL GANG

WINTER, JULY – \$HILE 2016

'TO BUILD, WE MUST DESTROY...'

[ed. – A selection from an anarchist text released after combative Chilean student demonstrations, by Individualist Cell 'Birds of Fire']

There they were, the voracious youth again, destroying everything, erecting barricades, clashing with police, nothing could stop them... There is fire and passion in their hearts, love and hatred on their insides, courage and decision. The beauty of chaos has returned to grace the streets, it is not only fire that adorns the asphalt, it is also the energy of the youth, the abolition of the sexes, everyone in the struggle... Will this struggle bear fruit? To want to study just to be someone in life? The individual who goes searching for real happiness, does not stop at so little, she [sic] knows that she can educate herself, and although that path is longer, that doesn't make it less interesting, because everything else is interminable...

[...] Chilean society is convulsing, it knows there's a conflict and doesn't know how it will end, there are students wounded, two dead and a few in jail, there are others on hunger strike. The tension increases, it's visible in the streets every time there's a day of action and protest, the confrontations between pacifist and violent protestors keep on increasing, so much that they have struck and snatched the masks off of some *encapuchadxs* [ed. – hooded fighters]. Careful, citizens[...]

To raze the school is possible today, as was done in the *colegio* Guillermo Cruz de Estación Central, [and] in the *colegio* Gabriel Gonzales Videla [ed. – scene to rioting and arsons during a tense 2011] [...] those places intentionally lit ablaze by those beautiful *pajarillas* ['little birds'] who understand that this destruction is a great step towards the conquest of life...

The journey is intense and difficult, it always has been, when individuals fed up with their miserable conditions organize and attack. One cannot be afraid of those who organize only for one specific goal although it is only to destroy, because at this point we know that to build, we must destroy... And all the reasoning these petty politicians supposedly have when they talk about the problem of education, does nothing for anyone, because the bureaucrats and businessmen almost always end up winning. And they believe that to repress passion is a simple thing, that with a little tear gas and a little water [ed. – from police water cannons] they will snuff it out, like any other flame,

1. We've been appreciating disorder, plunder and destruction during students' demonstrations since 2006, with continuity in autumn 2008 and a decrease in intensity in 2011, which has lasted to this day with variable presence and strength. Throughout all these years, unquestionably, with an anarchist/anti-authoritarian fighting presence that left no one indifferent.

2. *Municipio de Santiago*: the damage amounts to over 1,300 million [of Chilean pesos].

so they will have to be reminded that they are wrong, again and again, those idiots. The night always illuminates our steps, just like free love allows us unlimited bliss, to find us with the beautiful silence of obscurity, or at the feet of the fresh rays of the rising sun[...] running into the heat of a barricade, it's magic, like something supreme, or can only god be supreme? We burn the churches with their pedophile priests inside, we watch those cowardly abusers from the front to spit in their faces... Another day comes, but this is one of the beautiful ones, because we will combine the sun that caresses us with its heat with an emancipatory fire full of joy and hope...

[...] Today it is time to kill the cops in our heads, and this, to be sure, is a great battle. It's much easier to throw a rock at an armoured truck [ed. -- commonly deployed in Chile against demonstrators such as the students] and believe that, from this act, liberty closely follows. It's much easier to spend hours and hours talking about revolution and organization. It's much easier to believe that going to a free university will change the world. Students, don't be fooled, remember that those who control the world also attended the university, and to their disgrace, some studied for free. And what did they become? Heartless beings capable of torture in their jails and murder for a few cents, and what do you say now? That you'll be different? This remains to be seen...

[...] The revolt is here, we must increase our participation, our generous egoism [ed. -- see *Return Fire vol.1 pg41*] needs to contribute, for now, to the struggle, to gather and organize ourselves for specific ends such as destruction, enjoyment, loving camaraderie, encounters with chaos, advancing towards the dawn [or awakening] of the creative nothing [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg92*], then returning to our hiding places, to rejoice and dance with the birds, to nourish ourselves with the energy of the trees, to feel the ocean breeze, to hear the lovely melody of the wind...

We have said it already and we'll say it again: our revolution has already begun, we make it from day to day, making free love, declaring ourselves against every god and religion, deconstructing the dominating language that they imposed on us, openly opposing any society, we make it when we stop being men and women and become unique human beings.

SPECIAL HYDRAULIC FRACTURE

[ed. – Published by Moai, a Spanish-language newsletter on biological, technological and social control. Lightly edited from the original translation done by Theory Without Borders.]

What is Fracking?

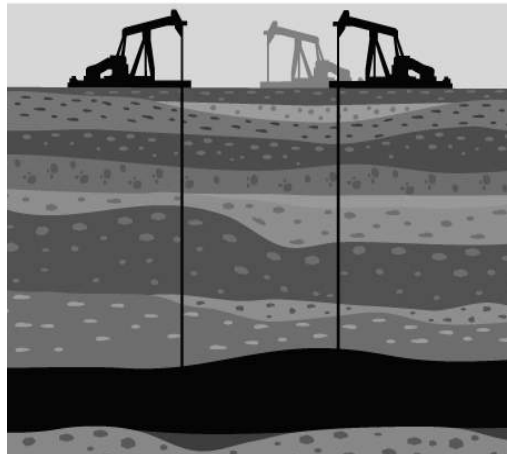
Fracking or hydraulic fracture is an unconventional method of extraction of natural gas, also known as “shale gas”. This gas, fundamentally composed by methane, is found stored in small pores or impermeable rock bubbles, normally of schist or slate, located thousands of metres below the surface. “Unconventional gases” are denominated to those that for their cost or difficulty of extraction are less profitable. However, with the advance of extractivist technologies, these gases can be catalogued as conventional in a short period of time.

The hydraulic fracture consists in “breaking” or “fracturing” the mother rock that contains the gas for its extraction. For this a perforation technique is used: firstly the surface is drilled for up to 5,000 metres vertically and after that several horizontal kilometres are also perforated (from 1.5 to 5 km). After this water with sand are injected with great pressure (98%). It should be noted that this water and sand also contain a series of chemical additives (2%). This provokes small explosions that fracture the rocks and liberate the gas, which ascends from the surface through a pit. The sand mixture is in charge of keeping the fracture open in order to constantly keep obtaining gas. Part of the injected mixture returns to the surface (between 15 to 85%^[1]), whilst the rest ends up in uncertain places.

The usual step in these types of exploitations is to build platforms that contain between 6 and 12 pits of extraction, in order to allow the surface of the terrain that occupies the platform to be composed by tens of hectares. To this we must add that the pits have a very brief useful life, which allows the occupied surface by the platforms to occupy a huge area of a territory.

Why Fracking?

Currently, even though natural gas consumption is booming, electrical energy (primarily generated thanks to petroleum and the consumption of fossil fuels) represents around 80% of the global energy consumption. On the other hand, the extraction of conventional natural gas possesses an energy return on investment (EROI) of between 1 to 6 and unconventional or “shale gas” between 0.7 and 13.3. These are ridiculous numbers compared to the current energy return on investment of petroleum, which can have rates of 100.



Then, why invest millions of euros in its extraction? This is easy to explain if we analyse the current energy crisis^[2]. There are many studies, books and publications that have invested their efforts into demonstrating and studying that we have reached the peak oil process and that the new petroleum pits discovered possess less fuel of worse quality, bigger cost of extraction and, therefore, less EROI. This theory is easily predictable by simply analysing the spectacular increase of the price of fossil fuel.

We survive in a system completely dependent on fossil fuel and electrical energy generated by the same, which also base their system of social domination on energy control. It would be stupid or ingenuous by our part to think that the big defenders of this system of social domination, which include huge petroleum companies, were not going to reinvent themselves so that the end of cheap petroleum doesn't suppose a threat to their businesses, privileges and power of social control. It is here where fracking serves as a tool to delay the discovery of new alternative energy sources. By improving extractivist technologies and conducting explorations in many places of the planet, the gas reserves will be able to be maintain their energy system for a short period of time and prevent the explosion of a true energy catastrophe, which doesn't benefit in the slightest big petroleum multinationals.

Why Oppose Hydraulic Fracturing?

There are many varied motives to oppose the extraction of unconventional gas. It is obvious that such an aggressive extractivist method will provoke a series of environmental problems.

On the one hand it is of vital importance to highlight the contamination of aquifers and subterranean waters, created due to the filtration of the mixture that is injected in the pits for the extraction of gas. These

600 chemical substances injected into the surface, many of them carcinogenic, end up in subterranean waters and will consequently be consumed by all human beings and animals, thus generating a chemical contamination of all the affected ecosystems. These human beings will be affected by this consumption of contaminated water. This has already been demonstrated through the analysis in cow livestock in several areas of the United States, where many animals suddenly died after consuming water close to the gas platforms. The effects towards the human race will take longer to appear, but can go from stomach infections to cancer, along with provoking death after constant consumption.

Another type of contamination that fracking provokes that isn't well known is the emission of radioactive substances to the atmosphere. Substances that are found naturally in the depths of the ground and contaminated water can also reach the atmosphere. One of these chemical substances is radon-222, which is the second highest declared cause of lung cancer.

The small explosions generated by the injection of pressured water are also capable of causing seismic movements into the ground, as demonstrated in places like England or the United States^[3]. This could explain, along with popular opposition and French colonialism in Mali and Niger [ed. – i.e. also over access to uranium and other fuel sources], the prohibition of this method in France, where the huge quantity of nuclear plants combined with earthquake risks could cause huge catastrophes.



2014 government proposition for 2,800 fracking wells across the U.K., including in so-called 'protected areas', and every English county except Cornwall. A moratorium has been announced in Scotland (which imports U.S. fracked gas) and Wales.

Extractive platforms generate a series of environmental and pollutive consequences that are hard to list. It is not only about the visual impact of the platform, the waste from concrete, gas pipelines, etc. But also the creation of roads, transportation of materials, the canalisation of water into the platform, the large water waste, the deforestation of the terrain, the erosion, the creation of residual ponds and many more problems that would require a lot of paper to write down.

These ecological and health consequences should ideally be the main reason to face and stop these projects if we truly valued the health of our surroundings. However, these are not even the most important reasons to stop fracking: if companies were truly interested in investing into improved extractivist technologies in order to guarantee that no health dangers existed there would still be enough factors for us to oppose these projects. Fracking opposition, from our part, should include the fact that it is a new method of exploitation of natural resources that only contributes perpetuating an anti-ecological, exploiting, unfair and inhuman system. We don't only express our opposition to fracking as an aggressive method to extract gas, but also to the opposition of any type of extraction of gas.

Permissions, Licenses & Businesses

Currently there are over 30 permits of exploitation conceded in the [Iberian] peninsula, concentrated around the north, primarily. These numbers are ever-changing due to the approval of new permissions, as there are already more than 50 solicitations; but also due to the opposition and resistance from some communities to allow these projects (albeit the latter is improbable and abstract).

These exploitations will be conducted, if we don't stop them, by businesses like SHESA (Society of Hydrocarbons of Euskadi); BNK Petroleum, with its Spanish counterpart Trofagas, Heyco, R2 Energy and San Leon Energy.



The False Opposition to Fracking

From the arrival of the plans of exploration of shale gas in the [Spanish] State, there are many voices (from individuals and collectives) that have risen up to try and prevent these exploitations of gas. For this reason, it is important to analyse determined strategies and alternative methods of fighting presented by numerous ecologist groups which, in our opinion, aren't effective or coherent and are even capable of benefiting the enemy that they intend to destroy.

In regards to the methods of struggle: the first thing that we must clarify is that *fracking is a global problem originated by a global energy scheme*. It is not only about a project in a specific area. Due to this it is important to conduct the fight against fracking on a global level and not only focus it on a specific platform, valley, etc... (No Fracking, not here or anywhere)

The town halls and Autonomous Communities^[4] belong to a State that encourages and support this global plan of energy development based on the hydraulic fracture. Due to this it lacks sense, from a logical perspective, to use or beg these institutions to stop fracking. On the one hand, it is obvious that if we intend to stop fracking, any type of dialogue with the State contributes towards an anticipated defeat. On a moral level it is a lost battle. It is true that in some cases the collection of signatures and pressure from political groups have managed to stop

some local projects. However, these are underwhelming victories, as no global opposition is ever presented, only local. On the other hand, if the governments indeed stop specific projects it is only because these are not fundamental projects for their energy development. In the case of fracking in the [Spanish] State, several specific permissions can

be obtained this way, because there are countries with enormous levels of poverty that exist, with bigger gas reserves and less popular pressure, allowing businesses to easily extract gas from those places. Therefore, the only way to oppose these mega-projects effectively and coherently is through a real fight, not collaborationist, that at the same time develops a global criticism towards capitalism.

In regards to alternatives: This is probably the most delicate and controversial point. The only proposal by "eco" friendly parties, NGO's and ecologist collectives against fracking are renewable energies, accompanied by a light decrease in the levels of consumption.

Renewable energies can pose, with a big economic investment in investigation and development, an alternative to the extraction of gas through hydraulic fracture, but they will never be an alternative to capitalism. The ideal world that these groups offer needs more roads, industries, trucks, primary resources, big factories, video surveillance and electricity cables passing through the woods to fully function. Renewable energy is also completely dependent on fossil fuels (plastics, transportation through roads, vehicles, etc...) and continues forcing human beings to work to produce cars, wind turbines, solar panels, etc; which impedes the liberation of the individual, who is still tied up and trapped in a sick, unhappy and monotonous job and lifestyle.

On the other hand, these groups don't tend to propose any political change accompanied by their "renewable revolution" in order to continue a capitalist system where the only things that matter are money and economy, thus ignoring values like friendship and nature. This approach not only represents no real alternative to the system of domination, but can also drastically benefit it. In a world where contamination reaches extreme levels, cancers increase enormously and the disasters provoked by petroleum and nuclear energy are part of our everyday lives, the best alternative to maintain the system of domination is through renewable energy. In fact, it's what is slowly extending the system. Small steps are being taken to improve the profitability of renewable energies, creating electric vehicles, etc... This way the State and businesses clean their image towards the people that they have to exploit, whilst they also pretend to care about the planet's health without changing the system of domination.

We don't want a world where the same contradictions continue to be applied, where people's lives are completely



A landscape of fracking wells, U.S.A.

domesticated, robotized and alienated and where the relationship between human beings and nature is inexistent. We don't want cities painted a pretentious "eco" green or a scenery full of wind turbines of more than 100 metres in height. We fight for a free world where people can re-establish their relationship to nature that prevailed during centuries past. We fight for a world where capitalism and domination disappear, which is only possible by renouncing the commodities that the energy and technological system provide for us. A world without fracking, or petroleum, or renewable barbarities: a free and wild world.

1. The numbers of return of contaminated water are proportioned by the own extractivist businesses, are not validated by any independent study. Therefore it is probable that the percentage of water that isn't recovered is bigger than as indicated.

2. One of the key concepts to understand the gravity of the energy crisis is the EROEI (Energy Return on Energy Investment). The TRE is the relationship between energy that a well provides us and the energy that we have to spend to obtain it. Hence, conventional petroleum has an EROI of 20, which means that for each unity of energy destined to the production of petroleum (in the elaboration of materials used in wells, its installation, perforation, operation, the maintenance, etc) 20 unities of energy are obtained. The critical value of the TRE is 1: when the TRE arrives at an equivalent, lots of energy is renewed as the one invested and the system stops having any sense as an energy source.

3. ed. – Fracking near Blackpool in the north of England by the company Cuadrilla was halted after causing two minor 2011 earthquakes, while the U.S. state of Oklahoma for example has seen a sever spike in quakes of 3.0 magnitude or higher since 2008, when fracking ramped up in the area. The number of 3.0 magnitude quakes rose from 2 in 2008 to 889 last year; as of this November, there have been 572 so far in 2016.

4. ed. – Autonomous Communities are the 17 separately-governed semi-autonomous regions of Spain, i.e. Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, etc.

EXTRACTION IN THE SIGHTS

20.11.16, Copenhagen, Denmark: Arson of a G4S van, "as gesture of complicity to the spirit of the warriors defending their sacred lands against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. [...] G4S is a security company with a long history of part Danish ownership and they currently provide security for the construction of the pipeline after a series of arsons against the construction sites. We hope our message of solidarity with fire reaches you." (The Dakota Access Pipeline would carry fracked oil from the U.S. state of North Dakota through to Illinois, cutting under the Missouri River less than a mile upstream from the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation's drinking water supply. This has precipitated possibly the largest gathering of indigenous Americans ever, as members of over 100 tribal groups have converged to protect the

land and water. While major disagreements have taken place between indigenous warriors or accomplices of whatever heritage pushing for confrontational action and pacifist elements or hired Non-Violent Direct Action consultant "camp leaders", combat has nonetheless ensued with the large militarised police deployment – including horse-riding warriors rallying a herd of buffalo into police lines, burning barricades on the access roads to the camp occupations, logs and molotovs hurled at oncoming cops, and much construction machinery put to the torch, while other forms of direct action have regularly shut down pipeline work. In different parts of the world, train-lines carrying oil cars or even specific fracking materials for the North Dakota wells have been blockaded (U.S.A.), bank facade and ATM sabotage carried out in solidarity (Switzerland), and a gathering of industrialists disrupted by invaders who tussled with the guarding cops (Canada.)



One of the U.S. military supply trucks torched after their retreat from clashes on the highway and turned into yet another barricade in the fight for Standing Rock, 27.10.16

16.10.16, rural Iowa, U.S.A.: Three bulldozers and one excavator burn, to the cost of \$2million, on the worksite of the Bakken pipeline, another due to cross the state of Iowa from the gas-fields of North Dakota downwards. (In August, \$1million more of damages had been wrought by another arson of another two pieces of machinery on the same spot, with two other arsons of equipment elsewhere on the same night.) The landowner admits that surveillance of the entire pipeline route is nearly impossible.

03.01.16, Cambridge, Canada: Unknown individuals "used a manual pipeline valve to restrict the flow of Enbridge's Line 7", a pipeline which runs crude oil from the Alberta tar sands (see "Another Figure of the Migrant") in parallel to the company's notorious Line 9. "We then applied our own locking devices to delay response time. [...] This action was undertaken to show our ever lasting love and support to the brave folks who've taken similar actions in the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, Mohawk, and Anishinaabek people. [...] We fight for the land and water; and we fight for our lives."

22.10.15, Germany: Clashes between defenders of the Hambacher Forest (see **Rebels Behind Bars; Some Light on the Investigation Leading to the Imprisonment of the Comrade Arrested on April 13th**) and the coal company trying to destroy it to expand their extraction. As tree-cutting work begins, around 20 assailants cross the security fence (which had been damaged in multiple places during fighting the



day before) and "smashed the window of the digger and the security car, the electronics of the cutting machine were sabotaged. One security tried to intervene and to arrest a person, but other[s] prevented him from doing so. Afterwards, it was possible to do more severe damage to the digger, its hydraulics were cut and the electronics completely destroyed. The group could retreat without problem into the forest. But a smaller group of 2 persons, which was also present in the area, was missed. Police arrived soon and left the scene again together with an ambulance car. It was assumed the people had got arrested. As a direct response to the arrests, a group of 30 people destroyed the remaining parts of the fence and smashed the windows of a truck. Afterwards, the two highway bridges which are used by the securities as permanent guardings points were attacked, lights and generators were destroyed." The mob was too large for security to intervene.

22.03.15, Elliott State Forest, U.S.A.:

A few 'mountain beavers' emerged from the hillside and destroyed the road leading into the Dean Scholfield timber sale in the Elliott State Forest. A three-foot deep trench now blocks the sale's entrance. Long lengths of rebar were cemented into three holes in front of the trench, preventing bulldozers from easily reconstructing the road. [F]or those of us who are intimately connected to this land, a clearcut is a clearcut. No matter if the trees are 100 or 250 years old: the mountain beavers will be trampled, trapped and poisoned and the coho salmon downstream will struggle to survive as temperatures rise and silt settles on the gravel beds. The ancient myrtle that is reaching towards the sky and watching the forest around it mature into old growth will be carelessly thrown into a slash pile, burned as hog fuel at the mill. [T]he human community down hill will breath in the drift and drink the water contaminated by the aerial spraying of herbicides. [...] We have been labelled many things: [vermin], vandals, and "eco-terrorists." So we'll do what we do best, and continue to gnaw at your roads and your profits."

In-Salah region, Algeria: In the midst of a wide-spread struggle against fracking in the Sahara desert (Algeria is said to be fourth in the world in the size of its recoverable shale gas reserves), rioting breaks out after authorities refuse to release prisoners of the struggle. The police headquarters, the police chief's house, some police barracks, and a police truck are all set ablaze, and 40 officers injured.



07.01.15, Pastaza province, Ecuador: *Waoorani indigenous fighters invade the Petrobell oil field in the Amazon, causing enough damage to shut down eleven oil wells operating at the facility. The army are called to the scene and six soldiers are wounded in the clash with seven warriors armed with blowguns, shotguns, pistols and spears. Six of the seven are imprisoned on January 8th, and the seventh "allowed to remain free with certain restrictions based on his advanced age". It is noted that in 2011 and 2012 indigenous warriors had already attacked the facilities of oil companies in the area.*

04.04.14, Vancouver, Canada: *Anonymous midnight attack on the \$3million home of the CEO and director of Mira Resources (an oil and gas company operating in Ghana and Angola), who is also the president and CEO of Aldrin Resources (a uranium company that has begun drilling in the Athabasca Basin in Saskatchewan) as well as the director of Athabasca Nuclear. Multiple gunshots are fired upon the house, before a vehicle is heard speeding away.*

07.01.14, Verucchio, Italy: *Some 'Boar from Marecchia Valley', aligned with the Earth Liberation Front (E.L.F.), enter a CMC site that quarries materials to "carry out death projects from Val Susa [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg70**] to Ethiopia and all over the world, by building high speed railway tracks, highways, dams, shopping centres, etc. [...] We placed tanks of petrol and triggers made of firelighters, fumigators and matches under 9 heavy vehicles. Unfortunately, because of the strong wind that extinguished the triggers, only two vehicles got destroyed, but the message went through..."*

Dinant region, Belgium: *Truck and van of a forestry company destroyed by arson. Shortly before, as the anarchist journal *Hors Service* noted, "another forest cutting vehicle of another company was attacked with fire. It seems that, since permits were given to transform even more forest into industrial wood production sites, opponents are directly attacking..."*

23.06.13, Elsipogtog, Canada: *Following an escalation the day before (when Royal Canadian Mounted Police came under attack while disrupting a festive gathering) in the efforts of Mi'kmaq indigenous and other peoples to prevent explorations for shale gas deposits to frack, a driller of the fracking corporation is torched. Other actions during this phase of the struggle (see **Return Fire vol.2 pg61** for further events) include demonstrations, blockades and expropriations of company vehicles.*



08.03.13, Solnechnogorsk district, Russia: *'Wolfpack' group of the Informal Anarchist Federation (F.A.I.) / E.L.F. destroy a tracked dozer and an excavator at a sand extraction complex. "The sand from this site goes to the highway construction projects in Khimki forest [ed. – see **Memory as a Weapon; A Shorter History of a Northwest E.L.F. Cell**] as well as some other regional development projects. [...] Because of damp weather one of the devices*

failed to ignite[...] With ravaging flames from the burning excavator at our backs, we approached the bomb and re-wired it."

08.03.13, Espoo, Finland: *While in Helsinki people protest the toxicity caused by the nickel, zinc and uranium mining of Talvivaara corporation outside Finlandia Hall during a shareholders meeting, others throw smoke bombs into the corridors of the company headquarters and graffiti the exterior. The action is also in solidarity with the Kulon Progo struggle against mining and metal industries in Indonesia, and captive Tukijo (see **Return Fire vol.1 pg70**).*

13.06.12, Farnham, Canada: *Sabotage of a major rail-line in Québec, chosen "for the crucial nature of the merchandise it transports," such as Alberta tar sands oil (see "**Another Figure of the Migrant**"), "before this sole railway divides into different destinations such as Sherbrooke city, Bromont's techno-park (which hosts some of the biggest names in the high-tech industry, including the infamous IBM) and further down on to New England. [Techno-industrial society] intoxicates the living[...] There are many more fluxes that are crucial to the functioning of this system of oppression and its Holy Merchandise, and we are committed to do it again, and strike targets that will always hurt them more."*

11.06.12, Olympia, U.S.A.: *The Washington State Loggers' Association building receives threatening graffiti and all 24 windows broken. "Roughly a decade after the fervent period of Earth Liberation activity that occurred in the late 90's and early 2000's [ed. – see **Memory as a Weapon; A Shorter History of a Northwest E.L.F. Cell**], [some] cling to the idea of hope and others view this as nothing more than a deceitful delusion. Neither narrative concerns us. What truly concerns us is that the living world around us is dying, and that the strength of our heart atrophies through inaction."*

26.01.12, Bima, Indonesia: *A thousands-strong crowd ransack and burn two government offices to express their outrage at a controversial gold mine. The mob continue on to a nearby detention center and force the authorities to release 35 of their comrades who were arrested at a protest against the mine during the past year.*

31.07.11, Santaigo, Chile: *Santander bank smashed with hammers and rocks by the E.L.F. The bank finances HydroAysén, "[a] hydroelectric project that intends to build 5 dams in Patagonia, in addition to the construction of a large power line. Which will destroy hundreds of hectares of wilderness and with it the lives of thousands of wild species." In the months before, large-scale clashes had broken out*

over the mega-project in Coihaique while a government-appointed commission voted the dams ahead (commissioners were kept indoors for their own safety as people threw rocks and battled cops with water cannon and tear gas) and also in Santiago, with injury to police. "The logic of money over life is ultimately what we reject and fight. Nor are we interested in that false defense of the Earth only because it is "richness" that should exist in order to be

"More extreme forms of eco-cide call for more extreme forms of protest."

– communique for extensive 31.07.08 damage by molotov to Gunns Ltd office, Tasmania, over deforestation for the Tamar Valley Pulp Mill

"Yet to focus on [high-risk extractive methods] as aberrations [is] to mystify the real operational character of an entire social and technological system. The unmitigated disaster of daily, undramatic activities [in places like Prudhoe Bay] – even before they enter the vocabulary of doom – is irrefutable proof that Valdez was no accident but the norm"^[1].

Modern industrialism cannot exist without [a] super-exploited colony, a "sacrifice area" of some kind – the sky, a human community, a watershed, the soil, the gene pool, and so on – to expand and extend its lifeless tentacles."

– George Bradford

*1. ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg29***



Barricades in Santiago against HydroAysén and its world

*contemplated as a tourist destination or because places like the south [transl. – of Chile, largely wilderness] distract from the frenzy of the city [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg52**]."*

09.05.11, Sarawak, Malaysia: *After days of blockading the roads to defend the land, residents of ten different Bidayuh villages set fire to five logging camps and the attendant heavy machinery. Around fifty people came from each village; police are too outnumbered to intervene.*

11.04.11, Chesterfield, U.K.: *Some paint-wielding individuals "descended upon the Shell offices", citing among other things the company's gas pipeline project in County Mayo (western Ireland). "This was done because we are anarchists who are in love with this planet, and willing to strike wherever and whenever we see fit[...]" We know this action alone will not stop Shell, but it is a manifestation of desires to see harm done to those who destroy the planet and every living creature on it. We will continue, we will build and develop skills, we will strike again."*

24.06.10, Cramlington, U.K.: *Sabotage at Shotton opencast coal mine. "One excavator, two bulldozers and ten heavy earth movers were damaged [including] cut electrics, cut hydraulics and coal dust in oil tanks. Also 150 meters of water pipe was slashed, flooding an area of the mine[...] resisting total environmental destruction, climate change and civilised culture..."*

23.02.10, Bristol, U.K.: *Anarchists storm the RBS bank headquarters; despite traffic and nearby security, "the mob succeeded in breaking windows, smashing paint-bombs against upper floors and setting fire to tyres in the middle of the road." Dedicated to indigenous resistance to the Alberta tar sands, financed by RBS.*

SOLD OUT TO THE INDUSTRY **- GMB Union Backs Fracking**

[ed. – A denouncement published in #11 of *The Acorn*, a U.K.-based anti-capitalist web bulletin. Little else should be expected of the union bureaucracy, anyone who has paid attention to their origins (see *Memory as a Weapon*; “*An Outrageous Spirit of Tumult & Riot*”) and subsequent trajectory can't feel surprised or 'betrayed'. Additionally we must note that despite the celebrated 'people power' cited in this article (in reference to long-standing civil opposition in the area), this October the Lancashire council rejection of fracking was over-ruled by the government Communities Secretary, paving the way for the shale gas company Cuadrilla to begin drilling in the English county in 2017. It will be the first time horizontal fracking has been undertaken in the U.K., and the first time Cuadrilla has fracked under homes. The move marks a major step up in the scale of exploratory fracking in the UK, as it gives four wells the green light (with another four in the not-so-metaphorical pipeline) compared to the single well approved for fracking by Third Energy in North Yorkshire earlier this year. Meanwhile, the European Union has announced €13 million research funding for shale oil corporations... **UPDATE FOR WEB EDITION:** After the decision in favour of Cuadrilla beginning the first new fracking well in the U.K. since the earthquakes they caused in 2011 (see footnote in the article above) a facility near Chesterfield run by PR Marriott (the largest U.K. onshore deep drilling company, which stores and maintains the rig on behalf of Cuadrilla), previously site of repeated protests, was infiltrated. The rig intended for use at the newly-cleared fracking site was attacked with sledgehammers to smash its touchscreen computers and windows. Components were drilled out, pneumatic pipes and electrical cables were cut, damages significant. Protesters have also successfully pressured some subcontractors into ending their agreements with Cuadrilla. A sign of things to come?]

The sickening pro-fracking stance of a British trade union is a useful reminder of how the “Left” has historically failed to fight industrial capitalism.

While people power in Lancashire was persuading the council to throw out fracking applications, the GMB was busy cosyng up to the industry.

The GMB is a “general” trade union in the UK, affiliated to the TUC [Trades Union Congress] and the Labour Party and boasting more than 631,000 members.

As it proudly declares on its own website, its Northern Region recently had the bright idea of getting a briefing on the fracking issue. And who did these “leftists” ask? Frack Off perhaps? Friends of the Earth? [ed. – *Two mainstream faces of anti-fracking sentiment in the U.K.*] Nope – they went straight to the Chemical Industry Association, the leading national trade association for the chemical and chemistry-using industries in the United Kingdom. Who cares about pollution if jobs are involved?

As a result of this briefing, on June 18 2015, the GMB concluded: “Given the fragility of the oil and gas sector due to price pressures, diversification through shale gas could well become a key employer within the energy sector.”

Billy Coates, GMB Northern Regional Secretary added: “The strategic importance of fracking within the UK's balanced energy mix must not be ignored. Along with nuclear, renewables, green coal [sic!], oil and gas, fracking could be absolutely essential to achieving near self-sufficiency which will benefit domestic and business need.”

“Business need”? What sort of language is that for a trade union to adopt?

And this is not a one-off. It follows a statement from the GMB Congress on June 8 2015 which says that “while there are important considerations, the economic, indigenous energy and employment benefits cannot be ignored”.

The union has even done a deal with UKOOG, the front group representing the fracking industry in the UK.

It is shamelessly buying in to the whole fracking circus, admitting: “GMB has welcomed UKOOG's development of the National College for Onshore Oil and Gas. As part of this agreement, GMB will have a seat on the Operation and Advisory Council of the National College.”

Here we have the heart of the problem that has afflicted the “Left” since back in the 19th century. At heart, it is not actually against the capitalist system, it just has certain minor quibbles with the way it is run.

But, of course, these left-capitalists are in denial about all this. They refuse to admit that industrialism and capitalism are essentially the same thing – that you cannot pretend to be against an economic system and yet wholeheartedly support the physical infrastructure that enables that system to maintain and expand its control.

They are also apparently incapable of seeing through the capitalist lie that there is something inherently good about “jobs” and are happy to fight for the

“right” of their members to spend their lives as slaves to the global industrial greed-monster.

Even worse is the hypocrisy surrounding this, which echoes the hypocrisy of the ruling elite with their oxymoronic “sustainable development”.

The GMB, like others on the industrial left, seem to think they can claim to be “green” at the same time as cheerfully oiling the very machineries that are killing the planet.

It is with no apparent sense of irony that the pro-fracking union boasts on its website: “GMB is recognised both nationally and regionally as being the leading trade union on health, safety and environmental issues.”

The anti-fracking movement will hopefully ensure that from now on the GMB is instead recognised as a corrupt and cowardly collaborator with the business mafia which is destroying our planet for its own profit.



'ANTAGONISTIC MARGINS'

Occupying the House of War: Terror and State Control

Imām Abū Hanīfah, an eight-century Sunni Muslim theologian from Iraq, developed a framework that has exercised lasting influence on Islamic theology. He distinguished between *dar al-harb*, literally the “house” [domain, abode, territory] of war, and *dar al-islam*, the house of peace. *Dar al-islam* represents the regions where the Islamic faith dominates and tranquility presumably reigns as a result of people living in accordance with the will of God, while *dar al-harb* designates the regions not governed by Islamic rulers and law. This is a legal rather than religious distinction: the difference between the house of Islam and the house of war is not determined by the percentage of Muslims in a region, but by what political system governs it. The designation “house of war” refers both to the assumption that any territory that has not submitted to the will of God will endure constant strife, and to the call for Muslims to undertake holy war against unbelievers.

The “houses” are defined thus because Islamic traditions, in contrast to those of Christianity, tend to emphasize proper conduct (orthopraxy) over proper belief (orthodoxy). **In this view, how people behave is more important than what they believe.** The pagan cults of the Roman Empire operated similarly: as long as a Roman citizen observed the prescribed rituals, he could profess whatever beliefs he wanted [ed. – *until the official take-over of Christianity: see Memory as a Weapon; ‘One God & One State’*].

In contrast, Christian traditions of defining orthodoxy and persecuting heresy valued the profession of proper belief above all; merely behaving in accord with Christian

precepts did not guarantee salvation. This emphasis on orthodoxy persisted through the Cold War, with its McCarthyist witch-hunts and loyalty oaths. The government promoted social conformity and patriotism to cement correct beliefs, and professing an improper creed could be lethal.

However, with the triumph of mass consumer society in the aftermath of the Cold War, orthopraxy has supplanted orthodoxy as the dominant paradigm for governance. Belief has been relegated to the same realm as religion: private, subjective, unobtrusive, optional. In the age of internet irony, earnestness is laughable, dogmatism contemptible, credulity hilarious. Whatever power satire once had has dissolved in the general undermining of all faith.

In the postmodern US, you needn’t participate in rituals like voting or July 4th parades. All that matters is that you keep going to work, keep shopping, keep doing what you are told by authority figures. When the retail chain that employs you shows a video explaining that stealing from the store is really stealing from yourself, you can snicker with your coworkers on your smoke break all you want – so long as the till adds up correctly at the end of the day. Trumpet at the top of your lungs that the government is corrupt, capitalism is the crisis, consumerism is destroying the planet. Just make sure that when you act on your dissident beliefs, you do so by canvassing for a third party candidate or driving your hybrid to the co-op to buy high-efficiency light bulbs.



Resistance that moves beyond speech, that challenges orthopraxy via heretical *action*, is another matter entirely. **In the electronic era, when control no longer hinges on geographical space but on diffuse networks of power, the “house of war”**

is everywhere and nowhere, requiring eternal vigilance and omnipresent surveillance. Today’s authorities utilize technologies of control that the Abrahamic religions could have only dreamed of. Imagine the inquisitions a papacy^[1] armed with RFID chips, CCTV cameras, and satellite-guided drones could have carried out. Yet even with such tools at their disposal, the terror of the authorities in the face of the *dar al-harb* only grows more frantic. As the experience of being governed becomes universal, the perceived threat of any alternative looms ever larger.

As James Scott discusses in his history of resistance to the state in upland Southeast Asia, for the vast majority of our species’ tenure human beings have lived without state power, or near enough to expansive stateless regions that they could escape. This placed limits on the depredations to which states could subject people, since individual flight and collective exodus remained viable options. Only in the past few centuries has state control extended to encompass the vast majority of the world’s population, and only in the past several decades have transportation, communication, and military technology advanced to such a point that states can prevent people from escaping. As the state marches us towards a brave new world of total control, that shrinking fraction of undefined space is the house of war, a zone of terror.

Mountainous areas have often been among the territories most difficult to rule. High-elevation regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan that have resisted state control are represented as havens for Al Qaeda and the Taliban. **The War on Terror provides the ultimate impetus for bringing every square inch of the globe into the web of surveillance and control;** these few slender territories free from state domination now constitute threats to the security of the United States [ed. – *and the rest of the “Western world”*]. If the authorities can’t reach them with tanks, they can target them with drones; **what can’t be colonized can at least be destroyed.** The project begun during the Cold War of imposing neocolonial domination on all non-aligned states continues in the anti-terrorism era, as the last regions that declined to be ruled by communism or capitalist democracy are tamed.

The land mines US troops spread across parts of Southeast Asia during the Cold War anticipated the project of total control advanced by the War on Terror. By rendering regions unlivable that were antagonistic to state control, they opened the final chapter in the struggle of the state to dominate all human societies. In the guise of an internecine quarrel, the

superpowers expressed their mutual terror of autonomous peoples by imposing regimes of fear: the sudden explosion that maims a forest dweller, the platoon that shoots without warning regardless of which side you're on. Petty despots in Latin America waged parallel campaigns as dictators and paramilitary death squads imposed fear as a way of life among indigenous communities from Guatemala to Chile. Now in parts of the Middle East, no one can escape the fear that a remote-controlled aircraft will rain death upon them from the sky.

The domain of the state has expanded so far, and with such brutal consequences, that life beyond it has become nearly unthinkable. Margaret Thatcher's infamous declaration "*There is no alternative*" has become the goal and vision of the security state. It aims to create the *dar al-islam* – peace through universal submission to authority – by waging endless war against all who challenge its monopoly on control and violence.

All space outside the control of the security state is, by definition, the realm of terror. Let's call these regions of possibility *terrortory*.

Blank Spots on the Map: Terrortory & its Discontents

Terrortory is non-striated space [ed. – see '*A Profound Dis-ease*']. When every territory has been plotted within the latitudes of power and longitudes of control, it is the *terror incognita*, the frontiers of the unknown beyond the edges of the map. It is the destination of our lines of flight. It is what lies outside consensus reality.

Close your eyes and imagine feeling terror. What do you see? Is it a person, an event, a setting, an environment? Throughout millennia of struggle between civilization and wildness, most who fought on the former side would have named places or landscapes. Frontiers and forests, the wilderness and the jungle: these areas loomed in the imagination, reminding us of the constant struggle between the gaping unknown and the precarious enclaves of civilization. But the spread of the state, combined with new technologies of destruction, allowed the balance of that struggle to swing toward the civilized, who ferociously domesticated wild landscapes and the peoples who inhabited them. **Now, as the forces of state and capital methodically eliminate the last social groups that resist civilized control, we're losing memory of any mode of life outside the binary of absolute control or absolute terror.**

The "state of nature," described by Thomas Hobbes as the primordial chaos from which all people strive to escape into the

reassurance of state control, is the original *terrortory*. Life under state rule, which for the majority of its victims proved more "nasty, brutish, and short" than life outside of it, had to be justified by posing an even worse alternative. Yet in the first centuries of European immigration to North America, thousands of colonists "went native," deserting to live among indigenous tribes. Maroon colonies of escaped slaves, indigenous locals, and poor white escapees flourished in the swamps and borderlands. Without a constant war against these alternatives, supported by white supremacy as an ideological incentive for exploited Europeans to identify with their masters against their African fellow workers [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg89*], the North American colonies would never have survived. The United States's racial nightmare of genocide, slavery, and exploitation originated in the terror of the European ruling classes, whose entire project of domination would have unraveled if colonists could escape to the peripheries.

Who do we find in a *terrortory*? It is inhabited by the people all Kurtzes mean when they whisper, "*Exterminate the brutes!*"⁽²⁾ The imaginations of rulers have populated *terrortories* with a series of scapegoats, pushing into the spotlight to be demonized and then discarding them when the next threat arose. During the Cold War, the ruling class [ed. – of the U.S.A.] attacked Communists and labor agitators, along with homosexuals and other sexual deviants [ed. – as did the *Communists themselves...*]. For over a century, they have blamed immigrants, recently emphasizing Mexicans and other Latin Americans. Since the 1970s, as the prison-industrial complex has expanded, politicians have targeted criminals, sexual predators, drug addicts, and young men of color. Since September 2001, Muslims have come under their scrutiny. At other times, anarchists, Jews, welfare recipients and other poor people, and a great many more have found themselves in the crosshairs as rulers fought to redirect discontent towards the powerless.

The profusion of scapegoated demographics indicates how insecure our rulers are despite the expansiveness of their control: we see this in the proliferation of gated communities with armed guards and CCTV cameras even as violent crime drops. **No technologies can abate their terror so long as sinister peripheries and furtive longings lurk in the shadows of their minds.** The cast of monstrous characters projected onto *terrortories* share two key features: they operate *secretly*, spreading subversion under the radar, and they are *contagious*, infecting the unsuspecting with their illicit desires.



Security & Secrecy

Old mapmakers scrawled *terra incognita* – unknown land – over regions yet to be explored. The phrase conjures images from the medieval bestiary: fiery dragons soaring over secret seas, one-eyed men alongside gold-hoarding griffins. Allure, mystery, terror. But with the expansion of state and mercantile power, the extension of the Christian missionary impulse, and the triumph of scientific discourse, these unknown zones became colonies to conquer, markets to penetrate, unsaved souls to convert – frontiers to *discover*. When [18th Century French Emperor] Napoleon led his expedition to Egypt armed not only with soldiers and cannons but an array of engineers, scientists, and indeed cartographers, he inaugurated the modern era of governance: total conquest through total knowledge.

State power is a cartographic project: an effort to map and graph and delineate all territory so as to administer it. **From the earliest efforts to systematically survey territory and its inhabitants, through imperial Roman censuses and William the Conqueror's Domesday book in 11th century England [ed. – whose completion peasants believed would signal the apocalypse] rulers have seen mapping, accounting, and enumerating as crucial to control.** One of the first steps of the state apparatus in striating space is literally girding it in lines of latitude and longitude, elevation and topography.

This pursuit of total knowledge through mapping extends to the populations of states as well as their territories. Look at the state's strategy in recent years for targeting radical social movements: prosecutors press conspiracy charges, using subpoenas, undercover agents, and social media platforms like Facebook to map relationships between potential insurgents. The strategy to criminalize of youth of color operates similarly: expansive regulations targeting "gangs" [ed – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg16*], anti-loitering

“The entire history of western civilization can be read as a systematic attempt to exclude and isolate the body. From Plato on, it has been seen at various times as a folly to control, an impulse to repress, labor power to arrange or an unconscious to psychoanalyze. [...] Due to a battle-trained christian heritage, we are led to believe that domination controls and expropriates a part of the human being without however damaging her inner being (and there is much that could be said about the division between a presumed inner being and external relationships). Of course, capitalist relationships and state impositions adulterate and pollute life, but we think that our perceptions of ourselves and of the world remain unaltered. So even when we imagine a radical break with the existent, we are sure that it is our body as we presently think of it that will act on this. I think instead that our body has suffered and continues to suffer a terrible mutilation. And this is not only due to the obvious aspects of control and alienation determined by technology. (That bodies have been reduced to reservoirs of spare organs is clearly shown by the triumph of the science of transplants, which is described with an insidious euphemism as a “frontier of medicine”. But to me the reality seems much worse than pharmaceutical speculations and the dictatorship of medicine as a separate and powerful body reveals.) The food we eat, the air we breathe and our daily relations have atrophied our senses. The senselessness of work, forced sociality and the dreadful materiality of chit-chat regiment both mind and body, since no separation is possible between them. The docile observance of the law, the imprisoning channels into which desires, which such captivity really transforms into sad ghosts of themselves, are enclosed weakens the organism just as much as pollution or forced medication. [...] To affirm one’s own life, the exuberance that demands to be given, entails a transformation of the senses no less than of ideas and relationships.” – *The Body & Revolt*

attempts to track it epidemiologically. In crowds, it can spread like wildfire, reaching epidemic proportions.

Fear of contagion often reduces to a fear of being penetrated. **The discourses deployed to target scapegoats reveal a disquietingly sexual theme.**

Spies and infiltrators penetrate secure networks; homosexuals and perverts penetrate forbidden parts of the body. Illegal immigrants penetrate the border [ed. – *between Mexico and the U.S.*], despite the 700-mile chastity belt across it. The brutal violence against scapegoats likewise takes on horrifyingly erotic casts: white obsession with the bodies of black men, the sexual mutilations that often accompanied

But we'll never get there from within the cozy confines of queer identity. If deterritorialized [ed. – see '*A Profound Dis-ease*'] sexuality is reserved for those of certain bodies or sexual identities, then it remains an *identitarian* [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg57*] rather than a *seductive* goal. If queer is to have any meaning, we have to transform our sex lives into a space where queer desires – which circulate without reference to citizenship in any queer nation – can take terrifying hold of us and spread.

The Continuing Appeal of Sex & Violence

But really, why all the fuss about sex and violence? Why are anarchists so hung up on breaking windows and fucking? Are these the only spaces in which terror and the unknown can come into play? Perhaps we fetishize riots and sex as the last frontiers of unmediated relation to the body. What *are* you doing after the riot or the orgy or whatever, after all? Let's all die on the barricades in the throes of orgasm, confident for the first time that we're really alive!

We risk years in prison for the rush of glass shattering beneath our hammers, or pregnancies and diseases for the thrill of intertwining our sweaty flesh. Are the eroticism of rebellion and the rebelliousness of the erotic all we have left, the last rapidly eroding foothold of unmediated embodiment? When every acre has been mapped, can we imagine no other zones of possibility beyond our own unpredictable limbs? Is the body the last territory?

Terror is an erotic feeling. No center can cohere without eroticizing its periphery. The line between disgust and desire is far more porous than most of us care to admit. This is why *seduction* best characterizes our politics: spreading anarchy is an erotic process, not a rational one. This isn't to say we have to give up distributing 'zines and crafting careful critiques – but we will not argue and reason our way into an anarchist society. We might, however, seduce our way into unexpected affinities, transform the margins into volatile peripheries, and infect the body politic with subversive desires[...]

Desire, Consent, & Politics: a Prelude to Seduction

What is desire? Let's conceive of desires not as internal elements emanating from within individuals, but as autonomous forces that flow through them. Individuals don't desire things; whole societies produce and circulate desires, even if those desires remain submerged in most people. The fundamental unit of our

ordinances, video cameras on streetlamps at every intersection in the [public housing] projects. Wherever people come together on their own terms, they become a threat that must be managed by surveillance. Conspiracy is secretive; withholding knowledge, however innocuous, threatens the security state's need to know all.

As an officer once said in requesting community assistance with an investigation, *a cop is only as good as his information*. Whoever came up with the saying “secrets don't make friends” had it dead wrong. Secrets make friendships; keeping secrets keeps friends, and can keep them out of jail as well.

And secrets are threats. Our secrets terrify. Our conspiracies open secret passages into *terror incognita*.

Terror & Contagion

In his introduction to *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes described the state via an extended metaphor of the body, with different parts and functions corresponding to those of the state. In this metaphor, he identified sedition with sickness. The urge to rebel is indeed infectious. The FBI

lynchings, the forced sterilization of women of color on welfare [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg31*], hysterical hyperbole about gay male promiscuity by the God Hates Fags set. Terror of penetration by subversive elements haunts the wet dream nightmares of our rulers.

Queer bodies terrify because of their refusal to conform to narratives of appropriate, authorized penetration. Hetero-patriarchal sexual narratives strive to make penetration predictable and unidirectional; queers interpenetrate, destroying the boundaries between self and the other, merging the erotic object and subject, being filled with it and becoming it, showing a radical potential for reciprocity. They're right to fear and hate us; queer sex declares war on the striation of the body, reclaiming it as *terror incognita*.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But wait – hasn't queer sex been reterritorialized by the apparatuses of state and capital? Is there anything inherently radical about sex between people of similar anatomy? **We can fight to make our own bodies into territories, zones of radical potential.**



analysis is not the individual human being, but the desire, with humans as the medium.

How can we conceive of desire and selfhood as they relate to consent and political action? The existing consent discourse presupposes static notions of self and desire. It presumes that desire is monolithic, composed of a single thrust rather than multiple pulls in different directions. When we have multiple desires, the desire that garners the plurality in our internal electoral process is assumed to be the only one that counts. Consent discourse presumes that what we want is knowable and can be articulated within the framework of our shared reality.

In reality, the desires we experience are not fixed or unitary. They shift constantly based on our experiences and contexts. They are multiple, contradictory, and divergent, surprising us with their diversity, frustrating us with their mutability. They resist our attempts to confine or domesticate them. They simply can't fit into a two-dimensional binary model of consent, wherein we either want something or we don't. This realization is terrifying, but it opens up new ways of understanding the anarchist project in relation to the consensus reality arrayed against us.

The nature of *desire* is complex and centrifugal, in contrast to the simplifying and centripetal nature of *interests*. The traditional approach of the left is for organizers to assist constituencies in winning victories that build power, which will presumably be deployed towards increasingly radical ends. The goals of these victories are generally framed in terms of the *interests* of the constituency, not their *desires*. This is a clever trick: as interests appear to be an objective rather than subjective matter, it is easier for an outside managerial class to get away with defining and representing them. Interests

can be framed as unitary, coherent, and integrative, whereas desires are multiple, inchoate, contradictory. **Identity groups share interests; friends and lovers share desires.** Interests are composed of calcified blocks of desire standardized to make sense within consensus reality.

Not only is desire far more complex and unstable than our discourses allow, it's also shaped by the conditions of our misery and exploitation. Even amid contradictions and chaos, the range of what it is possible to desire rarely escapes the confines of consensus reality. Who really imagines that in a free world, we'd dream of ergonomic chairs for our cubicles, more TV channels and brands of detergent, longer chains and softer cages? This is not to demean the struggles of those who fight for better conditions within this system. It's just to say that we would be paltry revolutionaries indeed if we based our programs merely on the consensus desires of groups whose allies we want to be.

The task of the revolutionary is not the task of the ally. We are not here to make the dreams of the proletariat come true. The proletariat is produced by capitalism, which we want to destroy. The task of the revolutionary is to shift our collective sense of the possible, so that our desires and the realities they drive us to create can shift in turn. **We are here to transform reality beyond where our notions of consent can lead us.** We need a different discourse to imagine the transformations that can open pathways out of consensus reality.

Sociologists studying prison life speak of "situational homosexuality," explaining previously heterosexual prisoners' homosexual behavior in terms of the conditions of their confinement in a single-sex environment. But isn't all homosexuality, and indeed all hetero- and bi- and other-sexuality, "situational" in the sense of being influenced by the context in which it occurs? Our sexual desires are shaped by the demographics of the places we inhabit, by our early experiences of

longing and experimentation, and by the media and education we're exposed to, among innumerable other "situational" influences. Sociologists see prisoners who have same-sex sex in prison and then return to cross-sex relationships upon release as being "really" straight and only "situationally" queer. **Who knows what patterns of desire and sexual expression would emerge if the omnipresent context of hetero-patriarchy, enforced through every carrot and stick known to us, were transformed?**

Many people experience their "sexual orientation" as unalterably fixed. Probably we all experience a mixture of seemingly intrinsic inclinations that frame a certain range of possibility and pleasure within which we make choices. But the queer project is not to carve out a space within capitalist hetero-patriarchy where those with unbearably persistent inclinations towards same-sex sexuality can endure them in relative peace. The queer project is to *obliterate capitalism and hetero-patriarchy* so new forms of desire can emerge. In prison society, our desire, homosexual or not, will always be "situational," constrained by countless limits. Let's destroy these constraints, opening the way for desires more powerful and terrible than we can imagine.

Introducing Seduction

There's another discourse we could try out here, a framework that seems to be implied by our current practice whether or not we wish to acknowledge it. That framework is *seduction*.

What is seduction? It's a rather unsavory concept, bringing to mind manipulative attempts to induce others to let themselves to be used for one's own ends. In a sexual context, it can imply either a romantic, charismatic, persuasive use of charm to propose a sexual encounter, or a way to trick someone into succumbing to one's advances. The connotations are discomfiting, but the salient factor is the implication that the seducer *creates* a desire, rather than simply unearthing it; she produces an impulse that did not exist before. It is this sense that we find most interesting in considering the problems of desire and consensus reality on the political level.

When we *seduce*, we present someone who ostensibly doesn't want something with a new situation in which they may want it after all. Whereas consent focuses on obtaining the go-ahead for an external action – "*Is this OK?*" – seduction focuses internally, on desire: "*How could you want this?*" **Our practices of seduction don't aim to induce others to do things they don't want to do, but to induce others to**

want to do them, in the most meaningful sense: to want to take on all the risks and pleasures they entail.

Again, we don't believe that we can persuade everyone to consent to anarchist revolution; not only is the deck stacked against us, the dealer, the table, and the whole house are as well. We don't buy into the idea that our goals are what everybody "really" wants, nor do we assume that everyone would adopt our views if only they had access to all the right information. We don't claim to represent anyone beyond ourselves, nor to stand in for any silent majority; in this sense, anarchist revolution is not a *democratic* project. Nor do we, despairing of those things, decide that to be true to our principles we must give up on anarchist revolution altogether and retreat into isolation among the few comrades with whom we can establish meaningful self-determined consensus. We don't think it's hopeless to resist in the face of the stranglehold of consensus reality. We want a different path forward, one that doesn't assume desire to be fixed, that doesn't rely on liberal consent.

We neither wish to impose our will on others by force, nor to disregard their desires. Instead, we want to perform a kind of dark magic, an alchemical operation. We want to *transfigure and induce* desires, not simply *fulfill* them^[3].

Let's recall the militants of the Gay Liberation Front in the 1970s. They had little interest in securing rights as an interest group within civil society, but rather considered themselves at war with the straight world. We can think of these sexual militants as partisans of different configurations or forms or flows of desire. Some GLFers considered their task to be unlocking the potential for same-sex love and sexual expression latent in every person; as the ones for whom this came more easily through accidents of nature or nurture, they formed a natural vanguard in the struggle for liberated sexuality. In that context, seducing the straight took on an explicitly political eroticism. **Unbound by the frameworks of fixed identity and their baggage within civil society, anyone can become both subject and object of queer desire.** Forget advocating for the "right" of gay people to exist gayly; let's infect straight society with contagious queer desire for love, sex, and liberation.

In that spirit, our prime advantage as anarchists lies not in the coherence and reason of our ideology, but in the passionate actions we undertake and the ungovernable lives we lead. Let's not try to convert people to anarchism; let's set out, with mischievous glee, to infect everyone around us with the anarchy that flows in our veins. Let's produce situations in which anarchy is possible – even likely – even *desirable* to those who might not feel any inclination towards it today. Of course, this is a violation of liberal consent: the right to be left alone to one's desires as they have been produced by the domination of state and capital. But in our strange cruel love for our friends and neighbors, we cannot abandon them to the mediocrity of consensus reality. How can we sleep at night, knowing that their heads resound with capital's bleak dreams[...]

Queer Peripheries as Terrortories

The most politically interesting senses of queer locate it at the antagonistic margins of dominant forces, sexual or otherwise – a periphery that is always shifting in relation to centers of power. In this light, the flight into *terrortory* is a queer project.

If this is true, it's not important for anarchists to *be* queer, whatever that might mean, so much as it is for us to seek out peripheral positions from which to attack consensus reality, seducing others into these zones of possibility. Fascinating innovations in relationships and sexuality continue to emerge from queer communities because marginality catalyzes creative resistance. Likewise, our political queerness and rejection of respectability afford us a perspective from which we can continue to precipitate ruptures in the ruling social order.

1. ed. – Arthur Evans noted that Roman Catholicism had "no monopoly on the terrors" unleashed during the 12th-19th Century global Inquisition against 'heresy' and dissent. "Some of the worst atrocities were perpetrated by the Protestants, who introduced the Inquisition to countries that had been lenient. John Calvin hunted down his religious enemies, as well as witches. He once boasted of luring the Unitarian Michael Servetus to Geneva under the guise of safety and then having him burned alive as a heretic. At Geneva, the most trivial offenses were also suppressed: dancing was illegal; a group of bridesmaids were once arrested for decorating a bride with too much color; a child was beheaded for striking its father. "What the Puritans and Calvinists achieved at the Reformation was the re-establishment of the depressive, guilt-ridden attitude as the whole source of religion" ([G. Ratray] Taylor)."

2. Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* personifies the European colonial project in the depraved ivory trader Kurtz.

3. Wait, there's nothing liberating about attempting to induce desires in others. That's the function of the advertising industry, the lever of demand that has driven capitalism over the past century. Democracy purports to be a marketplace of ideas where we can all talk about what we want and then decide; different configurations of desire are constantly at war. Ad firms don't just create specific desires, they enforce a mode of desiring that can be routed through the consumer economy. Propaganda, subliminal messaging, induced addiction, outright violence: these comprise a brutal arsenal aimed at us every moment of the day. Around the globe, the military clears the path for neoliberal pillaging, while NGOs get into the business of inducing people to want to be successful at generating currencies that can be exchanged on the global market. Ought we not be suspicious of a project framed in such transparently manipulative terms? As grim as it looks, this vista reveals that if we are not partisans of certain modes of desiring, we will remain objects rather than subjects within these desiring wars. We cannot retreat into essentialist notions of unearthing our "true" desires from some internal vault, nor a Buddhist project of extinguishing desire on an individual level while the world burns. What sets us apart is that we strive to create a world in which every person can realize her [sic] unique potential on her own terms, rather than simply pushing for this or that option within the current conditions.

'TODAY IN TARLABAŞI & SOMEWHERE ELSE TOMORROW'

[ed. – From a statement by Turkish comrades of the 'infiAl' collective, after stalling a militarised police raid. Anarchists around this time also clashed with riot police who were attacking the 'LGBTI+ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and more] Pride' demonstration (which had been banned by the city governor), pelting them with bottles and having rubber bullets shot back in response. Police blockaded other demonstrators into Taskim Square, then allowed fascist groups in to assault them.]

20.6.2016. Last night around 23:30, the anarchist space infiAl in Istanbul was raided for the second time by cops going out for a LBGTI+ hunt targeting the 24 Pride Week events and using completely made up scenarios of someone having notified the police with suspicions.

The cops, who are leading a violent campaign targeting Pride Week and TransPride and teaming up with fascists to take over streets and even spaces, have come with 2 Scorpion-type [armoured] vehicles and around 20 plain clothes officers to intimidate and threaten those planning to join the 'Self-Defence Against Homo/Transphobic Attacks' workshop on 20.06.2016 at infiAl. They had come with the intention of searching the space but had to retreat to doing a GBT control because of the reaction they got.

This fascist mentality, that has been patrolling the streets for months and harassing everyone, looking for the first opportunity to criminalise the space and those around it, showing cheap and ungrounded allegations as reasons for their raids, seeing the right to self-defence as a potential threat while we witness trans murders every day in these parts, is obviously not going to surprise us [ed. – an Islamist paper headline 'Anarchists prepare for civil war' preceded a second police raid over the workshops four months later; three comrades face terror charges].

However, infiAl for us is just a 'space'; today in Tarlabası [in Beyoğlu district] and somewhere else tomorrow, it is not the whole but just a part of the anarchist struggle and social revolution. That is why we support many similar spaces, to oppose our face-to-face relationships being interrupted and disturbed. We always emphasise the importance of such spaces being created for anarchists and anti-authoritarians, not only in cosmopolitan centers of cities but in all localities. Be it a squat, social center or any other format, we stand in solidarity with everyone who tries to raise the anarchist fight and will do all we can to realize such organisations.

ON THE CATASTROPHE OF THE SALMON FARMS AND MARITIME DEVASTATION

[ed. – This article is regarding the context which framed a wave of disorder around Chile during May 2016, starting with over 2,000 striking fishers on the Pacific island of Chiloé – joined by indigenous Mapuche (see **Return Fire vol.3 pg59**) living on the island – barricading access roads after a government ban on collecting or selling seafood. This is due to a large die-off along Chile's coast, with many creatures washing up on the beaches since 2015 and a 'Red Tide' toxic algae bloom. People point the finger at the State-supported salmon farming industry and its toxins; towards the end of April, the President declared the coastal area of Los Lagos a disaster area (bringing it under the authority of the National Defense who can take command of the Armed Forces in that area, set up checkpoints and monitor transit into and out of the affected zone, sort out collection, storage and distribution of food items and give instructions to local officials). Many people nevertheless took to the streets, blockading main highways and roads in Valparaíso, Santiago, Concepción, Temuco, Valdivia, and Osorno. In Puerto Montt, over 10,000 people rioted, destroying government buildings and banks, and battling police by using molotovs well into the night. According to one researcher, the effects of the ocean contamination will be long-lasting and severe. "The salmon industry in five years has increased its production by 15 times within the Chiloé sea... they paved the sea with nutrients, [and the algae proliferated...] [W]e have an active red tide and a latent red tide being deposited in the sediment around the sea inside the Lakes Region and therefore this will never end; the red tide will never leave the sea of Chiloé, because when these conditions are met, cysts will appear and you'll have red tide again..." A month later, a state-of-emergency was also declared along the Treasure Coast of Florida, U.S.A., after an "unprecedented" algae outbreak swamped miles of waterways and beaches with toxins noted to harm seagrasses, turtles, humans and other mammals. Fire to those who toxify our surroundings!]

"Ecosystems will mutate rapidly and radically thanks to human stupidity, expressed in buckets of genetic manipulation. Once a new agent or gene is released on an ecosystem, it cannot recuperate itself: the ecosystem mutates.

The number of variables is infinite, impossible to predict, impossible to regulate and there is no turning back: once an ecosystem is modified it cannot go back to what it was. One mistake kills hundreds of species, and mutates many others.... And human beings do not live beyond the ecosystem." Anti-Civilization Manifesto

"The last few catastrophes were not caused by 'nature', they were caused by Capitalist configuration of the space affected." 8 Critical Hypothesis on the Latest Ecological Catastrophes in Chile

Devastation and extraction have reached disproportionate levels of death and toxicity. The true and only face of Capital, the State, and their technocrats demonstrate the misery of their path of destruction.

The exploitation of nature has always been a necessary condition for the accumulation of Capital and Power. All societal machinery (understood as a hierarchical relationship as a fundamental principle) functions through the exploitation of the earth, the sea, living beings and all which can be considered part of enriching its merchandise. The use of fossil fuels are an example of this, carbon emissions and whatever else allows them to make more weapons for their wars and generate new forms of control. This is not chauvinism speaking; it is the crude reality of a tentacled monster!

In recent time, we have borne witness to the arrogance of the salmon farms, the State, their authorities that endorse these farms, and their technocrats that sicken us with their justifications. These companies glorify themselves by claiming they provide jobs, doing nothing else than impose capitalist ways of life in areas where people still manage to live differently. It is here where they have left death in their path, where they install their machinery and cause social disaster in communities both in material dispossession, as well as with the natural surroundings.

The same company (Marine Harvest) that introduced the salmon virus in so-called Chilean territory, now uses 5 times as many chemicals in the water than they did two years ago. The salmon are in a situation of enclosure and holocaust, introduced as objects in disgusting cages to the taste of citizens hungry for consumption. **The salmon industry had been affected by "sea fleas," bacteria, and viral sickness in situations of environmental collapse the Patagonian sea could not detain. The face of this agony is seen today in the Regions of Los Lagos and Aysén, with thousands of rotting salmon reaching the shores of the austral region after having been killed by the algae bloom by the very industry and services supported by the State.**

It isn't a climate phenomenon which unleashed the Red Tide that caused the disaster. It isn't just rising sea temperatures, the lack of winds, the high solar radiation. But mainly, it is

also the eutrophication of the ocean from the stellar enrichment of nutrients generated by the Salmon farming industry, from companies such as SERNAPESCA and SUBPESCA in the Patagonian ocean, supported by the State, hiding behind the broader issue of climate change. **The eutrophication of the ocean not only reflects the appearance of the "Red Tide" or algae blooms, but also the anaerobic (or suffocating) conditions in the ocean, due to the amount of organic material (or carbon) within the water that surpasses the capacity of the ecosystem to absorb, recycle or dispense of waste.** An anaerobic condition is a situation in which aquatic life cannot survive, due to the low levels of oxygen dissolved in the water or sediment. The Salmon farming industry supports this condition perpetually, since *every kilogram* of salmon feed placed in the ocean is equal in nitrogen to the sewage waste of *15 people*.

Currently, there are 32 million kilograms of dead salmon because of the virus of capital, which were left in the sea, destroying everything in its path, generating a collapse of maritime species, as well as the social collapse of adjacent communities in all aspects. The death of these salmon allowed for the appearance of the Red Tide, which resulted in an organic mass that began emitting sulfuric acid that is highly contaminating and quite dangerous. The venom of Capital becomes concrete.

These events demonstrate that the State along with the mega salmon farming industry, continue to use the ocean as an industrial wasteland, with the objective of lessening the financial costs of the corporate elite. These companies continue to pass on the costs of sanitary crisis to the marine environment, surrounding habitats and communities. The role of these technoscientific State institutions, such as the Institute for Fishing Promotion (IFOP),



have pointed out these catastrophes as having developed through “natural causes.” These include the growth of deadly algae in Cochamó and Reloncaví, the massive death of 10,000 sardines, anchovies, and smelts in the fishing town of Queule, the mass sickness of crustaceans in Cucao and Quetalmahue, and the massive Red Tide along the north shore of Aysén towards the Mansa Bay in Osorno. We should also add the mass sickness and death of 300 Sei whales on the coastline of Aysén, due to the consumption of toxic algae among other causes.

Capital in its most concrete manifestation is toxic (in what it carries). The only problem of this catastrophe and all others is that of CAPITAL, its imposed way of life, the devastation and exploitation of habitats, their surroundings, human beings and all other living beings. This machinery cannot live without the State, which supports it through its laws and its repression. Law and Power that simply reproduces itself.

Unto all of this, mobilizations throughout the entire southern region have developed, which have included fishermen, indigenous communities, and people in discontent. The point is to understand that the enemy of life are the usual culprits: The State, Capitalism, the authorities, the technocrats, those that impose a way of life. Only decentralized anarchic positions can negate all of these forms of power in practice. It is important to agitate and radicalize on the issues that matter most. We must deepen our analysis, which is not just an issue of mere bureaucracy. It is the inherent toxicity and devastation of Capital and the State that has caused a disaster wherever it has been imposed.

Individuals and collectives must continue to agitate and move with our anti-authoritarian principles unto a new attack from Capital. We must struggle against all toxicity that seeks to turn the territory into Capital. These extraction industries, whether in mining, forestry, fishery or salmon all cause the same harm. They destroy the territory, they destroy the environment, they impoverish and sicken communities!

The State and Capital are death, are imposed!

To agitate towards insurrection and disobedience against the same old culprits!

Where their power, their death machinery and their ideology does not live is where Anarchy lives!

TAKING APART AUTHORITY

[*ed. – Dated August 2016, this text was published in n°34 of the bi-weekly German-language anarchist newspaper Dissonanz, and concerns the aftermath of an incendiary sabotage that knocked out a police communications tower in Zürich, Switzerland. Houses were searched by the cops after the attack; one comrade is wanted for the action, and is currently in hiding. May the winds of revolt blow sand over their trail, for as long as they choose to remain underground...*]

A month has passed since the attack against the antenna of Zürich-Waidberg, a month of suspicious silence from the side of the media and the authorities. Only last week the first details started come to light, and we have learned from the media that the attacked antenna was no less than the emergency radio system of the Zürich police, supposed to be a back up in case the normal radio system isn't functioning. A fire destroyed the cables at the basis of this antenna, causing hundreds of thousands of franks damage, and putting the antenna out of service “for several days”. We also learned that an international warrant has been issued against the comrade the cops are looking for.

In light of these new details, the silence that followed this sabotage isn't surprising to us; **because what has been touched by this attack is a raw nerve that has embarrassed the entire police forces of Zürich, showing their vulnerability.** *What could have happened if at that moment, for one reason or another, there had been a breakdown of the radio system of the cops? Without the use of the radio to communicate, transmit orders and information, the Zürich police would probably have been seriously limited in its*



capacity to coordinate and react, creating a favourable situation for anyone who *has some scores to settle with this society.* But let's go a step further. And what if such a sabotage would have taken place during moments of social tension; for example during the riots in Bellevue^[1] a few years ago, or the ones in the Europa-Allee^[2]? When the defenders of order are not able to coordinate, they would have faced serious trouble to retake control of the situation and guarantee a return to normality. These riots, instead of brief riots of some hours, could maybe have had enough oxygen to spread in space and time. Even their characteristics could have transformed into *something different*: by creating a cartography difficult to control for the authorities because of their incapacity to coordinate, they could have opened up new spaces of thought: *Europa-Allee, and then? What do we want? How do we want to live?* Questions that would have got practical and immediate answers on the spot. The problem of gentrification for example is linked to the problem of wealth, of those who have and those who have not, and without the protection of the police forces, expropriation by those who have not could have been an answer. The revolt could even have gone beyond the single issue of gentrification, putting into question private property, and therefore one of the roots of the society of authority.

Facing the injustice and the abuse of this society, we feel often impotent. In the end, transforming society is an almost impossible objective; so what can a single person do about it then? **Without giving it much thought, we surrender ourselves to traditions, rituals, collective identities and repetitions of acts simply because it is what has always been done.** The quantity of people in the streets, of the provoked damage and of the injured cops become parameters of success or not for a demonstration. We do not want to admit that only measuring the quantitative side isn't anything else than an illusion we create for ourselves in order to keep on repeating the same rituals. The logics of “*ten today, hundred tomorrow*” prevents us from looking beyond



'Anarchic Days in Defense of the Land and the Sea' event, Puerto Montt, Chile, 24-25.02.16, with discussions, music, theatre and bookstalls

our own nose, to see that something else can be done, that even a small act can more drastically change a situation than permanent repetitions of “*recipes which proved themselves*”. We think it is necessary to develop the capacity to look beyond all these rituals and convenient habits which are atrophying our capacity of imagination, so as to find *other ways of acting*.

The silence that followed this attack has therefore been the fig leaf that tried to cover up a simple truth: the superiority in numbers and weaponry do not count a lot when facing human intelligence and ingenuity. A bunch of cables put on fire at the right moment and in the right spot by a singular person has the strength of taking a whole army apart, of transforming a situation that might seem static into something new, different and unforeseeable. Now, if one thinks about the fact that society as a whole can only function thanks to the presence of infrastructures that allow the circulation of flows, transformations, electricity, commodities, persons... about the fact that these infrastructures are present everywhere in the physical space, a whole world of possibilities to act and interact opens up in front of our eyes.

These last months, we have seen how a small fire on the right spot can also paralyze “half of Switzerland”^[3], how the burned cables of an antenna can also put part of the communication systems of the police out of functioning: what could have happened if these sabotages would have taken place on particular moments and interacting with other events?

State, economy and authority are not at all abstract and untouchable, it is enough to find weak spots, it is enough to have a little bit of spirit and imagination. For those who know where to look, the emperor is naked... and vulnerable. We wish the comrade who is on the run good luck, wherever he might be.

1. ed. – 2009 World Trade Organisation summit in Geneva, where demonstrators burned cars, threw molotovs at cops, attacked bank, jewelry shop and hotel targets, and looted stores.

2. ed. – At a 2014 ‘Reclaim the Streets’ party, all shop windows in this Zürich zone were destroyed, with around 1 million CHF damages. Police were taken by surprise, several injured, and even had equipment stolen from them.

3. ed. – July 7th, twin blazes ravaged the cabling of the Zürich railway security system, causing immediate halt to all traffic on the lines for hours.

“ANOTHER FIGURE OF THE MIGRANT”



[ed. – This interesting interview was conducted by the journal *Hostis*. Thomas Nail is the author of *The Figure of the Migrant*, a 2015 book. While we may disagree that there is any any one universal “place to start” in the sense he mentions (i.e. that of building so-called ‘counter-power’), we agree that attention to migrant strategies (past and present) could yield important insights/tactics for rebels.]

Hostis: *One may see the aims of Hostis and feel a tinge of moral discomfort when it begins to ask questions regarding the status of migrants, of refugees, and of exiles^[1], if only for the very reason that there remains some commitment on our part to the idea that to be content with a politics of recognition and a strategy of representation perpetuates the illusion of emancipation when all that can be achieved is Statist inclusion. In other words, once recognition as political strategy is exhausted, the very people who are indexed by this representation are left wanting. In this same vein, then, we might say that the question of representation, recognition, and the figure of the migrant forces us to go one step further – to say that “the real content of the demand ‘citizenship papers for all!’ could also be formulated as: everyone must have citizenship papers so that we can all burn them.”^[2] How does your concept of “migrant cosmopolitanism” deal with the potential merits and many shortcomings of this exhaustive and truncated application of Statist inclusion?*

Thomas Nail: Historically, there have been numerous figures of the migrant. For example, the nomad, the barbarian, the vagabond, and the proletariat are four major kinds of migratory figures. For me, the figure of the migrant is not a class or identity; it is a vector (a position in motion). As such, anyone can move into and out of it as territorial, political, juridical, and economic factors change. This position is one defined by the primacy of movement and can be formulated in the following way: the figure

of the migrant is the political figure who is socially expelled or dispossessed as a result, or as the cause, of their mobility. The migrant is the collective name for all the political figures in history who have been territorially, politically, juridically, and economically displaced as a condition of the social expansion of power.

Migrants are the true movers of history and political transformation, but this does not mean their movements are immune from cooptation by states, capital, or other forms of expulsion. In fact, it is their captured motion that is the very condition of social power in the first place (slavery, serfdom, waged labor, and so on). In this sense I think it is too simplistic to say that all of their movements are either antistate or reformist, in part because the difference between reformist acts and revolutionary acts is not an essential or formal one, it is a contingent and material one. An act is revolutionary when it results in revolution. Burning passports may or may not be revolutionary; it depends on the collective effects.

However, what is interesting to me about the figure of the migrant is that it has produced some pretty incredible collective effects that are completely outside territorial, statist, juridical, and capitalist circuits of social motion (slave and maroon societies, vagabond collectives, workers communes, and so on). If we want to think seriously about the possibilities of some kind of social organization distinct from the reactionary forces of territorial nation-states and capitalism, then we should start with those historically invented by migrants. Cosmopolitanism is the name often taken by the reactionary forces of states toward “including” migrants. This is not the worst thing that could happen, but it also does not accurately describe the tendency of what I am calling “migrant cosmopolitanism” to create nonexpulsive social structures outside such structures of representation.

H: *Do you see “migrant cosmopolitanism” as something distinct from more reformist and liberal notions of seeking the inclusion of, and the granting of rights to undocumented persons? The occupation of the Saint Bernard church^[3], which you have thought a lot about and which lasted from June 28 to August 23, 1996, strikes one as being something more than a politics of recognition. You also mention the No One Is Illegal migrant justice group based in Toronto as embodying the subversive and more radical aspects of the struggles around immigration, political refugees, and exiles. Obviously the tenacity of these struggles came from their*

level of self-organization and their ability to gain various forms of popular support, both materially and symbolically. What is it about these examples of migrant struggles that point beyond the shortcomings of a type of liberal approach to piecemeal reformism?

TN: What is so exciting to me about these movements is that they are not just asking for rights, they are demanding the abolition of citizenship altogether in a very specific way: by creating autonomous communities open to anyone regardless of their status. The slogan "Status for All" can be interpreted in two ways: "Everyone who lives here should have legal status within the juridical nation-state" or "If everyone has status, no one has status." The latter is consistent with No One is Illegal's demand for the abolition of nation-states and borders. Universal status undermines the territorial and national aspects of the state, and therefore undermines the state *tout court*. I have written elsewhere about the details of their Solidarity City campaign in Toronto.^[4] The aim of this campaign is to bypass the state altogether and organize migrants, social service providers, and allies into mutually supportive relations, regardless of status. Another example I have written about in *Returning to Revolution* is the Zapatistas.^[5] The Zapatistas are indigenous people in Mexico expelled from their land. As migrants in their own country, they have

decided to not simply demand rights from the state or migrate to the United States, but to build autonomous communes with their own nonexpulsive social structure.

H: Between 2008-2010 there was some publicity around the notion of migrant struggles taking up the idea of "demanding the right to stay home." This idea of trying to force a situation on the State where migrants don't have to leave, don't have to live the vicissitudes of migration itself also strikes us as something of interest, primarily for two reasons. First, the demand is situated in terms of an initial refusal to migrate, the demand to not be forced to live the life and fate of migrants moving from the global south to the global north; and second, because this initial refusal also refuses what capitalism has increasingly gained hold of, namely, public imagination and a people's way of investing and/or desiring a certain future. As Guattari said, "In my view, this huge factory, this mighty capitalistic machine also produces what happens to us when we dream, when we daydream, when we fantasize, when we fall in love, and so on."^[6] **So this initial refusal of being forced into the life of a migrant also acts as a refusal of investing in a future that coincides with whatever capitalism codes and reformulates as a desirable life for everyone – moving to a Western country, living a suburban lifestyle, replicating the heteronormative**

narratives found in Hollywood/ Blockbuster cinema in one's own personal life, or what have you. Simply put, this "demand for the right to stay home" fights at the level of "forms-of-life," and not simply at the level of Statist recognition of certain rights. What, if anything, has your work on these issues helped you clarify for yourself and others regarding this difference between struggling for State inclusion versus struggling for a 'form-of-life'? Or do you perhaps find this distinction unhelpful, outdated, conceptually ineffective, and so on?

TN: This is a great example and I deal with it at more length in *The Figure of the Migrant*. But in short, let me make two points. First, the "right to stay home" is a migrant movement and not the rejection of migration. Most folks involved in this movement are people who have already been expelled from their homes at one point or another. "The right to stay home" could just as easily be called "the right to return home" since most are already migrants. Take for example the millions of Mexican migrants in the United States who would much rather be back home in Mexico with their families. Or think of the millions of indigenous people around the world who are being expelled from their land by the capitalist accumulation of agricultural land. Even if they are not yet territorially expelled, they are already juridically, politically, and economically expelled from their social status in order to facilitate their geographical displacement. Even if some people are allowed to stay, what does this mean if everything around them has been destroyed by mining companies, monocrop farms, hydroelectric dams, and so on. One can become a migrant even if it is only the environment that changes.

Second, the idea of a migrant social movement around the right to stay or return home is a very old one. This strategy was the invention of the ancient figure of the migrant: the barbarian. The ancient world (Sumer, Greece, Egypt, Rome) is absolutely filled with slave revolts

"Nations and nationalism. Flags of countries and their borders more or less permeable, more or less lethal. States, laws and property deeds, but also cities and other permanent settlements. Sovereignty as a worldview that allows both the demand and collection of taxes and the recruiting of soldiers, enlisting the population in ways that are obvious and brutal or are more subtle. Bodies hanging from barbed wire or dried in the ruthless sun of the deserts. Bloated bodies that sink in dark depths or float on the open sea, far from the summer beaches. And the bodies crammed into the detention centres, concentration camps of capitalism for those without adequate papers or sufficient money. All this is only a small part of what it means to demarcate land and sea, that is, to impose non-natural barriers invented by some humans belonging to this civilisation that surrounds us and drowns us, even if the rope seems to us invisible or, maybe, golden. The barriers serve to exclude, to create a division between an inside and an outside, reflecting the division of the world into two classes: the exploited and the exploiters. The barriers, real or imaginary, are a necessary tool to form a "We", an identity that can serve as a union against all foreigners, that is, the stranger, the strange, the marginal, the deviant. It is no coincidence that "forastero" (a word for foreigner or stranger in Spanish) has the same etymological root as the words "forajido" (desperado), and "foresto" (forest). Formerly, everything that extended beyond the limits of a city was wild forest, and any tribe or culture from beyond the limits was accused of being uncivilised, lower, wild. Now as then, what is different must be rejected violently, either captured, tamed and absorbed, or simply crushed, because its very existence represents a grave danger for the stability of the system of domination carefully erected by those who hold the reins of society in their hands. This concerns the fear of losing everything, because control over a territory and population is totalitarian, an absolute truth, excluding any other possibility, precisely because the existence of something radically different threatens to help put in question the foundations of power."

– Destroy the Barriers



by captured barbarians, only a fraction of which were recorded in any detail, unfortunately. The primary demand of almost all of these revolts was the same: to return home or find a new home. In fact, this is the etymological meaning of the world "revolt" in the context of mass slavery: to return home. There is a fascinating reason why this becomes the dominant form of counterpower in the ancient world. For me this is less an issue of "form-of-life" than the "form-of-motion" proper to the migrant.

H: *In Means Without End, [Giorgio] Agamben presents the refugee as a figure of the threshold. Agamben's other chosen figures are quite tragic, the most famous being Bartleby and the muselmann of the camp. This is all to say that theoretical takes of the refugee routinely associate them with the power of incapacity. We're curious about why popular media seems all too ready to also characterize them in this way. Most high-profile news events, such as the recent migrant boat disasters in the Mediterranean, depict them as helpless. What is the form of power you find most useful in your analysis?*

TN: Ah, yes. Agamben has this great line in his essay "Beyond Human Rights" that is very inspiring to me. He says, "*It is even possible that, if we want to be equal to the absolutely new tasks ahead, we will have to abandon decidedly, without reservation, the fundamental concepts through which we have so far represented the subjects of the political (Man, the Citizen and its rights, but also the sovereign people, the worker, and so forth) and build our political philosophy anew starting from the one and only figure of the refugee.*" It's too bad he never followed up on this claim. I agree with the spirit of his point but I disagree about the content and method of this claim. This quote is one of the reasons I wanted to write *The Figure of the Migrant*. Agamben is on the right track, but he does not see the refugee as only one among many other figures of the migrant as I do, and therefore as part of a much larger philosophical project focusing on political motion and migrant counterpower.

But to your question: The refugee is an ancient figure of the migrant related to the barbarian. The two emerge at roughly the same time in history in the context of widespread slave revolts. Only when there is barbarism and slavery can there be the escaped slave who seeks asylum. The refugee (from the Latin word *fugere*) is the one who flees: first being forced to flee one's homeland as a captured slave, and then having to flee one's captor in favor of the *refugium*, or ἄσυλον (*asulon*, asylum). But the political limit of the figure of the refugee is that it does not follow the same imperative to revolt or "return home" as with barbarians like Spartacus, the Goths,

and others who tried to fight their way to freedom. Instead, the refugee remains tied to the *refugium*. In this way the refugee was simply bound to a new master: the god, temple, and priests that managed all the first refugee asylums for escaped slaves in the ancient world.

Of course, I do not want to say that this means all refugees are helpless! **My point is simply that the political figure of the refugee has a long genealogy that is still active today and tends to imply in its genealogy someone who is simply looking for a new master, a new nation-state, church, or refuge. Nation-states prefer dealing with this figure and would like to keep this historical meaning. Compare this to the refugee's historical twin, the barbarian!** The

barbarian is wild, chaotic, destructive, mobile, active, powerful, and so on: the destroyer of civilization. Historically, the barbarian is to be feared and the refugee is to be pitied by the gods. On this point I am against Agamben and on the side of Nietzsche [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2**

pg52], Benjamin [ed. – see '**A Profound Dis-ease**'], [Michael] Hardt, [Antonio] Negri, and many of the anarchists of the nineteenth century^[7]: we need a new barbarism.

H: *We are quite inspired by migrants' penchant for burning down the detention centers in which they are held captive. High-profile events include riots where inmates have taken over or destroyed large parts of facilities, as in Texas, Australia, and across the EU. Most political commentators have nothing positive to say about these events, though sometimes a litany of abusive practices come to light. Hostis is happy to celebrate these moments as a collective demonstration of the anarchist principle "destroy what destroys you." What do you see in this insistent desire to rebel?*

TN: This brings us to another figure of the migrant: the vagabond. **The masterless men and women of the Middle Ages (serfs, peasants, beggars, witches, rogues, and so on) significantly developed the migrant art of rebellion in its strictly etymological sense: turning back in direct violence.** Since barbarians are kidnapped from their home, their counterpower is related to their desire to return home. All violence is a means to the ends of escape. **While barbarian slaves could potentially escape the limits of their empires, by the Middle Ages there**

were fewer and fewer places left to flee outside the jurisdiction of some lord or another. Thus, vagabonds increasingly began to directly confront authority from within, by rebelling. This is not to say that there were not also raids or revolts of some kind, or that direct violence was missing from raids and revolts in previous ages, but simply that during the Middle Ages the primary goal of most migrant counterpower was less about supplies (raiding) or radical escape (revolt) than about direct assassination, political murder, burning, revenge, and desecration from within society without the goal of leaving it. Today the figure of the vagabond persists in migrant attacks on detention centers, the burning of passports, squatting, theft of electricity, property destruction, violent battles with police, and so on.



Multiple structures burnt down by inmates at Villawood detention centre, Sydney, Australia, 20.04.11

H: *To hazard a deceptively straightforward postcolonial question: what does the migrant tell us about ourselves?*

TN: Well, for one, we are all becoming migrants.^[8] People today relocate to greater distances more frequently than ever before in human history. While many people may not move across a regional or international border, they tend to change jobs more often, commute longer and farther to work, change their residence repeatedly, and tour internationally more often. Some of these phenomena are directly related to recent events, such as the impoverishment of middle classes in certain rich countries after the financial crisis of 2008, subsequent austerity cuts to social welfare programs, and rising unemployment. The subprime mortgage crisis led to the expulsion of millions of people from their homes worldwide, 9 million in the United States alone. Foreign investors and governments have acquired 540 million acres since 2006, resulting in the eviction of millions of small farmers in poor countries; and mining practices have become increasingly destructive around the world, including hydraulic fracturing [ed. – see **Special Hydraulic Fracture**] and tar sands^[9]. This general increase in human mobility and expulsion is now widely recognized as a defining feature of the twenty-first century.^[10] "*A specter haunts the world and it is the specter of migration.*"^[11]

However, not all migrants are alike in their movement. For some, movement offers opportunity, recreation, and profit with only a temporary expulsion. For others, movement is dangerous and constrained, and their social expulsions are much more severe and permanent. Today most people fall somewhere on this migratory spectrum between the two poles of "inconvenience" and "incapacitation." But what all migrants on this spectrum share, at some point, is the experience that their movement results in a certain degree of expulsion from their territorial, political, juridical, or economic status. Even if the end result of migration is a relative increase in money, power, or enjoyment, the process of migration itself almost always involves an insecurity of some kind and duration: the removal of territorial ownership or access, the loss of the political right to vote or to receive social welfare, the loss of legal status to work or drive, or the financial loss associated with transportation or change in residence. For all these reasons, the migrant is becoming the political figure of our time.



1. For instance, in the CFP [ed. – call for papers] for issue 2 we begin by asserting the following: "Seeking recognition is always servile. We have little interest in visibility, consciousness raising, or populist pandering."

2. Tiqqun, *Untitled Notes on Immigration*

3. ed. – In Paris; more than two-hundred migrants (mostly from Mali, Senegal and Mauritania) took shelter demanding regularisation of their immigration status, while the priest refused to sign the eviction notice, until riot police broke down the door and gassed the migrants out. The next day, when deportations had already begun, airport workers in Africa refused to unload the plane. In 2015 the church was briefly occupied again, during a string of police operations to disperse a group of around a hundred migrants from public parks and under-bridge shanties; "A majority of them were forcibly moved to the subway. There were obliged by force, by groups of three or four, to take the metro in different directions, separating those who had built a certain network of solidarity in conditions of extreme insecurity" (*The Government's War on Immigrants in the Streets of Paris*).

4. Thomas Nail, "Building Sanctuary City: No One is Illegal—Toronto on Non-Status Migrant

Justice Organizing," Upping the Anti no. 11

5. ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg41*

6. Félix Guattari, *Molecular Revolutions in Brazil*

7. ed. – "Bakunin's [ed. – see *To Love the Inhuman*] appeals to the "unleashing of the wicked passions" of the oppressed and exploited were seen by many of the more reasonable revolutionaries of the time as a barbaric call for the destruction of civilization. And Bakunin himself did call for "the annihilation of bourgeois civilization" along with "the destruction of all States" and the "free and spontaneous organization from below upward, by means of free associations". But Bakunin's French contemporary, Ernest Coeurderoy, was less conditional in his rejection of civilization [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg52*]. [...] And he, along with [Joseph] Dejacque and other anarchist revolutionaries of that time, appeals to the barbaric spirit of destruction..." (*The Rising of the Barbarians*).

8. With the rise of home foreclosure and unemployment people today are beginning to have much more in common with migrants than with certain notions of citizenship (grounded in certain social, legal, and political rights).

9. ed. – The tar sands deposit in Athabasca, Canada, is the largest known reservoir of crude bitumen in the world, underneath boreal forest and peat bogs, and needs intensive processing to produce fuel, and so one of the highest-carbon oils. The enterprise to extract it was described in the communique for a May 2010 firebombing by 'Fighting for Freedom Coalition', that destroyed a branch of its major financier Royal Bank of Canada in an Ottawa shopping district, as "one of the largest industrial projects in human history and perhaps the most destructive[...] cause of the second fastest rate of deforestation on the planet, [and] slated to expand several times its current size." (Roger Clement, 58 at the time, was sentenced to three and a half years for this attack, including six months for also smashing windows and ATMs at a different RBC branch, and refused to apologise in court.)

10. I use the word "expulsion" here in the same sense in which Saskia Sassen uses it to indicate a general dispossession or deprivation of social status.

11. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*

"In Brenner^[1] hundreds of anarchists, anti-racists and people angry at this world clash with the police for hours. It was a demo deliberately made to cause clashes, the press say, and yes, it was so, because there's always a good reason to clash with the cops and one more if they threaten to close yet another border. To erect walls on imaginary lines decided by the states and the authority in order to put us in a cage of rules, labels, documents. A CIE (prison for people without documents) in Bari [Italy] is thrown into turmoil by the prisoners while outside people in solidarity are encouraging the revolt: some fresh air at last! In July cops murder a twenty-three-year old *banlieu* [suburban estate ghettos] boy in a Paris police station. A week of street clashes, fires and anger against the cops follows. The same anger against the State's assassins that the Afro-American community has unleashed in the streets following the umpteenth murders of black boys by white cops in the USA (Dallas, Baltimore [ed. – see *Authorities Finally Confirm Stingray (IMSI) Use in Prison Island – in Scottish Prisons*]). Even Nobel peace prize winner Barack Obama has talked of 'racial war'. Yes, and not only: class war. The hit men paid by the white rich killing the black poor. All these images - these pictures one has in one's head because the TV, social networks, newspapers and YouTube must reproduce and spread everything making a spectacle of all the events and saying nothing of the reasons (or lying, manipulating them) - might be just images. Just more pictures to be shown off amidst the ever present indifference. Otherwise there's anger and the impossibility to stay put. This world is a prison, these lives of ours are half-survival. All the information and counter-information of the globe serve nothing if those who receive them don't have the impulse to act in order to change what they think unacceptable. [...]

Each one according to their attitudes, ends and consciences, but to act because the life that capitalism often makes us curse can be beautiful. [W]hen as revolutionaries we feel we are ever more surrounded by increasingly hostile contexts and subjects (from the disgusting average citizen to the prosecutor passing through the militant fascist), it is necessary for us who are writing to reinforce relations of solidarity and complicity, forge new ones, give ourselves time to meet up: give ourselves chances. To create spaces and times free from cops, money, hierarchies, social roles, so as we get to know one another as individuals and understand our desires, tensions of attack against the system. The present time is swirling like a seemingly untouchable giant, a fury and a one-way direction against which it seems impossible to act: it's always us who decide the threshold of possibility, taking good care not to confound the risk of repression with objective impossibility."



– How the Times are Changing...

1. ed. – At the Italian border 07.05.16, after the Austrian State had announced its closure and sent troops.

INVASIVE

– Nature in the Anthropocene

[ed. – This thought-provoking text studies the origins of the prevailing scientific/environmentalist orthodoxy around 'invasive species', and provides various dissenting theories of interest as well as problematising dominant (Western) narratives of 'pristine nature' and wilderness. Obviously the reader can investigate the merits or faults of these often-contradictory theories at their leisure, but we'll make one quick comment on 'Gaia theory' (broadly, the thesis that terrestrial life is composed of one single self-regulating organism) which has also been articulated by some anarchists in recent years. This thought seems to us a recapitulation of the monotheistic desire to recognise some 'higher unity' – when what we see of the world around us is a chorus of disparate energies and tensions which can cause

chaos, harmonies or entropy in their own turns – or the machine-orientated thinking of 'ecosystem' theorists native to industrial society. As another side-note, it's interesting how the classical 20th century discourse around 'invasives' closely mirrors the demonisation of 'illegal' immigrants...]

"Nature loves to hide"
– Heraclitus

*"Heaven and Earth are everlasting
The reason Heaven and Earth
can last forever
Is that they do not exist for themselves
Thus they can last forever."*
– Laozi, *Dao De Jing* Chapter 7

The topic of invasive species is a pressing one in our era of climate change and documented mass extinctions at the global level. According to the most popular narratives propagated in the media and scientific literature, the number and diversity of species are diminishing at an alarming rate: the result of the neglect if not outright destruction of our environment. **In this process, foreign plants, animals, and bacteria are blamed for harming large sections of native wildlife as well as economic and conservation endeavors. Both government agencies and radical environmental activists alike are concerned with the supposed health of particular ecosystems, as well as the fight to preserve "pristine" and "untouched" landscapes from the harm that techno-industrial civilization inflicts on them.**

The purpose of this paper is to assess these attitudes in the face of recent literature on the topic. It is my contention



heal various ecosystems and prepare the way for life to continue after environmental disruption. It is my contention that invasive species represent the failure of humanity to control its own environment, a failure that will only get worse as climate change and environmental degradation continue to change life on Earth as we know it.

The Official Story

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines invasive species in the following passage: *"Invasive species means an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Invasive species are one of the largest threats to our terrestrial, coastal and freshwater ecosystems, as well as being a major global concern."*

A book geared toward children, *Plants Out of Place* by Courtney Farrell, states the following concerning invasives and their harmful effects on environments: *"Invasive plants compete with native plants in many ways. Some invasive plants create a lot of shade. Without sunlight, certain types of native plants die. A few invasive plants even make toxins in their leaves. The toxins poison the soil so other plants cannot live there. After a while, some native plants completely die out."*

How to Eradicate Invasive Plants by Teri Dunn Chace is a book geared toward gardeners in particular and states the following concerning the persistence of invasive plants in urban and suburban gardens: *"You may have heard the famous*

that invasive species are more an indicator of a crisis in a particular environment and not the cause. The main culprit in most cases in the phenomenon of species invasion is [ed. – civilised] human intervention and the destruction of habitat. Indeed, some writers would consider invasives to be a sort of bandage that nature puts over one of its wounds to

Ralph Waldo Emerson quote to the effect that, 'a weed is a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.' A pretty thought, Ralph, but you did not get out in the mud and pastures much, or live in the times in which we now live. Some people might argue that a weed is a plant with no virtues".

One of the key contemporary figures in the biology of invasives is Dr. Daniel Simberloff, the Gore Hunger Professor of Environmental Science at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN. His most recent book for the consumption of policy makers and laymen [sic] is entitled, *Invasive Species: What Everyone Needs to Know*, published by Oxford University Press in 2013. In this work, Simberloff seeks to give a broad overview concerning important elements of invasive biology and particularly its effects on human society and development. **Simberloff is a major exponent of the "orthodox" biological view that invasive species have an overall negative impact on humans and nature**, and he goes over the history of control and eradication of these species.

For example, Simberloff states that invasives can alter entire landscapes permanently and for the worse if not dealt with by conscientious human intervention. For example, he writes: *"Because so many species are closely tied to particular habitats, impacts that greatly change the habitat can ripple through an entire community. For example, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the northeastern North American coast was composed of extensive mud flats and salt marshes. Nowadays, it is usually characterized by rocky beaches. This dramatic change is all due to the European common periwinkle snail... introduced (probably for food) to Nova Scotia around 1840. It slowly spread southward, eating algae on rocks and also root stocks of marsh grasses and transforming vegetated coasts into barren rocky shores. Thus, the periwinkle has modified the entire physical structure of the intertidal zone, and in the process has affected many other species. It displaces native snails, and prevents barnacle larvae and young seaweeds from settling, and marshland birds move away."*



European Common Periwinkle

This is not the only case of an invasive species drastically altering a regional environment. Charles Mann, in his book,

1493: *Uncovering the World Columbus Created*, documents many cases of invasive species affecting various environments through what modern historians call “the Columbian exchange” [ed. – after the genocidal Italian ‘explorer’ Christopher Columbus]. For example, the northeastern forests of the United States had neither earthworms nor honey bees prior to the arrival of the Europeans. Thus, forest floors piled up thick with leaves and other debris. These forests were drastically altered with the arrival of earthworms in European agricultural plants that ate these layers of debris, and many species were affected by this drastic change of environment.

More commonly, however, invasive species are blamed for competing for resources with or outright eating native species that they encounter upon “invasion”.

Perhaps one of the worst culprits is the brown tree snake that came to the island of Guam from Australia in U.S. Armed Forces planes around 1950. They have since decimated the local bird population due to having no natural predators. Similarly on island environments in particular, such creatures as European house cats, rabbits, and feral pigs can devastate animal and plant populations due to their taking advantage of novel conditions where they are considered neither prey nor predator by native species. This does not include invasive plants, such as Japanese kudzu, the plant that “ate the [U.S.] South”, which can crowd out native vegetation and alter the appearance of entire landscapes. *“Many species today,”* Simberloff states, *“on continents as well as islands, are dwindling toward extinction, even if the final death throws will be centuries from now. The decline of a substantial fraction of those is due wholly or partly to introduced species.”*

Simberloff and other scientists working in invasive biology readily admit that invasive species are almost exclusively the product of human activity. Nevertheless, they advocate for even more human activity, up to and including outright eradication, to eliminate elements of nature that are “out of place,” for the benefit of humans and other native living things. For example, unexpected changes in predator / prey relationships can lead to trophic cascades, introducing further imbalances in an ecosystem that has already been invaded. Simberloff offers the following example of this phenomenon in his book: *“An interesting trophic cascade occurred on subantarctic Macquarie Island, a World*

Heritage site discovered in 1810. This case demonstrates how indirect effects such as trophic cascades can lead to unintended harmful consequences. Sailors introduced cats to control rats and mice that they had inadvertently introduced and that threatened their food stores. In 1878, sealing gangs introduced rabbits as a local food source. The rabbits thrived and also proved to be a common prey item for the cats. The rabbits caused enormous damage to the vegetation, so the rabbit myxoma virus was introduced in 1968. Rabbit numbers quickly plummeted, and vegetation began to recover. However, the cats then turned to native ground-nesting birds as alternative prey, spurring a cat eradication program initiated in 1985. All cats were eliminated by 2000, but then the



Brown Tree Snake

rabbit population exploded and again devastated the vegetation. Thus, through a trophic cascade, introduction then elimination of cats led to a decline in vegetation.”

Thus, invasive biological orthodoxies dictate that there is an equilibrium within a given ecosystem that existed prior to human intervention. Should this equilibrium be thrown off for some reason, it is the human obligation to try to restore it, either by quarantine of the invasive, introducing predator species to reduce the number of the invader species, or outright eradication by chemical or other means. In spite of the setbacks that may present themselves like the trophic cascade scenario mentioned above, scientists working on invasives usually recommend vigorous intervention as soon as possible to root out these plants or animals before they become too much of a problem. Indeed, even where invasives appear to be relatively harmless or even beneficial, they counsel that the harmful effects of these species will sometimes only manifest themselves decades after initial introduction. It is better, so the reasoning goes, to be safe than sorry.

Invasive Biology Revisionism

In the past few years, many scientists and writers have come to question the premises behind this zero-tolerance attitude towards invasives. Dr. Ken Thompson is a Professor in the Department of Animal and Plant Sciences in the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom and author of the 2014 book, *Where Do Camels Belong? The Story and Science of Invasive Species*. In this book, Thompson like Simberloff endeavors to provide a comprehensive introduction to

the topic of invasives, but this time from the view that they are not as harmful as most scientists to this point have stated.

Thompson tells the story of Charles Elton, one of the early pioneers in the study of invasive species, and his rather problematic attitudes toward “invaders” that were a product of having lived through the tumultuous war-ridden years of the early 20th century. As Thompson states: *“Elton had lived through two world wars, so ‘invasion’ was a more loaded idea for him than it is for you or me. Indeed, in the Second World War, he worked on controlling rabbits, rats, and mice – ‘alien invaders’ that were eating stored food and farmers’ crops, and were thus practically in league with the Nazis.”*

Moreover, Elton firmly believed that nature was a static thing, and the contemporary order of nature was rational just as is: *“Elton believed firmly that species belong to wherever they happen to be right now, irrespective of length of tenure or of where they had evolved or migrated from. More than that, he believed that belonging confers rights of occupancy, that these rights extend indefinitely into the future, and that natives are morally superior to aliens.”*

This is all to say that for Elton and many conservation biologists influenced by him, the idea of “invasive species” comes from a political preference for stability as pictured in idealized human societies. Thompson spends much of his book documenting why this static vision is not very realistic.

For example, Thompson discusses the persistence of the much-villainized purple loosestrife in the wetlands of North America, and cites one review article by Canadian ecologist Claude Lavoie stating: *“There is certainly no evidence that purple loosestrife ‘kills wetlands’ or ‘creates biological deserts’; as it is repeatedly reported. For instance, 63 insect genera, representing 38 families and seven orders, have been collected from purple loosestrife invaded sites in Manitoba. There are no published studies (at least in peer-reviewed journals) demonstrating that purple loosestrife has an impact on waterfowl or fishes.”*

Nor is this the only invasive with an unmerited bad reputation. Tamarisk is often blamed in the U.S. Southwest for crowding out species and negatively disrupting ecosystems, but such damage is more imagined than observed: *“Tamarisk illustrates another important principle: once an alien invader gets a bad name, it becomes easy to blame it for any*

perceived environmental problem in the vicinity. The original riparian woodlands were the home of the endangered south-western willow flycatcher, and tamarisk was widely assumed to be one of the reasons for its decline, but it now turns out that in some areas many of the flycatchers nest quite happily in tamarisk, and that fledging success there is indistinguishable from that in native trees. Indeed, concerned over loss of habitat for the flycatcher, the US Fish and Wildlife Service refused permission for the release of tamarisk biocontrol insects in parts of the bird's range."

Nor is it at all evident that invasive species automatically cause mass extinctions of native species. Thompson cites marine invasives as an example: "[T]he 80 alien marine species introduced to the North Sea in recent centuries have caused no native extinctions so far, ditto for at least 70 species established in the Baltic, and the massive influx of species into the Mediterranean Sea via the Suez Canal has so far failed to cause more than a tiny number of local extinctions."

Finally, Thompson exhorts readers to give up on the idea of nature as neatly ordered and static. He summarizes his thoughts in the following passage: "The view of the biosphere you learned in school, disturbed to varying extents by humans, is seriously out of date. The modern world is essentially a mosaic of new 'anthropogenic biomes' (croplands, plantations, settlements, cities, rangelands), with here and there natural ecosystems embedded within them. It's because so much of the world has been transformed so dramatically that there is now a consistent 'winning' syndrome. **In a world before significant human influence, there was room for everyone, and all available tickets had some chance of winning. It's only in the last few thousands years, and especially in recent centuries and decades, that being a rat or a weed has turned out to be the golden ticket in life.**"

For Thompson, the "invasion" of out-of-place species is best tackled by no action at all. Since invasive species often prosper only in environments adversely affected by human behavior, once that particular environment has "healed" itself, the invader often goes away or is severely curtailed by the renewed dominance of native plants. Thus, Thompson suggests the best way to get rid of invasives is just to ignore them.

Environmental reporter Fred Pearce has an even more optimistic view of invasive species in his recently published book, *The New Wild: Why Invasive Species Will Be Nature's Salvation*. This book outlines even more emphatically why invasive

species are almost entirely a product of human negligent intervention into the environment, and how often invasive species arrive on the scene to "clean up" the mess that people have made. More importantly, the premise underlying Pearce's book is that the "fragility" of nature in general and ecosystems in particular is a myth. Most researchers have worked from the premise that various organisms within an ecosystem co-evolve within it, and invasives upset a delicate balance between all of them. Pearce however echoes other scientists who believe that "ecological fitting" is a better explanation for the interactions between organisms in a given environment, citing Green Mountain on Ascension Island in the Atlantic: an environment entirely made up of non-native species that have formed a completely functioning ecosystem in the space of 150 years. **Pearce's idea of nature in this book emphasizes self-organization and versatility rather than stasis and fragility.** The appearance of invasives is usually a sign of extreme environmental stress due to human activity, and can also have a "healing effect" depending on the circumstances.

Examples of this phenomenon occur in many water-borne invasives. Lake Victoria in Uganda in the 1990's was massively invaded by water hyacinth, to the point that it was almost impassible by boat. However, in 1998, due to the heavy rains of an El Nino⁽¹⁾ year pouring fresh water into the lake, the plant began to recede. Scientists realized that the water hyacinth thrived due to the amount of pollution in the lake that had deprived the water of oxygen in its bottom layers; the fresh rain water had "washed" the lake clean. As an Amazonian plant, the polluted environment low in oxygen was ideal for its growth. When such heavy rain ceased, the pollution began to build up in the lake again, and so did the water hyacinth.

This sequence of events has been repeated in such cases as the infestation of *Caulerpa taxifolia* [ed. – a species of seaweed, native to the Indian Ocean but widely used ornamentally in aquariums] in the Mediterranean and the zebra mussel in the North American Great Lakes: **due to pollution, an invasive organism takes advantage of the polluted environment to become an apparent menace, only to recede again once the environment recovers.** While the organism may still be present, it is no longer able to dominate in the context of a healthy ecosystem. In some cases, if biodiversity is something to prize, invasives may also augment biodiversity, and not diminish it. Pearce argues that for a dominant group of scientists: "[A]lien species don't count and are not counted. They do not exist as part of nature. They have no place. They are un-nature, if not anti-nature. They should

"The wild is often characterized as pristine. One element of the myth of the pristine is changelessness. In books, the intellectually rigorous will mention how nature is always changing, how even when it finds stability it cycles. They write the same thing about acephalous societies that are not properly "historical" in the Marxist sense. I had read these texts and understood them, but the idea was meaningless, or at least unactualized, until I took in all the intimate changes in one particular forest over a span of decades. The concept of pristinity conveys a certain fragility.

Wilderness is not wild unless it is untouched. I see it reflected in the tendency of post-modernists not to talk about freedom, to read any kind of influence as a form of corruption and thus a circumvention of liberty. So close, yet so far, they have deconstructed the self, and found liberty meaningless because they still use the rationalist, Enlightenment [ed. – see 'A Profound Dis-Ease'] concept, based on sovereignty, a naturally endowed lord over his domain. Another kind of freedom dwells in the world where the self only exists through its relations, and the freedom of one does not end but begins with the freedom of another. [...]

The wild is everywhere, ceaselessly pushing back. The only thing it needs from us are cracks. In the city, in the countryside, all of it impoverished by centuries or millennia of progress, wildness and freedom are active forces. Those who say there is no outside to capitalism never talk about crab grass or sparrows. They are almost right, there is one tiny, infinite thing they forget, and it is the most important thing of all."

– Sever



A mother boar, with her sucklings, moving in to forage rubbish on the city outskirts of Barcelona; an increasing phenomena around some Spanish urban centres

be gone. Under this definition, biodiversity in the twenty-first century can only go down. Extinction could cut the number of species, but introductions can never increase it. Thus the inconvenient fact that alien species actually increase real

biodiversity in many places is simply defined away... It sounded more like ideology than good science."

Indeed, Pearce names names and states that Simberloff and other scientists seek evidence to confirm their bias against invasive species. For example, Pearce breaks down the cases mentioned in Simberloff's *Invasive Species: What Everyone Needs to Know*, showing that Simberloff focuses inordinate attention on "tiny specks" of the planet like isolated islands while devoting few pages to places like Africa where invasives seem to do far less harm. Pearce calls out the philosophical biases of many scientists and policy makers: "**The idea of nature's balance and how humans were capable of transgressing or destroying it[...] is implicit in the biblical story of the Garden of Eden, in which sinning humans are cast out from the garden.** They were separated from nature and doomed to damage her. The idea has persisted right into the modern world, in which our view of nature is, ostensibly at least, based on science. The balance of nature has become a 'foundational metaphor of ecology,' says Stephen Trudgill, a British geographer from Cambridge University who specializes in what he calls our social engagement with nature. Ecology, he says, is science built on 'the guilt-laden notion that we have disturbed the natural order, and it is now all wrong and our fault.'"

Thus, the central thrust of Pearce's idea of a "new wild" is that there was no "natural balance" to upset in the first place. And thus there is not a central cast of characters that is supposed to occupy a certain region or ecosystem, if "ecosystem" is even an appropriate name for a group of organisms living together in a particular area. (Often, people mistake a native organism for a non-native organism based on how much of a nuisance it seems to them, as in the case of the highly problematic sycamore tree in Great Britain.) Nature here is dynamic and on the move. If new actors appear, they may at first seem to get the upper hand in some cases, but soon these regions reconstitute themselves, and nature continues what it has been doing for millions of years.

Some writers take a more holistic approach toward invasives, articulating how these species can have a "healing

effect" on the earth and human bodies in the face of severe disruption of ecosystems. One such writer is Timothy Lee Scott, a Chinese medicine practitioner and herbal medicine specialist. In 2010 he came out with a book entitled, *Invasive Plant Medicine: The Ecological Benefits and Healing Abilities of Invasives*. While the primary aim of the book is to provide health care with the plants that are becoming pervasive in our environment, Scott also takes the opportunity to reflect philosophically on the meaning of invasives in a polluted and tainted world. **Like one of his mentors, Stephen Harrod Buhner, Scott believes in the agency of plants and not merely their being passive towards the actions of other sentient beings.** Scott is openly a proponent of the Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in which the Earth is seen as a "living organism of interdependent biosystems that feed one another in order to sustain the whole life of the planet." In this sense, Scott states that: "Gaia has been fully self-regulated by all life on earth for hundreds of millions of years, and our unprecedented time in the planet's history is requiring extreme adjustments of ecosystems."

For Scott, the pervasiveness of invasives signals a time of general illness of the planet, including for humans who inhabit it. His main premise is that, just as ecosystems are getting sick and susceptible to invasive organisms, so are our bodies: "The degradation of the health of the whole as an unintended consequence of futile attacks on invaders is not an isolated phenomenon but instead it is a pattern that repeats on the macrocosmic as well as microcosmic scales. The deteriorating health of our forests is analogous to the current weakening of the human immune system. Widespread chronic disease, antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and emerging, endemic diseases result from modern medical practices just as Gaia's infected biosystems are caused by modern industrial and agricultural practices. Invasive epidemics are based on the widespread use of toxins and poisons that infect all biosystems, great and small, and these destructive influences trickle down into cellular life, mortally impregnating all



A landscape in the southern U.S. covered with spreading Japanese kudzu

Earth's species with deformative and abortive destiny."

In spite of their being a sign of a sick environment, invasives can be not merely part of the problem but also part of the solution. Very often, supposedly ominous invasives can be the "first responders" to scenes of ecological devastation. As Scott writes: "*When my wife and I moved onto this piece of land, it had been recently logged, and a couple of acres had been cleared for a house site. Blackberry colonized this desolate hillside and protected it from further erosion and intrusion. The plant descended on this land like a lion protecting her cub, showing her thorny fangs with ferociousness. It was angry, protective, reclaiming the wild, and there was no venturing onto this space without bloody repercussions.*"

Scott also explains that invasive plants also serve as filtration systems that take dangerous pollutants out of environments. They can absorb harmful chemicals left by industrial production, much as our kidneys, lungs, and other organs keep toxins out of our bodies. In this instance, Scott comes to the defense of kudzu, the "vine that ate the South": "Expansion of infrastructure, abandonment of farmland, and the establishment of plantations of trees for the lumber industry are major contributors to helping move this plant throughout the area. Kudzu is a warrior plant that tries to protect these areas with its viney presence, creating a fence-like barrier to keep out further intrusion. This ability is exemplified by not even allowing battle tanks on a Virginia military base to move through their viney entanglement. Kudzu follows along the trail of petroleum that is left behind by massive fossil fuel-based machinery, and it helps clean this contaminant and other toxins from the environment as it protects it. This steadfast plant essentially counters the agro-military-industrial fossil fuel based encroachments, and in order to do so, has to be a very powerful entity indeed."

Although invasives are often blamed for bringing about human illness, as Scott shows throughout

the book, they also heal human illnesses that are brought about by the encroachment of civilization. **Lyme disease in the U.S. Northeast is often blamed on the incursion of invasive plants, but Scott has alternative explanation for the arrival of Japanese knotweed in Lyme diseases-infested areas:** *“Knotweed is now widely used for the treatment of Lyme disease, and according to Stephen Buhner, the plant tends to move to infected areas six months to one year prior to the arrival of the disease. In addition to addressing a variety of invading pathogens with potent antimicrobial tendencies, Japanese knotweed’s abundance of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants help the body to process numerous toxins and cancers.”*

Thus, one can conclude that invasive species are helpers that come to the aide of ecosystems and our own bodies: *“Invasive plants are the warriors of the landscape, pioneering toxic and infected terrains, where they fight in the battle against pathogenic influences of our ecosystems. Sometimes they engage the warrior within us and impart potent messages to our being so that we make use of their medicine.”*

Tao Orion, a permaculture designer and writer based in Oregon, has recently published a book based on her own experience with invasives entitled, *Beyond the War on Invasive Species: A Permaculture Approach to Ecosystem Restoration*. In this book, Orion takes a more systematic ecological approach towards invasive species, and as well as speculates concerning their wider use in permaculture management endeavors. **Orion’s experience comes through working in conservation and witnessing firsthand that attempted chemical eradication with herbicides such as glyphosate does not work in restoring habitats (these species kept coming back to invaded areas), and that another approach must be taken to restore disturbed ecosystems.** As she states in one passage: *“If the goal of restoration is to return the site to its ‘original’ state – and this is the stated goal of many restoration projects – then glyphosate-treated soil with artificially limited zinc, iron, calcium, manganese, and magnesium cannot possibly approximate historical soil characteristics... Native species rely on a vast array of functional relationships among soil microorganisms and fungi whose populations are depleted or destroyed by the use of glyphosate-based herbicides, If the goal of ecological restoration is to approximate precontact ecosystem conditions, then herbicides like glyphosate cannot be part of a management strategy.”*

Such a realization has made Orion and other conservation practitioners more aware that a holistic and “macroscopic” view of an entire ecosystem is needed to know the role of the invasive within it: *“The organism-centered analysis so prevalent in the literature of invasion ecology leads to organism-centered management, revolving around the eradication of specific species in an attempt to return ecosystems to their former diversity, abundance, and resilience. Although there is little research suggesting this works, eradicating invasive species is considered normal and necessary within the framework of contemporary ecosystem restoration. Although many restoration ecologists know that there are larger ecological processes at work in the context of any invasion, invasion ecology as a discipline remains rooted in the idea that invasive species are the drivers of, rather than passengers on, the seemingly runaway train of ecosystem change. A more holistic approach would look at the dynamic of invaded ecosystems as interdependent with the invading organism rather than focusing on details like whether a particular plant contains more or less vegetative biomass than another plant that lived there before.”*

Orion then proceeds to offer multiple examples of cases where the reintroduction of a native species is practically impossible due to an altered environment far more favorable to the invasive plant. She then describes the role of a niche in a given habitat, that is, the function that a particular species play in providing food, shelter, and other benefits to organisms living around it it. **One notable example of this is the declining number of beavers throughout North America who shaped the landscape with their dam building which in turn created wetlands and meadows, allowing many other organisms to thrive. Orion notes that the giant reed, an invasive, performs a replacement role in the California landscape:** *“In the absence of an animal whose engineering feats increased sediment retention, spread water beyond the channel, and decreased water flow velocity, there is a plant growing that does many of the same things. As Parmenides mentioned nearly two thousand years ago, nature abhors a vacuum. Robust stands of giant reed do preclude the growth of native riparian vegetation. They also don’t provide habitat for the diversity of animals that native species do, but given the alteration of stream structure engendered by the loss of beavers and other related changes in land use and hydrology, there is no indication that native riparian vegetation, including*



The kits of a beaver colony discovered mysteriously in 2014 on the River Otter in Devon, England, after a period of presumed extinction in the British Isles from hunting

flood-adapted willow and cottonwood, would survive in the altered conditions.”

Thus, according to Orion, invasive species are neither totally harmful nor totally harmless, and they can get out of hand if not properly managed. But the only effective way to do address them is to take into consideration their role in a given ecosystem, and work with them rather than against them in the process of restoration.

On a related theme, Orion polemicizes against the idea of wilderness, or land untouched by human hands, stating that places that we perceive as “wild” are often really abandoned projects of land management that went on for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans. The prevalence of “food forests” in places like the Amazon and the environments full of medicinal and edible plants noted by various European explorers were neither happy accidents nor the product of untainted nature, as Orion states: *“The plants and animals that are now considered native are not static features of an ecosystem; they are relics of conscientious stewardship, and it is this stewardship that is required if their populations are to be maintained. Many native plants are well adapted to proliferate with the disturbance that harvesting and other cultivation activities provide.”*

Orion’s permaculture approach to the environment is one of “use it or lose it”, The wilderness model, created artificially by the descendants of white settlers in the 19th century, dictated that the only way to respect and save a land was to leave it alone and keep it off limits to all human activity. Orion states that, paradoxically, the only way that we will save a piece of land is if it sustains us and we develop a symbiotic relationship with it.

Orion thus spends the last part of her book presenting various ideas on how to restore environments utilizing invasives and their products to create alternative economic prospects, thus defending habitats by integrating them into human societal endeavors. **Orion indicates that the predominant manner by which humans**

take care of their environment is to employ it wisely in a sustainable way of living. Invasive species in her estimation will help humanity get from our current ecocidal regime to something more harmonious and holistic: **“Restoration in this sense is not so much a process of going back, but of moving forward into the unknown, and using our creativity and the tools available to us to create conditions in which life can thrive... In so doing, we will learn how to best encourage the proliferation of highly diverse and abundant ecosystems and manage invasive species in the process. We will not achieve anything of the sort by continuing to eradicate these novel organisms in the vain hope that the ecosystems where they live will be the same as they were in some idealized time in the past. We are here now, on the cusp of the sixth great planetary extinction, with climate change intensifying, and the ways that we relate to the land that sustains us will become ever more central to designing our way through the challenges to come.”**

Some would state that drastic environmental change has already happened. The distinguished Professor of Biology, Richard B. Primack, wrote a book released in 2014 entitled, *Walden Warming: Climate Change Comes to Thoreau's Woods*, documenting his years of research studying the change in the environment around Walden Pond in Massachusetts, famous as being the inspiration of 19th century U.S. philosopher Henry David Thoreau [ed. – see **Panopticons Then & Now**]. Thoreau, being one of the first environmentally-conscious writers [ed. – of modern Euro-American heritage], took meticulous notes concerning the behavior of the flora and fauna in the 19th century, including when certain flowers bloomed, when certain birds returned from migrations to the south, when pond ice melted, etc. What Primack and his fellow researchers found is that the behavior of these plants and animals has slowly but surely changed, as has the landscape of Walden Pond itself: *“We gradually realized that there were a lot of species that Thoreau and later botanists recorded in Concord that we were not seeing. Of the species seen by Thoreau in the mid-nineteenth century, mainly in the 1850's, we failed to find fully a quarter of them during our first years of searching in 2003, 2004, and 2005 – and no one that we spoke with seemed to be able to tell us where to find them.... And for many other species, the plants were still present in Concord, but in very limited numbers.”*

Primack speculates that many species of plants in particular have disappeared due to the climate becoming warmer earlier in the spring, throwing off native plants and opening up opportunities for such

invasives as purple loosestrife and other flowers: *“This result shows clearly that the success of invasive plant species is at least partly due to their ability to adjust their flowering time (and presumably their leafing-out time) in response to a changing climate. This physiological flexibility gives these invasive species a great advantage and allows them to outcompete native species and increase greatly in abundance.”*

The effects of climate change are thus slowly occurring before our eyes, and native species cannot be preserved by conservation efforts alone, if at all: *“The effects of climate change are already here in Concord, right now, and are already determining which species are winners and which species are losers. These simple and startling results tell us that global warming – something many of us consider to be a problem of the distant future that will affect our grand-children or even great-grandchildren – has already begun its advance right in Thoreau's Concord. Species that can deal with a warming climate will be able to persist and expand in Concord, but species that can't deal with climate change are declining in abundance and are heading toward local extinction.”* (Emphasis in the original.)

Conclusion

From these diverse conversations concerning invasive species, the most undisputed point is that we are entering in an epoch of great unknowns. One thing that is certain is that the consensus that considered invasives to be a massive threat to ecosystems and biodiversity will require greater nuance and revision as we go forward. Major premises of invasion biology may have been based on questionable ideology and bad science. In a discussion of the lackadaisical manner in which researchers have cited one particular influential paper against invasives, Professor Matthew K. Chew of Arizona State University notices the following in his own 2015 paper, *“Ecologists, Environmentalists, Experts, and the Invasion of the ‘Second Greatest Threat’”*: *“Lax citation practices are a well-known rattling skeleton in academe's closet. Categorising and quantifying their occurrence to determine whether ecologists, conservation biologists, or invasion biologists are any more predisposed to citing unread sources based on their reputed content than practitioners in any other discipline would be a monumental undertaking. But the flexibility with which the claim of Wilcove et al. has been deployed is impressive. There are so many extant permutations that it is impractical, even electronically, to inventory them. Many paraphrasers fail to acknowledge that the finding was limited to the United States. Few ever note that it*

was strongly skewed by the inclusion of Hawaiian cases, and virtually none that it was grounded in anecdotal data.”

No matter what our predisposition towards the idea that invasive species are harmful to ecosystems overall, much of the actual data to support the claim ranges from inconclusive to highly dubious. And in particular cases where they seem to be a plague of Biblical proportions, they are often the scapegoat for larger human-driven problems in an ecosystem, such as pollution or the loss of habitat.

The main theoretical lesson that I conclude with is that a proper understanding of invasive species prevents us from falling into two seemingly opposite but related errors. **On the one hand, invasives show that, even if there is no “purely natural” apart from human intervention, human agency has not achieved perfect dominance over what would commonly be deemed as “nature”. In spite of modern pretense to the contrary, humanity cannot and perhaps will never totally control nature, and its plans will continue to be frustrated by unruly and undominated life that invades manicured and cultivated spaces.** On the other hand, invasive species undermine the idea of “wilderness” and perhaps “wildness” itself, showing that our modern ideas of what “untouched” nature should look like are just as problematic as the Promethean impulse^[2] to bring all things under human control. Going forward into an epoch of perhaps extreme environmental change, we will have to navigate between these two extremes. We will continue to rely upon and manipulate the environment as we have always done, but as always we will be checked and even humbled by the great mystery that lies beyond us; a mystery that can cause both destruction and wonder, dearth and plenty, and life and death for particular organisms in the long parade of existence. For successful creatures of the Anthropocene^[3], to paraphrase John Henry Newman, to live is to change, and to survive is to change often.

1. ed. – *El Niño is a term for the warm phase of the so-called ‘El Niño Southern Oscillation’, associated with a band of warm ocean water that develops in the central and east-central equatorial Pacific, which causes drought in Asia and huge floods in America and the Caribbean, cooler weather in north Europe and north-east U.S., at two- to seven-year intervals for at least the past 300 years, possibly longer.*

2. ed. – *In reference to Prometheus, the one in ancient Greek mythology who stole fire from the sacred Mount Olympus and gave it to humankind; the term conjures themes of the “over-reaching of modern humanity into dangerous areas of knowledge”.*

3. ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg17**

SMART ATTACK!

– from Linky electricity meters to smart cities

[ed. – From #10 of *Le Postillon*, from the 'European Silicon Valley' of Grenoble, France, Europe's capital of technological development and so subject to rampant gentrification as to remain attractive to researchers, start-up creators and engineers. On the introduction of Linky, the first three million should be fitted by the end of 2016, with 90% replacement of old meters (35 million) intended by 2020. Installation will be compulsory for welfare recipients and any insulating their homes. Bills will rise 10-20% due to new consumption calculations.

Linky contains R.F.I.D. chips (see the supplement to *Return Fire vol.3; Smarter Prison?*); also, radio frequencies emitted are linked to cancer, leukemia, etc. (not to mention the toxicity created in their production) – all electrical appliances nearby to the units then re-emit these radio frequencies. Following pilot schemes in southern France, University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis researchers in 2015 recommended "incentive systems, smart tariffs, and technologies to increase potential [user] behavior changes" to speed up adaptation. Spain has made it mandatory for every household to have a smart-meter by 2018, other European nations like Italy and Poland already have many, and the U.K. plans to deploy 50 million to all customers by 2021.]

We know that little children make up extraordinary stories for themselves so they can live out the adventures that they don't have in real life. It's the same process which makes the scientific and political elites create "smart" objects. Looking at the expanding list of these gadgets destined to become indispensable, or even compulsory – from meters on fridges to textiles – you have to say that some of them must be very needy individuals. Rather than inventing a smart newspaper, *Le Postillon* here offers you a story – not extraordinary but all-too real – telling the adventures of the Linky, the invention of the smart city and the role of Grenoble in the coming of the smart revolution.

Presumably you've heard of Linky? No? Yes you have, remember, it's that so-called "smart" electricity meter. Which means, according to Wikipedia, that they can **"identify in a detailed and precise manner, eventually in real time, the electricity consumption of a household, a building or a business and communicate this by phone or power-line communication (PLC) to the data administrator"**. You're wondering what use that is? ERDF (Électricité Réseau Distribution France), the offshoot of EDF [ed. – State-owned energy firm, largely nuclear] charged with running the electricity distribution network in France, says: "Linky will simplify your everyday life: services such as meter reading, changes to the power level or switching on a supply will from now on be carried out remotely and in under 24 hours. Linky makes it easy to control your energy use thanks to more detailed information on your consumption." These new meters are in an "experimental stage" and have [as of 2011] been installed in around 100,000 households in the Tours area and 200,000 around Lyon. **But soon you too will be able to have one, for the outcome of the experiment was known even before it began.** They are therefore going to be rolled out across the whole of France. In the end, 35 million households will be lucky enough to have a Linky.

Does Atos Origin mean anything to you? No? It's a big company, though: annual sales of 5 billion euros, 50,000 employees across the world^[1] of which 15,000 are in France. What do they do? "We provide

consulting, systems integration and outsourcing services that help provide added value to our clients' IT systems. Our primary mission is to optimize the use of new technologies in our customers' IT systems and thus develop with them a new generation of services." Hmm... And what does that mean? Basically, they devise and install IT systems for a variety of "customers" ranging from oil companies to nuclear power stations by way of the Olympic Games [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg26*]. And the connection with Linky? It was Atos Origin who "landed the Linky project with ERDF". So they are in charge of creating and installing the meters. Actually, we forgot to tell you that the boss of Atos Origin is a certain Thierry Breton. That doesn't ring a bell? Come on, you remember, he's the former Minister of the Economy, Finance and Industry, between 2005 and 2007 – in other words at the time when it was decided to launch the Linky project. Things worked out rather well, didn't they? "Thierry Breton is thought to have negotiated an annual salary of 2.2 million euros for his nomination to the position of President of Atos. Additionally he is said to have also insisted that he should be allocated 700,000 euros worth of low-priced stock options". (www.linformaticien.com, 26/10/2008) "The French IT company Atos Origin more than tripled its net profit in 2010 to 116 million euros and reported a 'return to growth', declaring itself 'confident for 2011'." (Le Figaro, 16/02/2011).

So what's all this got to do with Grenoble, you're asking (because you know that, as a Grenoble newspaper, *Le Postillon* only talks about Grenoble)? To get Linky running, Atos Origin created a new subsidiary, with the lovely name of Atos WorldGrid (great, eh?). This new subsidiary is for now based in the charming and leafy Innovallée business zone at Meylan. But it's outgrowing its home and will soon be moving into the new Grenoble district of Bouchayer-Viallet, in a building currently under construction, where it will easily be able to accommodate its 700 'collaborators'. And if you are looking for work, they are currently recruiting 'C++ designer/developers' and 'CMMS project leaders'. Which means if you aren't highly qualified, there's no point applying.

If you like, we can get back to Linky.

"The 'energy transition', or boosting economic growth with new markets based on public guilt around pollution, offers us financial savings and a role in the battle against global warming in the shape of the systematic installation of "smart" electricity meters known (in France) as Linky. But in fact these small robots, proper little snitches, send information on household energy consumption via GSM microwaves or PLC (Power-line Communication), which are extremely harmful to the human body and its environment, to data processing centres where it is duly mined. [...] We will not save the planet by inciting guilt amongst those reduced to the role of consumers. On the other hand, attacking ultra-polluting industries would be effective, but French businesses are only the cancerous appendages of power; just as nobody can cut off their own arm, even if it's caught in a wolf trap, so industry and the state cannot prise themselves apart. It's only the military-industrial complex that wants a world where objects talk to each other. With all its propaganda, it wants to sell us a positive-energy interconnected world where switching off the stand-by on the telly saves polar bears, without ever facing up to the real problem: industrial pollution fed by the logic of profit and growth. The economy. The only positivity lies in the generation of forces which would allow us to live excellently without being enslaved or, in other words, without being shat all over."

– Refusing the Linky Meter, or, How to Attack Techno-Industrial Society for Dummies



For despite all the good intentions of ERDF and Atos Origin, the experiment isn't going as well as it could and, as ever in France, moaning Minnies are making themselves heard. The list of complaints raised by the first users on internet forums (such as Rebillyon.info) is so long that we couldn't fit it in here. So we will make do with summing up a few of them, on a thematic basis.

– **Money.** The cost of the meters, ranging from 150 to 300 euros per household, is apparently added to the electricity bill, in installments.

– **Technical.** The new meters are causing a lot of power cuts. "At the slightest surge, it cuts out!" Some meters have even burst into

flames a few days or weeks after installation.

– **Common sense.** According to ERDF, the great plus point for the “customers” is to be able to reduce their bills by closely monitoring consumption, by reducing the use of heavy-consumption appliances or by using them during off-peak times. But the meters that have been installed don't let you see the details of what you have consumed. To do that, you have to get an extra “box” costing about 100 euros. Hardly anyone is going to do this.

– **Health.** The smart meters are yet another electromagnetic source, causing unknown [sic] effects on people's health.

– **Social.** Everything can be done remotely (switching on the supply, repairs...), which means fewer jobs and less human contact. The supply can also be cut or reduced remotely, while previously it required a visit from an engineer and thus a physical encounter with those whose power he [sic] was supposed to be cutting off. Now it's just a click away.

– **Freedom.** “Information on energy consumption transmitted by the meters is very detailed and reveals much about the occupants of any home, such as their waking times, the time that they have a shower or when they use certain appliances (oven, kettle, toaster)”. This is the very sensible CNIL (Commission Nationale Informatiques et Libertés) saying so. Even according to several engineers, personal data is not secure and thus easily used for policing or commercial purposes.

All of that doesn't set you dreaming? That must be because you just haven't understood anything about Progress, The Future Life and smart grids. About what? About smart grids, or “intelligent networks”. What? “Smart grids use computer technology to optimise production and distribution and to better co-ordinate supply and demand between providers and consumers of electricity.”

Smart meters, like Linky in France, are thus one of the elements of the smart grid. You've no doubt grasped that by “enabling better use of energy” smart grids are supposed to be environmental and part of “sustainable development”. But they have nothing to do with that old-fashioned backward-looking environmentalism, which wanted us to think about our consumption, steer us towards energy conservation and encourage us to return to the age of the candle, the ballpoint pen and the landline. Oh no, smart grids allow you to be “green” while continuing to profit from all the joys of modern life, without challenging your lifestyle but by reinforcing it: “In the light of the explosion in energy demand, the time seems to have come to trade in our old energy networks for communicating, intelligent and thus more efficient systems”.

Even better, the smart grid boosts growth because the manufacture of smart meters

needs lots of energy, as do the central control systems. To save energy, we have to use more. Smart grids – and more generally smart energy – thus guarantee a rosy future for our splendid nuclear industry, which has been having a rough ride of late. And, in any case, as *Innovallée Mag* (Summer 2010) reminds us, “smart” is the future of the world: “One thing is sure, however, and that is that the smart revolution is underway! Tomorrow, the world around us will be riddled with sensor networks, charged with communicating between themselves by standard protocols and with sending their information in real time to a more or less automated central control system. Welcome to the smart world ruled by... distributed intelligence!”

Guess which city is piloting smart grid stuff? Bingo, you've got it! “As a real local technological speciality, the smart grid has found in Grenoble a space for innovation and experimentation,” the “CleanTech République” website tells us. This site, whose slogan is “green innovation at work”, simply loves the smart grid and more generally everything which allows dosh to be made under the banner of “sustainable development”. So a team of its “journalists” came to Grenoble to make some “web-TV” with local actors on the theme of smart grids and smart cities. The result is about as thrilling as a Soviet propaganda film. **If you ever look at the local press, you will already have read 9,522 times that Grenoble is a “laboratory city”, “at the forefront of the latest technology”, “where the world of tomorrow is being invented”.** Well, that's not wrong. **Around nanotechnology, the loss leader which sells Grenoble to the world of investors^[2], there are clustered a large number of technological projects which are going to “revolutionise our lives”, not in a messy and unpredictable way like the Arab Spring [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg87*] but rather in a calculated way, planned and organised by the political and scientific elites. For the greater happiness of us all, of course, even if we are not asked for our opinion beforehand.** Among the advances are “Senscity”, a project from the Minalogic business cluster in Grenoble involving our friends at Atos Origin, which wants to establish a “city-scale Machine-to-Machine eco-system”. You what? “The functioning of cities necessitates the establishment of certain important services: waste management, public lighting management, water management etc. The M2M [Machine-to-Machine] provides solutions of supervision and control which allow us to optimise these processes: it is thus a crucial element in the sustainable development of the city”. You see, you mustn't be afraid of control and supervision because it's good for sustainable development.

In any case, you are about to be plugged into all that because CleanTech République

tells us that the people of Grenoble are going to be guinea pigs. “To respond to challenges like the rise in population or the changes in its energy networks, the city of Grenoble is currently preparing the roll-out of several big technological experiments within its borders. Whether this consists of smart grid demonstrators or eco-centres, these projects will involve elected officials, businesses, universities and of course residents”. If you haven't yet been contacted, don't worry, because you'll soon be “mobilised”.

Are you wondering what tomorrow's city will look like? Go and pay a visit to Bouchayer-Viallet, to admire the “Les Reflets du Drac” building. It's true that, particularly close up, the aesthetics are those of a prison. But the solar panels mounted on top and the bright colours make it obvious that it's actually an office block. This building has got everything going for it: High Environmental Quality, Low Consumption Building and... “double skin”.

Listen to how Florence Audouy, programme manager for Urbiparc (the subsidiary of Bouygues Immobilier which constructed the building [ed. – the wider company, incidentally, also builds prisons]) explains the concept, still on the CleanTech République site: “The double skin was the great idea of Jacques Ferrier [the architect]. The building has been designed with an initial concrete skin which is very well insulated. But he got round a number of constraints to attain the performance levels we were targeting by proposing the option of a double skin on three sides of the building: on the west, south and east sides there is a metal frame with a mesh of perforated panels which fulfils four main functions. First function: improving the thermal comfort of the building (this double skin protects the envelope, prevents an overheating effect in summer and reduces the consumption for cooling the building). Its second role is to produce an umbrella effect; it acts as a sun-shade, filters the light and provides light levels that are much more pleasant for the people inside who are constantly working on computers and thus have to protect themselves from direct sunlight.”

There you have just learnt that modern architecture protects fragile human eyes from the scourge of the sun and allows them to spend all their time in front of friendly screens rather than being assaulted by the horror of natural rays. But what should be done with the sun, then? “There are 1,000 square metres of solar panels on the building”, Florence Audouy tells us. “The power is sold to the grid but represents around 20% of consumption. It's the equivalent of the energy needed to light the building.” And here you have just learned that this building actually uses lots of energy (but it will be smart) and the solar element is just there to make it look nice and friendly. What you don't know yet is that the building under

construction for Atos Origin (see above) is called "Les Reflets du Vercors", that it is right next to "Les Reflets du Drac" and that they look like two peas in a pod. The smart attitude is all about uniformity!

You know how when politicians push ahead with their big schemes, they are always worried about potential opposition which might scupper their plans, even though they are acting for the good of the people? So it is with Stéphane Siebert, who combines the role of sustainable development assistant at Grenoble city council with that of deputy director of research at the Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), and who says, still via CleanTech République: "*What I find extremely interesting in this approach, which I would term collaborative, is that it allows the behavioural aspect to come into play. [...] Nobody today knows how all these new forms of technology are going to be able to work when they are available to thousands of users at the same time. We absolutely need to have a full-scale demonstration, with real people, to allow us to check that everything we have in mind works properly. [...] Of course, the key to success is that people adhere to the approach.*

And it is much easier to do that in a new district like La Caserne de Bonne or La Presqu'île, because eventually we will see the arrival of a massive number of new residents who have not yet been tied down by a whole set of habits and commitments, which after a while make it too complicated to change [...] Here, at the same time as offering people a new way of living and a

new place of work, we can offer them, in a far easier way, a whole set of services for the use of energy and associated means of transport". See how smart the city of Grenoble is? Rather than bothering real residents, it prefers creating new districts with new residents who, seeing as they have just moved in, will be considerate enough to keep their mouths shut. Once the experiment is "conclusive", then they can happily roll it out to the rest of the city and present opponents with the old line that "it's already happening over there". Handy, eh? That's what participatory democracy is all about.

Don't you find it impressive, how everything is now "interconnected"? How, starting from one small object – the electricity meter – they can reach the point of talking about new districts and smart cities [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg31**], about the world of the day after tomorrow. **That's always an important element in these projects, in the evolution of the world, in progress: giving the impression that all this is inevitable, that it is ordained from above, that we can do nothing about it. You will point out that Linky stems from a European directive which stipulates "that 80% of electricity meters must be smart by 2020 to encourage competition and energy savings".** That's true, but as we have seen in this article, lots of promoters of Linky and the smart revolution are active in your city, close to your home, in laboratories or shady offices. And so?

Imagine: if you were hostile to the machine-world, if you resisted the incursion of electronic sensors and chips into every area of social life, if you considered yourself sufficiently "smart" to have no need of objects which identify themselves as such, you could make use of this proximity to express your disagreement. You could refuse to become a guinea pig for the "smart city" and make your refusal public. In any case, it would be more interesting than moaning about "this latest piece of rubbish" and sounding off about "directives from Brussels" [ed. – see *of the European Union*], wouldn't it? But then, of course, thanks to our little

Stab-proof vest
De-friend associates
Emotional balance simulator
Stress-free life
Shrink-wrapped corpse
Mono-crop harvester
Low-paid
Sun-dried refugee
Oven-ready Holocaust victims
Classless society
Boil-in-the-bag prison rations
Space-age birth control
Diet-junkie syndrome
Well-dressed cyborg
Jet-lagged climate dodger
Real-estate suburban boredom
Rohypnol speed-dating club
Flat-pack logistic living
Direct streamline contamination
Intergalactic waste-disposal unit,
Welcome to the united
states of technology
gone wrong!

story, you will have truly grasped all the many benefits we can expect from Linky and the smart revolution.

[All non-sourced quotes come from the Linky, Atos Origin, Wikipedia or CleanTech République websites.]

1. ed. – Notorious in the U.K. for their privatised examination of individuals' eligibility for disability welfare. Also, as 'Some Angry People' wrote after smashing up their offices in Nottingham for the above reason near the time this article was written, "Atos are becoming experts in the business of identifying groups to contain and exclude them. They were one of the groups who tendered for the government's ID cards contracts..."

2. ed. – 'Minatec', as of then the biggest European research centre for micro- and nano-technologies (see **Rebels Behind Bars; Let's Relaunch the Struggle Against Nocivity**) – on top of military, surveillance, and historically there also nuclear developments – is for example located in the area. Around the time its opening was resisted, with an occupation of the Isere town hall leaving damaged offices, Minatec staff transport being blocked by flaming barricade or researchers being heckled and pelted with eggs during their conferences, while there and also at an IT firm computers were sabotaged. The inauguration itself, with the area in a quasi-militarised state, saw rioting in the city, trashing of banks, a firm producing R.F.I.D. (already in use in public transport tickets and highways in Grenoble) and nano-tech, a work agency and police station. Cars were burned and barricades raised against the police charge. The Grenoble-Chambéry electric line was sabotaged in three different points, causing delays in electricity supplies. Some 'Opponents of Necrotechnology' reported that "three issues of a fake magazine pretending to be official propaganda promoting the new technologies have been posted through the letterboxes of the city's residents. The latest, for example, talks about the supposed plans for a huge dome made of nanotech materials which will enclose the alpine corridor between Grenoble and Geneva for 120km, and where people will need chips embedded in their body to enter. These magazines have caused a huge scandal because so many people believed what they read – and then found out that it wasn't so far from the truth anyway."

"As always, the usual question is left unanswered: what are we to do with this information? What can we do against it? We are talking of yet one more field of scientific research among the thousands of despicable things that are being done in laboratories in half the world. Personally I think that the point of keeping an eye on the flood of news on 'miraculous discoveries', 'exceptional inventions' and 'new research with a thousand and more promises' is no more than the information they contain, which is useful to understanding who, where and how scientific progress is being championed in 'our' cities. On the topic of what to do against it, instead, also discussing the subject with other comrades, a sensation has emerged that as we talk and talk about what 'they are doing' in laboratories, about new developments, etc. we risk becoming alienated in the immobility caused by facing things perceived as distant and inaccessible, occurring in universities or out-of-the-way laboratories, in the intrigue of a development that is almost untouchable, not at all linear and absolutely molecularized. But before us reality is already striking us with everything that, in the normality of everyday life, permits the functioning of the mega-machine: infrastructures of transport, communication, the supply of energy resources, the first attempts at creating 'smart cities' with IT networks that allow their administration. It is important to look ahead, at what the techno-scientific system is preparing and the directions it want us to be dragged into. But the reality to be attacked in the struggle is the present one, the one that we are already experiencing." – Luca Bernasconi^[1]

1. ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; Let's Relaunch the Struggle Against Nocivity**

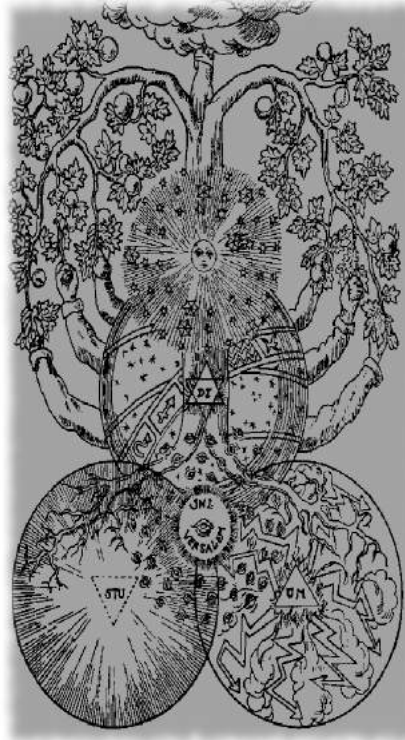
'THE STORIES WHICH CIVILISATION HOLDS AS SACRED'

[ed. – The following was presented and followed by a discussion at the 2015 East Bay Anarchist Book & Conversation Event in Oakland, U.S.A. One of the central prompts was; “Can there be an anarchism that lives outside the box of the human social project?” The recommended conversation which followed this reading can be found in the original audio, later released by the project Free Radical Radio (now on hiatus). Any mistakes or omissions in the transcription, we take responsibility for.]

In his profound work, *Nature and Madness*, human ecologist Paul Shepard offers what he feels to be the culmination of his life's work. An interdisciplinary, comprehensive exploration of the 20-year psychogenesis of the human animal, the environmental conditions that create that human animal, and the consequences of removing the human animal from these conditions. One of the many important ideas discussed in this beautiful text is Shepard's description of the general stages of human development. Although I risk the painful reductionism or simplification of these stages, for the sake of this talk it is pragmatic to understand them as a compounding, widening series of relationships between a *self* and *other*.

At the beginning of a human life, the infant begins to make sense of its first experience of self and other through its relationship to the mother. This is the primary relationship with other, which will act as the base that supports all developmental stages to follow. As mobility and awareness are gained, the infant enters the phase of childhood, and begins negotiating a relationship between self and other, where *other* is material environment. Much of this relationship will be modeled after the pre-existing maternal relationship. During childhood, every substance is put in the mouth, unknown locations must be explored, knowledge is literal and direct, and non-human life is observed, categorised, named and mimicked – and is self-understood further through likeness and difference during this play process. A vast amount of time and argument could be expended on these two phases and their implications and expressions, but what I am more concerned with today are the processes that follow.

The onset of adolescence marks the beginning of the third phase, which once again expands and negotiates the relationship between self and other, where *other* is now social environment. The framework for this process will still primarily be an extension of the relationships to otherness formed throughout infancy and childhood. During



adolescence, the complex aspects of personality emerge, and a sense of place and identity within the social environment is understood through negotiating relationships with peers, elders, social customs, and a guided preparation for adulthood. The challenging adolescent phase of life comes to a close with the process of initiation, in which the youth identity formally ends and the new hard-won identity of adulthood is not only taken on, but understood and recognised by all other participants in this social environment. At this point, the struggle for identity is ended, and the individual, now knowing themselves, is free to begin the adult phase of life, in which the scope of relationship expands once more to negotiate the question of self and other, where other is now a complex universe.

The problem here may be obvious to the listener. Most people unlucky enough to be born within industrialised civilisation will rarely – if ever – even have the opportunity to interact with a person who has made it to the fully-realised phase of self-development. Even fewer will have chance to experience this transformation for themselves. This is not a reflection of personal unworthiness or poor choices, but a result of the utter void of culture and deprivation of initiation. The system of rewards and punishments that enforced the logic of industrial civilisation worked very hard to prevent maturation out of indefinite adolescence. The permanent psychic teenager – regardless of biological

age – lives in a state of unending insecurity and doubt, experiences a constant compelling confusion about the sense of self, and strongly prioritises battling for a precarious position within the surrounding social environment. This is a completely anthropocentric [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg11*] experience, and creates and manages citizens of empire wonderfully. **The ache of indefinite adolescence and the empty promise of an adulthood based on social indicators fuels nationalism, fuels the military, sells condos, builds careers, populates cities. On the other hand, the cultivation of relationships to the complex living world, where humans are *not* above all else, is one of the first things that civilisation works to destroy upon making contact with an uncivilised group of humans; and the annihilation and prevention of these non-human and non-material relationships arguably defines civilisation itself.**

In this absence of initiation, some people eventually still drag themselves away from adolescence, and into something like a partial adulthood... to varying degrees. This process seems mostly composed of slowly accumulating experiences that each inform small aspects of the persons' relationship to the world around them, and gradually alter their core motivators away from that which I have described as a *solely adolescent experience*. While this does not seem to fulfill all the aspects of fully-matured psychic adulthood, nor operate on a time-frame that matches human biological development, it is the best that most people have to work with, given the context.

In the absence of actual inter-generational cultures to be initiated into, the adolescent that feels resistant to mainstream imperial void-culture has, since the mid-twentieth century, been offered any number of aesthetic societal microcosms, in which to enjoy their pathologically-extended teenager experience. By this process of subculture, even seemingly deviant elements of society have a comfortable place to politic and jockey for unstable social capital, repeatedly attempt to prove their worth through dramatic visible gestures, seek membership and validation in the ways that appeal to them, and otherwise be solely driven by the same adolescent motivators that industrial civilisation rewards constantly, and attempts to prolong. In fact, for a social environment to be a scene or subculture at all, it is essential that all content and relationships follow the anthropocentric priority structure previously described.

When the adolescent subcultural environment intersects with an individual's inquisitive crawl into partial adulthood, the reactions are often conflictual. The de-

“The human being will struggle for freedom, for strength, for self-realisation against all the odds. As adolescents we do this through the formation of gangs, initiations, uniforms and clothing indicators and of shared standards, identities and an arcanum peculiar to itself. Sub-cultures. These hold within them the danger of being inherently reactionary and in terms of political groupings, unless we want to remain tiny and reproductive of insidious power structures, we would do well to be aware of the psychological impact of these structures and behaviours. Living in a state of arrested development is not reclaiming one's full humanity.” – *Secrets & Lies*

prioritisation of the adolescent value system is correctly perceived as posing a threat to the insecure and precarious social value that others possess within that system. The defensive responses are commonly intense, and a final result seems to often be a severing of relationships – not solely with the youth subculture itself, but often with the ideas that subculture claims ownership of... which is where most of this recuperative power is held.

This, however, never happens as an immediate transition, and many people hold on to large aspects of social priority for a long time. Some simply reinvest in a new social identity, subculture or location, beginning the process again and attempting to repetitively renegotiate the adolescent experience throughout their lives.

What is most interesting in all this to me is the opportunity that this moment holds for continued exploration of the relationship between self and other, specifically the non-human other, and the means by which civilised humans seek this out. While I recognise that word *spirituality* can generate a strong reactionary response (in both people who have rejected their monotheistic *religious* upbringing and those who cling tightly to their monotheistic *secular* upbringing), the subjects that I am discussing may very accurately be described as matters of the spirit.

As people slowly begin to seek answer to questions which fall within the realms of the spiritual, the loudest voices demanding to be heard are, of course, the stories which civilisation holds as sacred. Sadly, for a lot of people these are the only voices that will ever be heard.

For many people involved in this subculture, these mainstream spiritual paths will actually feel familiar, and easy to transition into. The internal emotional experiences that drive people to prefer one major world religion over others include childhood nostalgia, socio-political defensibility, the romantic fetishisation of

the underdog experience, pacifistic cowardice and narcissism, and everything inbetween. Although it may outwardly appear that the practices of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism are all different, they all relate to and function in the world in the same way. The differences in names, costumes and rituals between them is *inconsequential from an adult perspective*; that is, to reiterate, a perspective concerned with expanding the relationship between self and a complex, more-than-human world.

The primary focus of all these spiritual paths is to position the practitioner in a place of denial, objectification, and anti-relational hostility to a complex living world. The adherent is asked to reject their own lived perceptual engagement with the world around them, in favour of a set of absolutist moral principles derived from a completely removed and humanistic *other-world*. These monotheistic traditions look and see the world as profane; see the world as a prison cell; see the world which must be transformed in the image of moral goodness and human safety; see the world which was given to dominate; and see the world which is hated, and finally escaped. All that is good and sacred are the lives of humanity; the acts of humanity; the desires of humanity; and the one true God, who loves *only* humanity. **Monotheism can not accurately be understood as the intellectual belief in a solitary deity, but instead is a moral worldview based on dualism and an anthropocentric refusal of relationship between the self and a complex, more-than-human world.**

Despite the hordes of devotees that still follow these classical moral religions of the world, rational science is easily the most widely practiced and most dominant monotheistic faith in industrial civilisation. As the inheritance of rationalism and a de-spiritualised Christianity, the religion of science is currently the purest form of monotheism in the world. Having done away with a single sacred other that lives outside of this world, science simply holds the sacred as its own mechanical philosophy of the universe, and the circular logic of self-defined, self-generating objective truth. This holy writ is intended to be taken as unassailable and timeless; and the purpose of this should sound familiar at this point. A straightforward outgrowth of

traditional monotheism, [rational] science is still based simply upon a fear and hatred of the living world. Its actual practice still follows a clear moral imperative to force this world into conformity with its vision of a hypothetical and more tolerable humanistic world. The annihilation of the relationship between the self and the non-human other is total within this state – with not even a jealous sky-dad to reach out to. The complete dominion over the world which was once promised [ed. – *in the Judeo-Christian version*] in the Book of Genesis is now called Progress [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg11*], and is pursued with the fervour of unshakable zealots and the wealth of nations. **The creation of this current nightmare reality of alienation, toxicity and mass extinction is not so much a product of greed, but following a deeply moral religious mandate to dominate the living world regardless of material consequence.** Like all evangelical practices, the missionaries of rational science take to every corner of this world in order to teach their faith to the poor ignorant locals, and bring that locality under the control of their religious law. And like all evangelical practices, *this is good*, because what they have to offer and what they teach *are good*. Some dream of taking to the stars, so that they might “*go forth and multiply*” [ed. – *imperative preached in Genesis*] and enforce their practices and beliefs on entirely new worlds; and the exceedingly devout and cowardly fringes of the scientific faith even hope to achieve a more immediate salvation by uploading their ‘digital souls’ directly into internet-heaven^[1], in order to escape this world that they find so wretched and frightening, while retaining their isolated sense of self.

All of this of course is comfortable and familiar to most humans raised within industrial civilisation. The morality, duality, objectivity, hatred of the living world, and neurotic devotion to humanism that is the mythology of monotheism is taught to everyone in this culture, whether religious or secular, and almost everyone embraces these myths deeply and lives by them. This includes almost all subcultural radicals as well... if not especially. Most radicals are driven by a deeply-entrenched belief in good and evil, and often an intense preoccupation with the importance of human life. Even most of those who claim to have thrown off the morality of their childhood teachings rarely do anything but indulge an reactionary teenage impulse, and strictly follow the inverted form of their earlier moral lessons. Immorality is, simply, still a morality [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg41*], a dualistic list of goods and bads, and is ultimately the same as any other expression of monotheism *in the way that its practitioner relates to the living world.*

In this light, it seems not so strange to me at all that Marxist materialists might devote themselves to the worship of *[undecipherable]*; that humanitarian activists might begin praying towards Mecca; that deviants and criminals might return to Wednesday Mass. For many, these so-called changes and conversions are not really changes or conversions at all, but simply adjustments in word-driven language, practicing the same way to relate to the world which was learned long ago.

And yet the questions that drive these impulses are real. In this void of guidance and culture, some people still want to know how they are to relate to the living world around them; and I imagine that many find it comforting to listen to even these stories of dominion and salvation. **But what other voices are there?** What stories are there that speak of how to broker and negotiate the relationships between the self and a complex living world in which humans are participants, and neither masters nor exiles? What paths are there to follow, when friends speak quietly about matters of the spirit, but still feel themselves to exist in an amoral reality, in which the beautiful is wrapped inextricably with the terrible – and what of those poor souls who do not feel inclined to abandon a worldview, even as they abandon the reactionary teenage subculture that claims to own it?

It can become difficult to explore answers to these and more vulnerable questions using the language of a culture in which these answers are not supposed to exist. What I find most difficult in speaking about polytheism and animism is that not a single aspect of these subjects can be easily or accurately approached using ideas defined by monotheism. Please remember that, at least since the slaughter of the Canaanites^[2], this culture has engaged in thousands of years of genocide trying to erase these practices and beliefs from the world.

Commonly, *polytheism* is used to mean a belief in multiple iterations of what monotheistic people mean when they use the word 'God'. *This understanding misses the mark widely enough to be useless.* I described monotheism earlier not as the intellectual belief in a single deity, but as an absolutist moral worldview regardless of the flavour of its expression. In that vein, I also use a definition of polytheism as a comprehensive worldview in which *the sacred is not remote*, but the very essence of the material world itself, forever intertwined with the banal and profane. Polytheism does indeed lend itself to a belief in a



plurality of divine entities, because it affirms the plural character of reality itself. **In this understanding, the monotheistic definitions of entities like gods, spirits and the dead lose their meaning.** While modern language fails to accurately describe a polytheistic relationship to other, direct experiences of life serve to demonstrate phenomena and truths that seem to prohibit, preclude and negate each other... yet exist and intermingle all the same. For the polytheist, nothing in this complex living world can be reduced or isolated to a duality of any type, be it good and evil, objectivity and subjectivity, spirit and flesh, or life and death. From the polytheistic viewpoint, agony could never be unwoven from bliss, and the dead may walk alongside the living – even though they are not here.

When people speak of it at all, the world *animism* is commonly used to mean the belief that everything in the material world possesses its own spirit and life. **While this is not a statement that I would call false, it glosses over most of depth and content that I find important, and requests that monotheistic people in industrialised civilisation assign their own definitions to the idea.** Although it

barely scratches the surface, I would like to offer a rough working description of animism as a *practice of relational engagement* with the others encountered in a reality where everything is complex, interactive, and alive on its own terms – and in ways that often do not feel familiar to civilised concepts. The key here is that animism is *relational*. There is a big difference between liking the idea of trees and brokering an ongoing mutual relationship with an individual entity that is living an engaged existence rooted in the soil. Again, this only scratches the surface, but is somewhere to begin.

The most common place that I run into conversations about animism is among anthropologists, and sometimes primitivists *[ed. – see **To Love the Inhuman**]* – supposing that those two groups are in some way separate. I have often heard animism described in these circles as the fairly uniform pre-religion of all primitive *[sic]* people, practiced before the belief in imaginary gods seduced humanity's spiritual attention away from the material world. People like this description of animism, because it still works pretty well with the modern monotheistic worldview. It places animism as a historic thing that *other people* – who do not exist anymore – *used to do*. That

perspective feels pretty safe, since it doesn't challenge the historian's personal practice of monotheism with any other possible way of relating to the world. In that same vein, this anthropological view of animism also includes an inherent dismissal of polytheistic divinity, and upholds the monotheistic separation of the divine from the material world. The other thing this description does is cast animism as a *religion*, in the way that monotheism

“[A]nimism is not a religion, or a church or a sect or a movement. It is a direction, a tendency, a pointing towards, a feeling[...] [T]he temple or cathedral clearly serves to separate the sacred from the profane, the religious from the secular, the realm of worship from the realm of work, money-making, and killing. The *wétikos* [*Cree term for “an evil person or spirit who terrorises other creatures by means of terrible evil acts, including cannibalism”*] want people to box up their religion in buildings, where it can be isolated from the rest of life. Then religion comes into existence as a concept separate from life, worship can be largely centred in one place, and priests and preachers can make their living and gain great power by controlling the use of the little boxes where that which is “sacred” is stored away.” – *Colombus & Other Cannibals*

“Countless anthropologists have managed to overlook the ecological dimension of the shaman’s craft, while writing at great length of the shaman’s rapport with “supernatural” entities. We can attribute much of this oversight to the modern, civilized assumption that the natural world is largely determinate and mechanical, and that that which is regarded as mysterious, powerful, and beyond human ken must therefore be of some other, nonphysical realm *above* nature, “supernatural”. The oversight becomes still more comprehensible when we realize that many of the earliest European interpreters of indigenous lifeways were Christian missionaries. For the Church had long assumed that only human beings have intelligent souls, and that the other animals, to say nothing of trees and rivers, were “created” for no other reason than to serve humankind. We can easily understand why European missionaries, steeped in the dogma of institutionalized Christianity, assumed a belief in supernatural, otherworldly powers among those tribal persons whom they saw awestruck and entranced by nonhuman (but nevertheless natural) forces. What is remarkable is the extent to which contemporary anthropology still preserves the ethnocentric bias of these early interpreters. We no longer describe the shamans’ enigmatic spirit-helpers as the “superstitious claptrap of heathen primitives” – we have cleansed ourselves of at least *that* much ethnocentrism; yet we still refer to such enigmatic forces, respectfully now, as “supernaturals” – for we are unable to shed the sense, so endemic to scientific civilization, of nature as a rather prosaic and predictable realm, unsuited to such mysteries. Nevertheless, that which is regarded with the greatest awe and wonder by indigenous, oral cultures is, I suggest, none other than what we view as nature itself. The deeply mysterious powers and entities with whom the shaman enters into a rapport are ultimately the same forces – the same plants, animals, forests, and winds – that to literate, “civilized” Europeans are just so much scenery, the pleasant backdrop of our more pressing human concerns. [...] To be sure, there has always been some confusion between our Western notion of “spirit” (which so often is defined in contrast to matter or “flesh”), and the mysterious presences to which tribal and indigenous cultures pay so much respect. I have already alluded to the gross misunderstandings arising from the circumstance that many of the earliest Western students of these other customs were Christian missionaries all too ready to see occult ghosts and immaterial phantoms where the tribespeople were simply offering their respect to the local winds. While the notion of “spirit” has come to have, for us in the West, a primarily anthropomorphic or human association, my encounter with the ants was the first of many experiences suggesting to me that the “spirits” of an indigenous culture are primarily those modes of intelligence or awareness that *do not* possess a human form.” – David Abram

understands the word, rather than as a perspective that determines the way in which any number of unique cultural practices may be conducted.

This rears its head again when animism intersects with the inheritance of North American environmentalism. Widely popularised by the writings of Thoreau [ed. – see *Invasive*], this moral tendency only seeks to reinforce the concept of *nature* [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg24*] – which is this culture’s name for the imaginary outdoor place that is completely separate from humanity and the sacred. Starting from this alienation, the environmentalist position then takes a bath in its own self-loathing, with the belief that this separate nature is pure and perfect – precisely inasmuch as it is free of the taint of humanity.

This idea that nature is good and humans are bad is, then, essentially the same as the original idea that nature is bad and humans are good: a shining example of the uselessness of inverted morality, this attitude towards the living world continues to simply confirm anti-relational monotheism.

This is still a popular and unexamined sentiment among radicals; many of whom recognise that the consequences of industrial civilisation are counter to their own desires, but still inherently accept the myth that this void-culture encompasses all of humanity itself. When this dualistic thought process engages with the concept of animism as a *religion*, it is a short step to the ideal of animism as pure and perfect spiritual connection with nature, free of the taint of human culture. I find this vision of a pure animism to instead be a product of monotheistic story-telling, a familiar voice that insists that no other cultural practices are actually possible. So, if it is not a religion, or something to be intellectually believed in, it may be more accurate to say that a person does not practice animism,

but instead *engages in a cultural practice that is animistic.*

Let me return once again to the absence of initiation, the slow exploration away from the anthropocentric obsessions and insecurities of adolescence. If this search for a way to cultivate the relationships between a self and a complex universe is not stunted and prevented by monotheism, then it will lead at some point to a world full of different traditional cultural practices – which are animistic and polytheistic, and come from people of *literally every background*. While the human cultural aspects are unique in each of these traditions, they all have origins in personal, relational engagement with the others in a living world; including those entities which are often misunderstood by the modern language of gods and spirits. Most of these independent cultural practices have another thing in common: and that is that their traditions have been sundered, lost, and damaged by the genocide of this culture. This can create difficult and uncomfortable questions for some people who want to walk these paths. *Where is the value in a partial tradition? What is the validity of a reconstructed practice? How can a person living in one location practice a tradition that has its origins in another place? How can most people living in industrial civilisation even claim access to one or more of these cultural traditions? And what about the reality that many other people may already be claiming to practice these traditions in ways that seem offensive or undesirable?*

Within the subcultural social environment, this is quite a pot to stir. The adolescent relationship with identity is defensive, precarious, and highly-prized. All manner and form of social and personal politics come into play, as people battle for position and attempt to gain leverage over others while remaining hyper-vigilant of attack and vulnerability... and none of this is very interesting to me. Especially when compared to the question of whether or not a cultural practice is indeed animistic or polytheistic.

I find that any cultural tradition, of any background, and any aesthetic, that a person connects with deeply, can be a beautiful and important answer in this quest to follow a path out of adolescence and into a human adulthood that cultivates relationships with the complex living world. Provided, of course, that that cultural tradition in question is being practiced in a way that actually does that. **I say this because I feel that any tradition can also be expressed in ways that ignore relationships, deny the plural experiences of life, and prioritise only**

aspects of the social. The influence of this culture runs really deep. Cultural appropriation, for instance, is an essentially adolescent phenomenon, where someone engages with a tradition in a way that is aesthetic and social instead of prioritising relationships to the living non-human world. Interestingly, the same thing is true of any 'spiritualised' nationalism. This is still just a social identity and group-seeking, based around the aesthetics of cultural tradition. The concept of xenophobia is just about as anti-relational as it gets. Just like cultural appropriation, the nationalist trajectory can only manage to share imagery with the traditional cultural practices that it steals from; because if the people doing it were actually interested in prioritising engaged spiritual relationships with a complex living world, they would simply be doing that instead.

Turning to a different set of practices, I would like to look at what more polytheistic practices can look like when they are *stripped of an animistic perspective*. Monism and pantheism^[3] are often spoken of as somehow being relevant to the polytheistic worldview... which I find to be incorrect. While these practices certainly attempt to refute the dualism of scientific culture, they do so by flattening the plurality of this world through total unification. Monism and pantheism are also attempts to flatten the individualities of the many many gods by holding them all as representatives of a single all-god. Not only is this directly counter to a polytheistic perspective, but *representation itself is anti-relational*. Both of these practices are neither polytheistic nor animistic, but, by no coincidence, they are fairly compatible with industrial civilisation.

Another anti-relational way that people engage with the 'gods' is through archetypalism, which recognises all of the individualities of the many gods; but recognises them only as archetypal aspects of the human psyche. In this way, whatever cultural tradition the practitioner enjoys can be engaged with simply as a set of anthropocentric thought-experiments. This practice is pretty common among people who intellectually like the idea of polytheistic divinity, but are still trying to work through the monotheistic secular sensibilities of their childhood.

(I suppose it is worth a quick aside to mention the many practices that fall under the general heading of occultism. These popular and widely-practiced magic

systems may or may not hold a polytheistic perspective, but are united by their focus on the practitioner's cultivation and accumulation of personal power. I find this to be anthropocentric and disinteresting from an animistic perspective.)

So what does it look like to take on a tradition, and practice it in a way that is both polytheistic and animistic? Most people don't feel like they have points of access to cultures that not enveloped them for their whole lives. Not only that; most people who find themselves born in North America feel uneasy about the idea of lineage. What is available to people with diverse or unknown family backgrounds? I think that it is important to remember here that basing a person's entitlement to a spiritual practice on a hereditary determinism *is the logic of racial nationalism*.

Another thing to think about is that this entire exploration is based on *relationship*. It can come as a serious surprise to the children of this culture, but developing a relationship with strangers is fundamentally the same; whether it's with plants, the 'gods', other living humans, or the mighty dead themselves. A person has to make themselves available, and then engage with the others that choose to engage with them. If a person has made it to the point in their life where they are open and looking, they will almost certainly be called in no uncertain terms to the path they are supposed to walk. **In a plural living world, can anyone confidently separate the voice of intuition from the loving guidance of the dead?** The beautiful thing about engaging in an animistic polytheistic tradition is that each person has the autonomy to practice as they wish and develop relationships with non-human others that are actually based on free association and mutual aid. The act of rejecting social fears, crossing the threshold into such a spiritual practice, is a transformative moment in itself; maybe not the step that arrives at a finalised adulthood, but certainly a step that begins the next leg of the journey through life. And it is one that most people from this culture will never make.

In the end it turns out that a person cannot believe in animism; they can only be animistic. A person cannot believe in polytheism; they can only be polytheistic. And a person cannot believe in anarchism; they can only be anarchic. Unless they are still an adolescent... and then they can be anarchistic!

1. ed. – Such as the 'transhumanist' movement (who envision and work towards a 'Singularity' artificial intelligence horizon and melding of the human body with digital technology), which has in recent years grown from an obscure sect – in many ways keeping alive the old dream of eugenics (see **Return Fire vol.3 pg28**) – to mainstream attention. Ray Kurzweil, as leading transhumanist ideologue, is now employed by Google, as was noted by those who attacked the Google headquarters in Munich on 07.11.16 using red lacquer and bitumen: "The Google strategists develop scenarios in which people can be replaced by artificial intelligence within a few decades. What comes as a promise of a life without work and exploitation means, under capitalist conditions, that a large part of humanity will become unnecessary. It is no coincidence that the Singularity University is located right near Google's headquarters in Silicon Valley. As an elite university, the institute that educates managers from all over the world in the fields of AI [Artificial Intelligence], robotics, nanotechnology, bioinformatics, medicine and network technology is one of the leading representatives of the transhumanist movement. In addition to the leadership of Facebook, people like Ray Kurzweil and Larry Pager (co-founder of Google) gave speeches at its opening ceremony. The goal of transhumanism is the fusion of humans and technology. According to their assessment, the human brain will be fully mapped by 2030, creating the possibility to immortalize oneself in a post-biological life (a backup that will exist in computer systems). Transhumanists are convinced that the way out of a world which they have decisively destroyed is the transition from human to machine. Its main players are made up of an ultra-neo-liberal right which has its starting point at the Silicon Valley manufacturing center. The basic idea of efficient thinking regarding fallible bodies that become old and sick has already had a concrete impact on employees in the IT sector with the [pressurised] introduction of oocyte freezing to reduce infertility in women [ed. – i.e. to expand their working life for the company]."

2. ed. – Canaan was a region in the Ancient Near East, and provides the main setting of the narrative of the Hebrew Bible (i.e. the area of Israel, Philistia, Phoenicia, etc). Canaan is a character in the Bible who features in the Curse of Ham, in which he is cursed with perpetual slavery because his father Ham had "looked upon" the drunk and naked Noah (Canaan's grandfather). God later promises the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendents, the Israelites. The Canaanites are marked in the Book of Joshua as one of the nations to be exterminated, as they later are by the Israelites, along with the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. One of the 613 mitzvot (precisely no.596) prescribes that no inhabitants of the Canaanite cities were to be left alive.

3. ed. – Monism is the view that attributes oneness or singleness to a concept (e.g., existence), while pantheism is the belief that everything composes an all-encompassing, immanent God, or that the universe (or nature) is identical with divinity. H.P. Owen claimed that "[p]antheists are 'monists' [...] they believe that there is only one Being, and that all other forms of reality are either modes (or appearances) of it or identical with it."



ARE THERE SIMILARITIES, BEYOND THE OBVIOUS, BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN PRISONS?

[ed. – From the website of the Argentine total liberation magazine *Semilla de Liberación*, and edited by us for clarity. Beyond the obvious intolerability of both, we can contemplate the ties between the incarceration of humans for social control (or profit) and that of non-humans confined and bred for entertainment (or profit) – or as it goes by today, ‘education’ – justifying the rape of all species under the guise of knowledge. Remove one link from our awareness of the chains that ideologically bind us, and we lose sight of the intersections between these divergent practices. Houses for human or non-human objectification serve the same torturous and alienated existence and we are here to demolish it. Zoos, adverts, laboratories. That conception of the body and its amputated desire-as-spectator are not ours. All kinds of routine cultural and religious myths normalise and excuse this dissection of our lives and awareness. What kind of animality can one observe in a zoo but a fragmented one that’s been shorn from ancestral symbioses (as have the humans who go to view them) – plants, bodies of water, soil, fellow creatures – and driven neurotic? What kind of beings have they become who gaze from outside the bars, that believe they are seeing an intact creature and not a mere shadow, civilisation’s refugees from a life that was once entwined with the earth? Yet let’s remember that even after the ordeal described below, both human and non-human captives on occasion continue their rebellion...]



We will never be able to pit levels of human and animal suffering against one another, but this text reflects a little the implications of prison on any individual that values their freedom...

To answer this question we must, without doubt, answer many more, such as: **What similarities are there between the behaviour of humans and animals similar to them?** Does it condition the captive in equal ways in certain traits in the human and animal counterpart? Hence, this search shouldn’t fall into anthropomorphism differentiated by typical human traits of animals and the influence of society over them. It should avoid dualisms, the contamination of thought with the desire to achieve a useful result or the collapse of the simplification of the analysis.

We understand that the comparison of the captive subject – animal or human – has been practically impossible until the penetration of libertarian ideas in the field of animal rights. Generally the detained is analysed, if human, from a psychological or sociological approach whilst the animal prisoner is attempted to be understood through zoology – or its branch called ethology that specifically studies the behaviour of animals. These disciplines rarely overlap and literature about animal behaviour in zoological captivity is extremely careful about comparing its results with prison for humans, for obvious reasons. **Comparing a human being to an animal is still considered to be an insult, along with animal behaviour. It is not compared to ours, to justify the consequent exploitation.**

To speak about the similarities between the prison environment and the zoos in the first place we must break the big taboo; the taboo of jail, that place which nobody wants to see, that place where supposedly the scum of society is found. Where they surely have a bad time, but we continue believing that it is necessary to reform

them so that they fit into society or to simply punish them. Let’s see then, how this punishment is and if we can draw anything to light by comparing them to captive animals. **We must remember that “the animals” are composed by all living beings with certain alimentation and cellular structure, however here we are going to particularly refer to the animals with clear similarities to us like**

mammals, birds, vertebrates in general that are more used for zoological exhibitions. These animals share with us many behaviours and senses, let’s see how they react to these traits in incarcerated life.

I will base the work here upon “THE EFFECTS OF JAIL ON THE PRISONER: CONSEQUENCES OF PENITENTIARY DETENTION” by Dr. Jesús Valverde Molina. In his work the doctor tells us that “All

human conduct is adaptable” and that “the conduct is adapted to the environment in which the person is living”. Here, apparently there would be no significant difference with animals, as their behaviour is adaptable and connected to their surroundings. On a zoological level the inevitable question arises: adaptable on an individual level or species level? Here is the point in which vertebrates that we analyse are effectively influenced by the surroundings of the zoo.

The Dr. continues that “what is formulated as personal characteristic that adapts to a non-instinctual behaviour are not “healthy” mechanisms of adaptation in jail, but strategies of survival”. This is significant in comparison with the conduct of animals. Let’s reflect a second on this. Could the “sick” behaviour be a “healthy” adaptation to the sick conditions from their surroundings? The same Dr. tells us then: “What is “crazy” is the context of the jail, not the conduct that is adapted to that environment”. **To understand the conduct we must understand the surroundings.** Here we will think of both cases: prison and zoos.

What is the architecture?

- Based on the function of security
- Differences in the “existing space” and the “available space”; wild captive animals in small cells see, effectively, a big space in front of them, a space that they can’t access, designated to human beings
- Restriction of mobility
- Physical overcrowding (jails are big, but not for the prisoner)
- Psychological overcrowding
- De-personalized space (standardized, without any possibility to count on material outside of the place for the construction of housing, nest, bed; a non-place or in the best cases of zoos a built place with the criteria of a professional human in charge)

How is the use of time and space?

- Inhospitable, reduced and dangerous space. (We must ask ourselves if for the animals their stay in the zoos is considered by them a constant danger, surrounded by human beings, noises and a modified environment which make many wild animals feel



threatened. It is something that leaves as time passes or do they continue in this state of constant fear all the time?)

- Nothing to do and not being able to do anything
- The presence of strangers in the prison
- “In jail you don’t live 365 days each year, but a day 365 times”
- Life in the yard (and the life in the enclosure for wild animals)
- The absence of activities (just walking or sitting down)

Consequences of the stay in the yard:

- A general feeling of emptiness (we don’t know what the wild animals are feeling because they can’t explain to us things that happen, but through their behaviour we can predict certain things and we find common grounds between human animal captive behaviour, we can understand better what happens)
- A constant state of anxiety (observed especially in zoos)
- Obsessive thoughts and conversations. (Can we suppose the existence of obsessive thoughts in the case of wild animals who show clear signs of “zoocosis”? Moving from one side to another, trying to exit the compound? Obsessive conducts are known in animals and are generally linked to life in captivity.)
- Definite loss of decision-making skills
- The personal staff (the uniform, security and punishment methods)
- Efficacy (things must be done in a certain way to not allow any chance for escape)
- The formation (equal through the personal in prisons and zoos: security rules, treatment with the captive – it’s best not to engage on an emotional level with any captives; a work routine: feeding hours, cleaning, sleeping timetables)
- The relationships between officials and prisoners (them vs us, an important dualism in the case of prisons due to what is considered criminal and a differentiation between human/animal – negating the physical and psychological suffering of captive animals)
- Volunteer staff (visitors in the case of zoos)

Therefore, there are similarities in the regulation for the prisoners:

- Regulation as a restriction of life
- Regulation as a system of domination

CONSEQUENCES OF PRISON ON THE PRISONERS

1. SOMATIC CONSEQUENCES

1.1. SENSATORIAL PROBLEMS

1.1.1. Vision.

“In this situation the state has complete control over your physical existence, and physically isolates you from the rest of society. While “outside” it is still possible to extract yourself in one way or another from the overpowering authority of state and capital, here you are confronted to a crystallization of the societal relations. When you’re living in the rich West and are part of the correct population group, you can give yourself the illusion that you are more or less free. You can consume as much as you want, you can take part in all sorts of virtual fake realities, and if you have money you can even travel around a bit, and treasure the illusion that you are free (to move). “Inside”, the illusion gets crushed by the omnipresence of the repression machine which controls all of your movements and cleanly writes them down in reports, and if you don’t behave you get a negative report and/or go to the black hole or you are put on strict and certain “liberties” are taken from you, like making phone calls, having visits, and so on. Inside, just like outside, certain privileges we have (which are artificial liberties) are being regarded as real liberties, you get used to certain privileges (like having a walk, making a phone call and so on) and you don’t regard the fact of being locked up as a problem anymore, but the maintaining of certain privileges as the solution to your problems. In the end, here as well, you can consume how much you want, and feel better because of that, and start to feel like you’re staying in a cheap hotel, with the only difference of course that you cannot go to walk on the beach to inspect some monkeys, but that you have to stay the whole fucking time in your cell, without complaining.” – Paolo Melis^[1]

1. Arrested during the disorder in Gent, Belgium, against a 6.10.09 fascist event; four of its leaders were beaten in the street, while cars, ATMs, rubbish containers and construction materials of a prison building firm burned, as well as many Palace of Justice windows being broken. Paolo was accused of arson that night, and Jürgen Goethals of eight more. Both are now free.



“These zoos for humans or concentration camps – I’d rather call them this way – are functional to the maintenance of the social and political status quo. We are fed twice a day; as the food trolley passes by, its shaking noise is like a fork thrown at the bowl normally used for pet dogs and cats; and then they ‘walk’ us out like the pet dogs they probably have at home. Surely these places mark you psychologically and physically beyond the time you spend inside. I can’t eat the good produces I used to cultivate in my garden, and have to content myself with the flavoured crap, tasteless and deprived of nourishment, offered by the house; but at least I always try to keep fit in my body and mind. Besides the DNA database there is now forced labour for ‘social’ prisoners: cleaning roads, highways and rail-tracks and producing more motivations for the breeding of humans in captivity. Some might find my words and images abnormal but this is the crude reality of what make us paradoxically similar to other animals exploited and imprisoned for others’ consumption. We can well undertake a thousand struggles but we must free ourselves from one single cage, be it real or social. Those who think they are superior or more important to other living beings or other forms of struggle simply justify submission, the practice of locking up living beings in a cage and the control of others considered inferior and therefore to be submitted to their ideological will. The comrades who are close to me and to all other prisoners in their different ideas and actions make me feel I’m not alone, and in spite of the restrictions on my freedom they encourage me to continue the struggle against the existent that is poisoning the earth. Rehabilitation methods and reintegration into society are meaningless. We don’t want to know anything about big or little works that companies are undertaking in the name of progress, nor do we want to know what they are doing for the government... I’ve already got everything I need to sabotage them. For the actions of liberation of the earth and all living beings from techno-industrial dominion!” – Gianluca Iacovacci^[2]

2. See *Return Fire* vol.3 pg71; he is now off house-arrest

- Rupture of the space
- Lighting contrasts (sunglasses)
- Scarce contrast of colours (absence of warm colours)

Consequences:

- Headaches
- Deformation of visual perceptions
- Special perturbations
- Impoverishment of life (a world in black of white). In zoos it is very common to see cement precincts, practically without vegetation for the captive animals. In these conditions it would be possible for alterations in their vision. These aspects are not easy to perceive in animals and rarely does a zoo know the terrible states in which their animals live in.

1.1.2. Hearing.

- High level of noise
- Permanent noise

Consequences:

- Auditive problems.
- Concentration problems.
- Monotony of sounds (The majority of zoos in the world are in the big cities, metres away from roads, with hundreds of people that visit daily)

1.1.3. Taste.

- Insipid food (this is common in zoos with little resources and budgets – mainly in Argentina – and all its jails)
- Poverty in the diversity of flavours. (How many flavours can be perceived by animals that live in captivity? How many would be capable of perceiving in their natural environment?)

1.1.4. Sense of smell.

- Jails smell (zoos, generally, even worse)
- Lack of smells [from outside habitats]

1.2. PERSONAL IMAGE ALTERATIONS

1.2.1. Deficit in the perception of their own body.

Two types of phenomenon:

- Loss of the image of their own body
- Lack of intimacy has grave consequences for everybody's identity. (Many zoos are built so that animals can't hide from visitors or have any privacy.)
- Effects on their own body image (avoiding looking into mirrors). It is known that some animals identify with the first individual they see when they are born, so what happens when animals in zoos have more contact with humans than with their own species?
- Can't measure distances (confusion between the limits of their own body and surroundings, especially those closed in isolation). Lots of captive animals in zoos are condemned to solitude.

1.2.2. Lack of personal care

- Lack of personal hygiene
- Deficiency in facilities
- Loss of motivation to clean themselves

1.3. MUSCULAR TENSIONS

Causes:

- Excess fat in diet
- Scarce mobility (reduced space to assure the spectacle and entertainment)
- Anxiety (typical in captive animals)
- Feeling of danger (by being surrounded by humans constantly)

Consequences:

- Frequent muscular contractions
- Pains
- Sleep alterations (common in captive animals)
- Rigid movements (symptom of "zoocosis", an illness in zoos)

2. PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

2.1. EVERY DAY LIFE

- "Total context" (all life is structured around the jail)

Consequences in jail:

- Exaggeration of situations (relevancy of little things)
- "Living the jail"

Subsequent consequences:

- "Stuck in time". (Liberating a wild animal from a zoo with relative success is a very hard task. Unless rehabilitation is provided these animals would simply not be able to have a natural life, being submissive or too aggressive in their pairs, incapable of reproducing. It is very necessary to expand studies to understand the drawbacks for their free lives after captivity. Dependency on somebody? The inability to handle their lives? These are huge parallels to human beings. Maybe we will find more answers forward one...)
- Difficulty to elaborate future projects

2.2. AGGRESSIVE SELF-AFFIRMATION OR SUBMISSION FACING THE INSTITUTION

- Power structures in jail (perception of vulnerability for the inmate)
- Necessity for self-affirmation to maintain self-esteem
- Jail as a form of annihilation. (Wild animals can't understand human motivations. They don't know why they're kidnapped, so there is constant tension.)
- Choice between extremes: confrontation vs. submission

2.2.1. Confrontation:

- Diagnosis: mechanisms of survival, adaptation to the penitentiary system. (We are all guided by circumstances: if the puma doesn't show their teeth they won't be feared.)
- Confrontation as an indicator of mental health. (In animals this is observed all the time: when they are captured they resist a lot, bite, try to escape, and after – as their mental health declines – they begin to domesticate themselves and lose a lot of the capacity for confrontation.)

Consequences:

- In jail: institutional hardening
- In freedom: no recognition of the damage (Captive animals normally show themselves more aggressive with their

captors and with their own pairs. This conduct can persist unless there is a proper rehabilitation.)

2.3. ALTERATIONS OF SEXUALITY

2.3.1. Sexual relationships:

- There are no times for subtleties ("quick, quick"). A very interesting study in "Interpreting animals" from Temple Grandin describes how rescued chickens from factories were incapable of appropriately courting hens and they raped them. The idea that everything is instinct in animal life is a thing of the past, we now know how complex the world is and what we have in common: learning from pairs, socializing in a natural environment.

- Bedrooms (animals are all the time visible for the public)

Consequences:

In jail:

- Brutalization of sex. (In the case of chickens it should be noted that the real test of a free animal is being able to reproduce – and find a couple – as in the world of natural selection anything they have missed in captivity can cause their inability to reproduce)
- Frigidity in the couple

In freedom:

- Sexual poverty, sexual rigidity (absence of fantasies)
- Problems with couples. (Of course we are not going to talk about sexual fantasies in animals, but it is clear that courting is fundamental and animals don't learn this in zoos, in fact, it is difficult for them to reproduce in captivity. Lack of desire? Maybe the high level of stress that they constantly are exposed to prevents them from reproducing.)

2.3.2. Masturbation:

- Absence of fantasies
- Constant relief to deal with the absence of pleasure. (This is often seen in captive animals. They masturbate all the time due to lack of stimulation; it is a behaviour [ed. – among others] described as "zoocosis".)

ABSENCE OF CONTROL OF THEIR OWN LIVES

- A powerful institutional situation, violent and normalised and hierarchised relationships centred on domination
- The prisoner has practically no control over their own lives

2.4. PERMANENT STATE OF ANXIETY

- In prison they are always in danger
- Constant state of anxiety, which will be generalized in all types of situations
- This leads them to live with more anxiety in permanent situations in their lives in jail, increasing risk situations

2.5. LOSS OF VINCULATIONS (compared with kidnapped animals in their natural habitat)

- Entering prison means immediate isolation

Consequences in jail:

- Restriction of personal relations

- Gradual loss of connections
- The time of jail as time empty of content
- The notion of exterior reality will be lost
- Memories will slowly distort and idealise

2.6. LANGUAGE

Language as an element of exclusion:

- Exclusive verbal terms from jail
- Peculiar intonation
- Different gesticulation

These are only some ideas, vague notions of what happens with prisoners in jail and in zoos. It is necessary to investigate doing funded comparisons, more scientifically corroborated, as those who write are simply amateurs who want to raise attention to these similarities so that we try to better understand prisoners and animals that are captive.

The facts were taken by the work of Dr. Jesús Valverde Molina: me.gov.ar/curriform/publica/valverde_efec_carcel.pdf and the internet in general. I recommend this page to understand more about zoocosis: www.infozoos.org/comportamiento/saberrantes.php [Spanish language]

1. ed. - In 2006 it was discovered that detainees at the U.S.A. internment camp in Guantanamo Bay, Puerto Rico, were being fed 4,200 calories per day to make them mostly obese and less rebellious. However the same year some clashed with guards, armed with fan blades and broken light fixtures.

“We are a small stone of the mountain, a drop within the ocean, a sigh running through the wind, we are the minoritarian struggle, the despised, the dangerous, the reckless, those who love violence, those who make the fire to sing the insolent song of their dead...”

- claim for fires set to barricade and PDI police bus, Curicó, Chile, 21 & 23.05.11

“As anarchists, we do not make a fetish out of death, in the way that fascists, armies, and nations do. We do not prefer our comrades, friends, and lovers as cold and stern memorials, or as rose colored memories revived in the haze of sentimental poetry. We prefer them beside us, creating with us the spaces and struggles of our liberation and fighting alongside us in defense of our lives. We do not ask for martyrs. We do, however, know that is inevitable[...] We are born in the history of the Haymarket Martyrs [ed. - see *Return Fire vol.1 pg86*] hanged for resisting the industrialist's police, of Suga Kanno strangled by the Empire of Japan^[1], and of Carlo Giuliani shot down by the Italian cops [ed. - see *Return Fire vol.2 pg68*]. We inherit a flag stained black in the remembrance of our dead, in the negation of their killers, and in the promise to never surrender.”

- Seeds Beneath the Snow

1. ed. - An anarcho-feminist who published a banned newspaper and in 1910 plotted the assassination of Emperor Meiji.

SANTIAGO: THE CONTEXT OF THE MARCH FOR THE CLOSURE OF THE METROPOLITAN ZOO

Brief ideas surrounding the International Day of Struggle to Close All Zoos, 24th, 25th and 26th July [2015]^[1]



Anarchists and other liberationists tear down fences and clash with police at Kısırkaya animal 'shelter' near Istanbul, Turkey, a "last stop" for strays rounded up off the streets, which also opens up development of a 'protected' forest among the 200 most important ecological sites in the world: Ankara and Izmir also saw demos

The conflict against the culture of domination imposed by the State/Capital means that we have to bring our values and ideological reflections into the fight to strive for liberation.

Our detachment from values like empathy and solidarity are signs of a sick society, whose only aspiration is consumerism. This irrational lifestyle treats each human or animal as exchangeable goods for the process of production for world trade.

Power has made us into a society that views torture and assassinations as a natural aspect of life. **This explains why other oppressive institutions like jails are also presented as normal elements**, either as a form of punishment or as a way to correct the faults of the productive system. For non-human animals this reality is presented through zoos: their “social function” is to provide education and entertain humanity. Meanwhile, behind bars the suffering of thousands of animals is regularly maintained by distancing them from their natural conditions and instincts. These animals only gain stress, sickness and death.

This tragic reality remains in front of us, along with the isolation of thousands of animals that wait for their turn to die and continue to give their services to humans through food, clothing or decorations.

And here we are: **we are the ones who have to act.** Liberation is a path of constant confrontation where the choice is to stop being apathetic bystanders and take action by abandoning our harmless “lifestyles” that don't seek any resolution or conflict, whilst millions of lives suffer and end behind the bars of vivisection centres, breeding farms and zoos.

Propaganda & Sabotage for Total Liberation

We remember the young anarchist fighter Javier Recabarren, who died on the 18th of March this year after being run over by a bus from the company Transantiago.

On the 18th of March our comrade Javier Recabarren died after being run over by a bus outside of his school. However, this 11-year-old boy was no ordinary kid. Whoever crossed his path noticed his unshakable desire for freedom.

He was a member of the “Animal Collective: Raise Your Voice” and participated in extensive manifestations for animal liberation initiatives. He also performed anarchist activities that involved revolutionary solidarity with our comrades in prison. Naturally, he was also involved in the street fights, fearlessly facing the police and burning flags of the United States. These actions led him to be detained by those bastards.

The war that Javier started is a clear sign to keep fighting against all forms of power and authority, along with continuing the fight for animal liberation and practicing revolutionary solidarity to

ensure that Javier's vision prevails and transcends... This young fighter inspires us to maintain our chosen path towards Total Liberation.



The young combatant, at a demonstration



Transantiago are targeted...

COMRADE JAVIER RECABARREN: IS WITH US!

Today we will give you a minute of silence... and a lifetime of combat!

**Revolutionary Struggle Collective
25th July 2015, Santiago**

1. ed. - Coordinated between Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Costa Rica “to end these monuments to the domestication and commercialization of life”.

'A PROFOUND DIS-EASE'

[ed. – We were invited to use excerpts from titles newly-published by Winter Oak Press for this zine, and though happy to accept Ed Lord's book 'Modern Madness', we found it hard to choose which parts would be sufficiently self-explanatory. The text is rich with concepts and lines of thought developed by various thinkers (largely heretics within the Western canon), but perhaps not so approachable without more of a grounding in the subject matter and vocabulary. So we have rearranged some ordering and emphasis (along with making some segments from the original text into footnotes and adding some others we felt were relevant of varied works that have a bearing on these topics), and hope that the result is true to what author wished to convey. The writer has "a professional background in acute psychiatry and a personal immersion in radical environmentalism", and asks, "[w]hat if mental distress is considered as much a matter of geography as it is of personal pathology?" The full tome looks at the Zapatista struggle (see **Return Fire vol.3 pg39**), the Idle No More movement (see **Return Fire vol.1 pg66**) and the Dark Mountain Project (a collaboration of diverse 'environmentalists' attacking various conceptions of civilisation on artistic, mythic and narrative levels), as an attempt to step out of Eurocentric paradigm that dominates today (though certainly using some of its thinkers). Also arguably key to much in the piece is the reading of 'modernity' which the author and others work from here; as this is a term also used in very different contexts, again we have taken sections of the book for an opening passage to set the scene. While more 'academic' in tone than much we publish, we found the elements wound together in this piece compelling, as we hope other careful readers will too.]



A key premise of this work is that there is a profound dis-ease at the heart of modernity. Psychiatry is interesting in this regard in that it is both culpable in the problem as an artefact of that modernity whilst also being a 'warning beacon' identifying anxiety and distress in the population. There will be those who disagree with this premise, arguing that things are generally getting better and in this case why attempt to fix that which isn't broken. **To explore this issue it is helpful to identify what we are referring to with the term 'modernity'.** In the one sense modernity can be seen as a particular period in time emerging after the European Enlightenment. Felix Guattari described Modernity as the shift from "the age of European Christianity" to "the age of the capitalistic deterritorialization^[1] of knowledges and techniques". The Enlightenment is associated with the coming to pre-eminence of the scientific world-view, post-monarchy ways of organising political systems and the dominance of capital within and beyond economic spheres. Philosophers associated with the emergence of modernity include Descartes, Kant, Bentham [ed. – see **Panopticons Then & Now**] and Bacon^[2]. **Modernity can be seen as having two strands, a cultural project and a social project: the project of the Enlightenment as the cultural strand and the encapsulation of a particular civilisational model in the European/Western process of societal modernisation as the social strand^[3].** The Enlightenment, building on the Renaissance and Reformation^[4], was a shift away from the medieval and early-modern world-view of tradition, myth,

religion and rule by absolute monarchy. This included raising scientific methodologies as the preferred way to explain all manner of phenomena^[5].

[...] Modernity is also associated with the Industrial Revolution, seen by some as commencing in around 1710 and reaching its zenith between 1840 and 1880. This was a period characterised by an increasing pace of technological development, rapid urbanisation and a dramatic upswing in the rate of population growth. The 1710 date for commencement is somewhat arbitrary, stemming from the specific use of coke in a blast furnace by Abraham Darby, and the industrial revolution is arguably more accurately seen as a continuation of Enlightenment scientific thought^[6].

[...] One of the central tenets of the modernist world-view is a faith in 'progress' [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg11**]. This is the belief that time is on a linear trajectory and that 'development' is taking humanity to a progressively improved mode of living. One frequently finds an unquestioned adherence to this myth and it can often be supported only by a narrow quantitative appraisal of one particular field of knowledge to the exclusion of wider factors or, to use the language of economics, 'externalities'.



"It is a theoretical and practical certainty that theory and practice are not intrinsically separate spheres but different moments of an inseparable whole. We reflect on our practice and put our theory into action. To contemplate theory and practice, to write about them both, from a moment of reflection that comes between moments of battle, is to introduce a question of mood to this reflection. Theory, then, becomes a constellation of stories that help us remember how we came to be here. It is not an immediate memory - not the tactical learning we piece together with our friends from days of struggle - but an attempt to dialogue with those who are no longer here, to create for ourselves a place to stand, in rejection of the coordinates we find ourselves mapped into. To theorize, as rebels, is to reaffirm a greater family, to identify that which we wish to carry with us." – Lev Zlodey & Jason Radegaz

[T]he overlapping and intertwined tentacles of modernity and mental distress are very much a part of one organism and cannot be neatly prised apart for dissected analysis. The crux here is that most attempts or techniques developed or proposed to alleviate mental distress are from exactly the same linear 'myth of progress' thinking that is so inseparable from the genesis of the distress in the first place. Hence the intertwining tentacles of modernity and mental distress.

Disciplinary Modernity & Control Hypermodernity

[...] The emergence of the scientific technique as rational movement of linear progress was mirrored in social and political thought by figures such as Hegel^[7]. He carries the idea of society moving in one direction from a past of disorder to a future fulfilment through the resurrection of the dialectical method of thesis meeting antithesis and correcting in a synthesis. Enlightenment thought, however, does not represent such a radical break with the pre-modern as it could be argued it simply exchanges the metaphysics of an all knowing God for the metaphysics of a rational subject. So "the enlightenment's metaphysical and epistemological assessment of the world was continuous with pre-modern thought in so far as it also still seemed to assume the idea of an ordered whole" ([Simon] Lumsden).

[...] This modernity of faith in an ordered whole is, however, a refrain of life that has grown old. We find ourselves "at the point of the decay of an epoch" where the

dominant stories have *“begun to lose their explanatory cogency”* (Lumsden). Hence the scramble to adequately theorise the stage we are at, which some call post-modern, some hyper-modern, others late-modern and a host of other terms. Zygmunt Bauman captures the lack of clarity and shifting sands of the time very visually with his term “liquid modernity”. This is also where [Gilles] Deleuze’s “control society” emerges as a term of reference, for describing a new phase of organising beyond (but also co-existing with) [Michel] Foucault’s sovereign and disciplinary societies. **I have argued that psychiatry found its genesis in the early modern Enlightenment period and has been fixed in lock-step with the twists and turns of the project of modernity ever since. This helps to explain the seeming liberation that many thought would be heralded by unlocking hospital ward doors and the scaling back of the large psychiatric institutions in the western world over the past 30 years. I continue to suggest that this has, unsurprisingly, not been a liberation, just a shift mirroring the wider post/late/hyper/liquid modern context.** The institution has been totalised across the social field, as John Berger puts it *“across the planet we are living in a prison”* and all are fellow prisoners, while *“penitentiaries still exist and more and more are being built. But prison walls now serve a different purpose. What constitutes an incarceration area has been transformed”*.

[N]ew forms of resistance are required, specifically in this case new approaches and explanatory tools to comprehend mental distress. The anti-psychiatry of Laing, Cooper, et al^[8], is no longer up to the task, likewise the critique of Oedipus and Psychoanalysis^[9] now seems quaint as mental distress has passed into the hands of bio-medical epistemologies and pharmaceutical marketing. Those earlier critiques were appropriate to the disciplinary modern society but *“psychiatry is [now] so heavily bent toward a biomedical understanding of mental illness and so dependent on psychotropic solutions for emotional problems that it might be characterised as not simply modern but rather hypermodern”* ([Andrew] Michel).

[...] An insight I drew from the Dark Mountain Project and from ‘The Coming Insurrection’ was that we are currently living through a “live pragmatics of collapse” and I aim to hold this in creative tension with an anarchist prefigurative hope. My two-fold resistance relies on one major crux of my critique; the existence of an ‘outside’ to modernity. This is the base which makes any critique not just a nihilist despair but a ready possibility to be

productive. **Modernity rests upon the assumption of its universality: “Nothing at all may remain outside, because the mere idea of outsideness is the very source of fear”** ([Theodore] Adorno and [Max] Horkheimer). **This is true of utopian Enlightenment thought in its teleological^[10] process, and it remains true of a late/post/hyper-modernity with its generalised techniques of control. As previously stated, these claims to universality are a “myth of mythlessness” or a “tradition not aware of itself as a tradition”**. Getting a purchase on the chinks in modernity’s armour is reliant upon upsetting this universalist claim.

[...] The existence of an ‘outside’ to modernity is a conclusion to be drawn from all three of the case studies explored in previous chapters. The Zapatista struggle was in large part an embarrassment to a modernist/modernising Mexican state, the existence of actors who would rather not partake in the building of a ‘first world’ state was not a role the dominant story had accounted for. This led, in their ‘constructivist turn’, into getting on and creating different modes of organisation, actively demonstrating that there was more than one way to exist in a space and to construe social relations. To be immersed in this kind of prefiguration is to very soon see modernity as just one story among many. Similarly in my analysis of ‘Idle No More’, in their refusal of modernist laws, naming schemes and borders in favour of non-Cartesian embodied ways of understanding, we can see a suppressed outside being re-opened and explored. What was particularly interesting here was the trauma and distress involved in many centuries of enforcing a demarcated modern colonial ‘inside’^[11]. There is insight to be gained from the search for healing of trauma by these indigenous groups, an example being the blockading of problematic ‘flows’ and the re-opening of healthy flows (flows that ignore borders) to engage with a landscape therapeutically. Finally I characterised ‘Uncivilisation’ [*the Dark Mountain manifesto*] as a “re-wilding from within”, with a “keen eye to an ‘outside’ that hasn’t been colonised [or] that is loosening the colonising grip.” This project is the search for new stories that can be an insurrection to derail the death ride of progress. What draws all of these expositions of an ‘outside’ together is a drive to ‘de-colonise’, that is they are not static critiques but are in ‘movement’ actively looking to shake off the totalised colonial present. [...] They are all engaged in de-colonial practices, if we accept that modernity itself is, as [Jürgen] Habermas suggests, a colonisation of the lifeworld. This perspective points towards post-colonial and de-colonial theory and practice as being useful approaches to my

pre-figurative and pragmatic resistance to modernity’s ‘rational management’ of mental distress.

[...] **Remaining cautious of the risk of expropriating ideas in a classically colonial fashion, I should point out that other figures have directly made these connections between the domains of modernity, colonialism, psychiatry and mental distress.** Most notable among these figures is arguably Frantz Fanon, a French educated psychiatrist of Algerian descent^[12]. Fanon identified the social and political elements of mental distress that he saw while working in Algiers from 1953 until his resignation from his medical post in the colonial administration in 1956 to join the Algerian liberation movement. What is instructive for my use of decolonisation as resistance is Fanon’s identification of not just a neutral biological disease pathway in those experiencing mental distress, but the functioning of colonialism on the libidinal and psychic planes. This analysis took him within a matter of years from the hospital to the scene of a violent rupture of colonialism; just as I am searching outside the hospital for the ‘cracks’ or ‘ruptures’ within modernity to get some purchase on an analysis of mental distress. This position acknowledges that it is not enough to simply put ‘service users’ in already extant positions of power, as this is merely playing around with the roles in an already present colonial game. More than this game is needed, as Samira Kawash situates this Fanonian ‘rupture’; *“true decolonization is something much more radical than the reversal of position and the replacement of rulers; decolonization is the uprooting of the system as a whole, the supplanting of the political, existential, and corporeal reality created by colonization”*. She also suggests that Fanon’s analysis doesn’t take a Hegelian view of ‘progress’ but something more akin to Walter Benjamin’s redemptive dialectic of revolution; this is the position that the moment we find ourselves in and the possibilities therein are not reduced to a point on a one way line of ‘progress’ or historical teleology, but that this moment can *“blast open the continuum of history”* (Benjamin). **This is thus the fear that the Algerian resistance struck into the French colonial psyche and also the fear that a resistance to modernity strikes into those invested in the project of progress; “the “terror” of decolonization is the terror of radical possibility generated within the scene of colonization”** (Kawash).

Abstract Space: Abstract Distress

The scene of de/colonisation within which I am seeking a Fanonian rupture is the abstract space of modernity. Within such an abstract space mental distress has become and can only be seen as an



Contemporary rebellion in Algiers against misery and hunger imposed by the neo-colonialism of the market and the 'de-colonised' State

ahistorical abstraction. The meaning of such an assertion will become clear if we explore theorisations of abstract space further. Mick Smith elaborates this concept of 'abstract space' by drawing upon Le Corbusier's^[13] modernist writings on city planning. He suggests that "*modernity's principle is repetition*" and that its *modus operandi* is the "*creation of types and through the eradication of difference*". **Le Corbusier champions this principle by demanding "the erasure of the specificity of both past and place [to] break free from both the 'slime' of social history and the unwelcome intrusions of nature's 'disorderly conduct'". I am arguing that Le Corbusier's modernist dream of city planning echoes exactly the dream of modern psychiatry.** The overt aim of so called "evidence based" psychiatry is the establishment of 'objective' universal standards, diagnostics and interventions that can shake off the weight of the checkered history of approaches to mental distress. This aim is to "*build on a clear site [to] replace the 'accidental' lay-out of the ground*" (Le Corbusier). The modern city and the modern technique of 'health' thus become one and the same thing, they are the embodiment (if embodiment hadn't been banned from psychiatric discourse!) of the intertwining tentacles discussed previously. Thus "*the nature and origins of our distress remain hidden from us, and it becomes 'free floating', unanchored to any recognisable 'cause'*" ([David] Kidner), just as the interior of our mass produced car, office with its suspended ceilings and plastic carpet or brick box in suburbia are shy at disclosing their origins, are 'free floating' and literally 'could be anywhere'. David Kidner analyses this abstraction in the case of 'depression', arguing that the industrial domain comes to re-define 'human welfare' thereby 'misconstruing human needs' as an unacknowledged emergent property of the normal functioning of industrial society. Thus he concludes that as the 'natural' world of a healthy bio-diverse environment is systematically impoverished and destroyed, so is the human psyche in exactly the same fashion. The crux of this matter is, however, that a 'firewall' is built

between the two domains thus obscuring their virtually identical unfolding, leaving depression, anxiety and the like as individual problems, "*reflecting personal inadequacy*" and demanding individualised solutions/treatments.

In this setting mental distress becomes a matter of the individual and a universal individual at that. The 'gold standard' of psychiatric classifications such as the ICD-10 (WHO 1992) or symptom/treatment rating scores such as the Health of the Nation Outcome Score (HoNOS) or Montreal Cognitive

Assessment (MoCA) is that they could be applicable to a person anywhere on the globe, despite the European and North American origins of these classifications. The ICD-10 manual gives each disorder a numeric code that is then able to be integrated into digital record keeping systems. Even though there are many hundreds of such codes within the manuals, there are many millions of people experiencing mental distress and inevitably these individual embodied subjectivities existing in particular places, spaces and times will have their experience reified into a 'type' that allows limited room for 'difference'. This abstraction of mental distress also demands the presence of professional divisions of labour [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.2 pg6*] and these

"The foundations of psychology lie within Enlightenment philosophy rather than in the day-to-day experience of the person-in-context; so it should not surprise us that the covert aims of psychology are closely aligned with those of the whole industrial project. Only if we naively accept [the experimental psychologist's] claim to be "objectively" studying the person would we anticipate that psychology might offer a welcome and necessary corrective to the personally alienating and distorting influences of industrial life. What we find, instead, is that it is one of industrialism's chief accomplices, proposing and legitimating views of the individual that are consistent with the development of a market economy, and denying legitimacy to any cultural and spiritual structures that might challenge the hegemony of the economic determination of our lives. Experimental psychology, then, has a certain ironical truth value, as David Ingleby has pointed out: it posits as "natural" a model of the person that is consistent with a domesticated world increasingly determined by industrial and commercial requirements, and in so doing it helps to bring about our conformity to this model. [...] Even when the significance of social and occupational factors in the causation of "mental illness" has been recognized, the roles of "genetic" and "environmental" factors are often mapped out in a way that assumes that their prior separation is a fact of life rather than an ideological construction. For example, the aetiology of schizophrenia is conventionally viewed in terms of an interaction between genetic predisposition, on the one hand, and "psychosocial stressors," often located within the nuclear family, on the other. But what is concealed here is the relationship between these two classes of influence. A particular "genetic predisposition" may incorporate an incapacity to adapt to the specific, and arguably less than ideal conditions offered by urban society, insisting on the need for a way of life that is currently unavailable. This genetic predisposition therefore carries a concealed *social* component. It is not a genetic predisposition to, say, schizophrenia as such, but rather a genetic preference for one sort of environment rather than another. Genetic predispositions are therefore relative to particular ways of living: genotypes that are adaptive in one environment may be disastrously unfitted for another. For example, one of the "risk factors" in schizophrenia has been found to be "emotional responsiveness." In an urban world saturated with fast-moving traffic, huge amounts of information, ever-changing occupational demands, and a good deal of sheer physical noise, it is not surprising that an emotionally responsive person would often feel bewildered and overwhelmed by the number and intensity of stimuli demanding their attention. Under these circumstances, the ability to ignore a large proportion of this input and to remain detached will be essential for emotional survival. On the other hand, is the individual inhabited the sort of environment within which our nervous systems have mostly evolved – that is, one that is closer to a wilderness situation where attentiveness to every sound might prolong one's chances of survival – then the "risk factors" identified [by researchers] might instead become predictors of *survival*. Such example make clear what the abstract discussion of "genetic predispositions," "risk factors," and so on conceal: that risk is relative to the lived character of specific environmental conditions, and that to separate "genetic" factors from "environmental" ones is radically to misunderstand the character of both." – David Kidner

disciplinary divisions then come to define what is understood as mental illness and the appropriate ways of approaching such a condition.



[...] Thus with the emergence of a range of psy-professions in the past 100 years the issue of mental distress has become reified and reduced. The use of numeric coding discussed above is a prime example of this process of capture and reduction. To be effective, however, in helping someone in distress often demands resisting this reification and capture. The psychotherapist Nick Totton criticises the regulatory professional culture as being bound up with the processes of domestication of the wild discussed in previous chapters. He suggests that therapeutic helping practices are *“impossible to domesticate without disempowering[...] therapy is, in fact, inherently wild, and cannot be rendered safe in the way that regulation processes intend”*. Thus, despite the fact that professional regulation may indeed ‘protect’ the public in a mass culture and in a one-dimensional fashion, there is a whole world of richness and diversity in skills of helping distress that is lost in the process.

[...] To make abstract space, commons^[14] open to all for all manner of ‘wild’ practices have to be domesticated, bounded and enclosed. Just as this happened physically in the modern age, as space became exchangeable ‘property’, with fences, walls, monetary/numeric value and the like, so this happened in the modern psyche^[15]. As seen in the example of First Nations communities in Canada and elsewhere, this very process involved trauma: the creation of distress. But it didn’t stop with the creation of distress, it then ‘captured’ this distress, in the ‘enclosure’ of the *psy-commons*. Self and communal understandings of distress and how to react to such states were thus denigrated and commodified into the realm of ‘experts’ and professionals who came to hold a ‘monopoly on distress’.

Subversion 1: Scaling Up the Diagnosis

The first tactic of resistance that I will offer as a response to this individualising and de-skilling enclosure is the appropriation of the

diagnostic codes and their re-application at a different and unintended scale. This is an appropriation of the weapons of colonisation, their modification and redeployment as tools of de-colonisation. Gary Genosko illustrates his discussion of [Felix] Guattari’s ‘smooth and striated’^[16] with just such a re-deployment of tools of oppression. One of the cases he applies is the use, until 1967, of ‘disc numbers’, ‘E numbers’ or tags on individual Inuit persons in Yukon and Northwest Territories of Canada to identify them. This numbering system was later replaced by a ‘census’ requiring individuals to select a recognisable European style name. Both names and numbers were re-deployed in multiple ways, often an individual using a complex combination of names, nicknames, numbers and so forth to describe themselves. Also the discs themselves were physically used as decoration, to identify houses lacking street numbers, on snow-mobiles, in works of art, etc. In one particular instance in 1991 a symbolic numbering system was started by the issuing of ‘mock disks’ with ‘Q’ numbers applied to ‘Qallunaat’ – white people. These examples are the ‘escape’ of codes from bureaucratic ‘overcoding’ techniques repeatedly applied as part of the violence of colonialism. In terms of the smooth and the striated Genosko suggests that state bureaucrats will attempt to apply the striations of organisation to indigenous communities; but *“there is something smooth about Inuit life that keeps issuing challenges to the self-appointed bestowers of names and number crunchers in state bureaucracies and elsewhere (churches, mining companies, etc)”*.

My resistance of re-appropriation takes the diagnostic manuals and their numbered codes as medico-legal-bureaucratic striations applied to individuals. In my cases the escape of the code is its application not to individuals but whole societies and institutions. The first example of this is Chellis Glendinning’s book *“My Name is Chellis and I’m in Recovery from Western Civilization”*. Glendinning, a psychotherapist, takes the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suggests that it represents the ‘normal’ state of societal functioning in civilisation. *“[T]he traumatized state is not merely the domain of the Vietnam veteran or the survivor of childhood abuse; it is the*

underlying condition of the domesticated psyche”.

She methodically goes through the diagnostic criteria and symptoms demonstrating that they are applicable on a society-wide scale and at this scale are seen not as pathologies but as a typical way to go about everyday life. For example the recurrent intrusive recollections of trauma common to individual PTSD are displayed in the frequent themes of violence, horror and terror in mass entertainment such as films. Another symptom is the numbing of affect, which Glendinning suggests is akin to a *“dead to the world’ approach to life [that] has become the modus operandi of most people living in mass technological society[...] caught in rush-hour traffic, watching television, glued to [the] computer screen[...] the crowd of paralyzed people in the elevator”*. Another symptom, arrested psychosocial development, playing out as widespread infantile approaches to relationships in adults [ed. – see *‘The Stories Which Civilisation Holds as Sacred’*] and governments conducting knee-jerk military operations as acts of “revenge” [ed. – see *Panopticons Then & Now*]. A final, and pertinent to my argument, symptom she describes is addictions, particularly the largely un-questioned techno-addiction which is the assumed position of ‘progress’ and growth economics. Paul Virilio’s work touches on some of these themes. In his *“The Original Accident”* he describes the *“havoc wreaked by progress”* as the *“integral accident”* of modernity. In this analysis he scales-up suicide; this final act has ceased to be a matter simply of psychology, *“associated with the mentality of a few disturbed^[17] individuals, but sociological and political”*. As stated previously, these societal scale symptoms are mostly either denied, not analysed or are naturalised as simply a part of ‘human nature’. The strength of Glendinning’s position is that these symptoms cannot be ignored in such a fashion, they stand as an indictment of a pathological modernity that is every bit as ‘mentally ill’ as the individuals inhabiting it and to whom diagnostic codes are applied.

The second diagnostic re-appropriation to be raised here is the book *“The Corporation”* by Joel Bakan, the material of which also became the topic of a documentary film by the same name. The diagnosis to be used in this case is Psychopathy and rather than a society wide application, here the ‘patient’ is an institution: The Corporation. Bakan’s methodological application of the DSM IV and ICD-10 criteria bring him to the conclusion that modern corporations can accurately be described as ‘psychopaths’. So while individuals within corporations may present with psychopathic traits in

their working practices, they “compartmentalise” these traits and behave differently in their personal lives. The corporation itself, however, is a psychopath through and through, meeting the diagnostic criteria comfortably. Thus “the corporation is singularly self-interested and unable to feel genuine concern for others in any context”. It is “grandiose” in its thinking and planning and is “manipulative” to achieve these ends. It lacks “empathy”, is incapable of feeling “remorse”, refuses to “accept responsibility” and relates to others “superficially”. The significance of applying this diagnostic formula to a corporation is that in many legal situations these institutions claim the rights of individuals.

[...] When something usually reductionist and restricting is re-applied in this fashion it shows starkly the farce that the individualising process of categorising distress is, along with the structures of hegemony and power (such as corporations) that maintain and legitimise this process.

Similar factors can be seen to come into play with Glendinning’s ‘socialising’ of PTSD; so it is not just individuals alone fighting their intrusive recollections of trauma, but the entire ‘civis’ together struggling to forget their collective trauma. In some cases this approach could point towards therapeutic practices genuinely helpful to the distressed individual. An example of this is a recent ‘novella’ “Liminal”, written by Natasha Alvarez. Her writing is a journal of a year of ‘mourning’ that she chose to take in response to her overwhelming feelings [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg69*]. She describes “wrestling with a deep and painful sadness” after the birth of her son. She responded with a widening of the issue, captured beautifully in a brief passage: “*Post partum*” people said. “Grief,” I replied, “mourning for a collapsing ecosystem and a dying planet.””

This resistance of re-appropriation is transversal in that it crosses the intended boundaries of application of the diagnostic codes. It crosses the artificial divide between the monadic individual subject and the social practices and institutions of which they are a part. In this way it highlights “the erroneousness of dividing the Real into a number of discrete domains” (Guattari). This re-appropriation is an example of schizoanalysis as a “radical materialist psychiatry” (not just another ‘technique’ to dwell within the ‘psy’ domain) and it begins to get some leverage on my problematic of mental distress in the spaces of modernity.

Overtly Spatial Distress: or Traversing the Firewall

“What has congealed as an environment is a relationship to the world based on management, which is to say, on

estrangement. A relationship to the world wherein we’re not made up just as much of the rustling trees, the smell of frying oil in the building, running water, the hubbub of schoolrooms, the mugginess of summer evenings. A relationship to the world where there is me and then my environment, surrounding me but never constituting me. We have become neighbours in a planetary board meeting. It’s difficult to imagine a more complete hell.” (The Invisible Committee).

Using The Invisible Committee’s description of a ‘complete hell’ in contemporary France as a starting spring board I intend now to carry a line of flight over (or through) the fire wall discussed above. ‘Distress’ within this ‘complete hell’ is not ‘abstract’ distress, neither is space an abstraction in this process. In the place of the desire to see distress as a-historical, a-social and a-spatial my transversal movement will place distress as overtly spatial, specific, relational and embodied. Let me take a detour into archaeology to illustrate this point further and to find another spatial “hell”.

In his narrative description of the finds from numerous archaeological digs around the eastern Mediterranean, Steven Mithen characterises the creation of an everyday living ‘hell’. The site he particularly describes thus is a Neolithic village dating from 9000-7000BC called Catalhoyuk, in present day Turkey, near the Syrian border. In these early sites of domestication (a problem discussed previously) we see the kinds of spaces both facilitated and necessitated by the technology/technique of sedentary agriculture. Displays of human skulls and images of animals were found here that suggested [ed. – as one plausible interpretation] a fear of nature and systemised rituals, the ‘wild’ as something external and a felt need to secure their community from incursion. These images were within an architecture of little variation, with repeated designs and rigidly demarcated areas for specialised activity; “different types of people – old and young, male and female, specialist toolmakers and those without skills – were very restricted as to where they could sit and work within each room. To me it seems as if every aspect of their lives had become ritualised, any independence of thought and behaviour crushed out of them by an oppressive ideology manifest in the bulls, breasts, skulls and vultures. This sounds like living in a Neolithic hell...” (Mithen). This ‘hell’ is in sharp contrast to the ‘heaven’ [ed. – theorised by some] of pre-domesticated hunter-gatherer life from 20,000BC to 11,000BC for which he found evidence from other archaeological investigations.

This experience of taking up settled farming has surprisingly strong resonances

with the spatial relationships produced (or exacerbated) by hyper-modernity; if we remember the “complete hell” of having become “neighbours in a planetary board meeting”. Just as the first farmers had re-situated the ‘wild’ as separate and external, we ‘moderns’ now find ourselves as “me and then my environment, surrounding me but never constituting me”. The “bulls, breasts, skulls and vultures” may have been replaced with smart phone adverts, plastic wrapped factory chickens and badger culls, but the message is much the same. These are two concrete examples, in the 21st Century and in 7,500BC, of Glendinning’s societal PTSD. We find ourselves trapped together in an everyday that is colonised by dysfunctional practices that stem from trauma and are re-producing the trauma. **[Herbert] Marcuse calls these practices “enslaving contentment”, the daily activities that are little more than “performances required to sustain destructive prosperity”. Awaking daily to participate in routines so familiar and numbing that they are barely even recognised as questions in need of examination, let alone as practices that are built upon resource depletion, slavery (wage and forced) and species extinction. This is the ‘uneven’ ground that Le Corbusier would like to erase from the equation, there can be no ‘commons’ for sustenance here, only techniques developed by professionals. The straight and even lines must be built to enable the smooth continuance of ‘progress’, citizens must forget the uneven ground hidden under and repressive practices hidden by the level concrete floor. If you feel distress in this space it must be a technical problem of biology, chemicals or genes requiring an empirical solution that can be manufactured and reproduced wherever the concrete floor stretches.** However, concrete isn’t yet everywhere and where it is it has a habit of cracking, and these edges and cracks are where we could begin to situate what Guattari calls “aesthetic-existential” approaches that refuse to “objectify, reify [or] ‘scientifise’ subjectivity”.

[...] Our task then in drawing this schizoanalysis to a close and to suggest resistances is to make these “new coefficients of freedom” possible. Rather than spatial practices of standardisation and banal repression a possibility of ‘anarchic space’ can be opened up. Within anarcho-space there is a need to address the inherited distress, as the trauma won’t just disappear, thus pragmatic practices can be explored drawing upon a hotch-potch of re-directed existing approaches and what is left of the richness of the psy-commons. There will also be pre-figurative practices that envisage an existence that

isn't stuck in constantly re-producing trauma. These practices are akin to health promotion, remembering the cliché that 'prevention is better than cure'. **To make an illustration of what is required let us consider factory farming as a problem of modernity.** This issue can be subdivided into particulars, such as routine over-use of antibiotics. Thus one could campaign against this use of antibiotics, demanding that the practice is stopped. This would, however, ignore the 'assemblage' of factors that make the factory farm what it is. The antibiotic use is necessitated by the crowded conditions and the vectors and mutations of disease in such a space. The crowded space is necessitated by the imperative to maximise profit with the highest yields possible in the area available. This argument goes on through multiple levels of organisation, philosophical and material considerations, and in a complex non-linear causative fashion. Through this we find that factory farming is another 'technique' that is hyper-modern through and through. Thus to effectively challenge the problem of factory farming one would need to take an 'assemblage' view and not just look at one single issue. This methodological insight remains true in an assessment of mental distress. One could demand the cessation of the use of psychotropic medication, but fail to address the reasons that the use of such medication has become the accepted way to approach mental distress. It would also risk stigmatising people who find such substances genuinely helpful in managing day to day. Thus I want to suggest that pre-figurative resistances to create anarcho-space and the pragmatic approaches also will need to be such 'assemblage' views. This is why a richly spatial approach is helpful – by refusing to see distress as 'free-floating' and abstract and thus requiring interventions that are every bit as reductionist, we can see the fire wall that we plan to traverse. [...] I shall now appraise the interventions, tools and skills at hand.

Subversion 2: Luddite Health Promotion

Preventing distress and helping someone who is in distress are tasks requiring skill. I want to suggest, using an argument developed in anthropology by Tim Ingold, that what currently passes for 'health promotion' and 'helping' in situations of mental distress is closer to de-skilling machine operation. Ingold dismisses the traditional idea of technology evolving on a linear trajectory from simple to complex and thus seeing 'primitive' societies as possessing less technical know-how and awaiting development. His suggestion is that it is in fact a matter of the subject being "drawn from the centre to the periphery of the labour process". [...] This move to the periphery turns the "workman"

[sic] into "an operative, putting into effect a set of mechanical principles that are both embedded in the construction of the instruments he [sic] uses, and entirely indifferent to his own subjective aptitudes and sensibilities". In this way the operative is "detached from" the process and end product. Ingold calls the opposite approach "technique" (not in the sense that Jacques Ellul uses this term). This way is at the "centre" and "immanent", seeking to minimise the distance between the subject and the process. In this approach the tool is inert until the skilled subject "delivers a force that is personal rather than mechanical", there is no pre-given or independent instrumental objective embedded in this type of tool. Rather the 'process' is embedded in social relations. **To use such a tool is to be highly skilled, overturning the old notion of the 'primitive', this skill being "at once a form of knowledge and a form of practice". Thus, "acting in the world is the skilled practitioner's way of knowing it".**

Having defined Ingold's use of the term 'technology' and 'technique' let me return to my earlier assertion about current interventions for those in distress. I would argue that most 'psy' professions, guided by notions of 'evidence based practice', are more akin to the 'operatives' on the periphery of the process using machines with pre-determined functions. This situation has been an emergent property of the push to standardise interventions coupled with the drive by different 'expert' groupings to professionalise their domain. Thus recalling my discussion of Susan Griffin's essay on ideology [*What if all our efforts toward liberation are determined by an ideology which despite our desire for a better world leads us inevitably back to the old paradigm of suffering?*] (Griffin) it seems that "despite our desire" well intentioned^[18] professionals find they are wielding machines over which they have little agency. These machines are of numerous forms, for example mental health legislation is just such a machine, as are prescription guidelines, pharmaceutical formulations, assessment protocols, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) sessions, shift working patterns and the built environment of wards and clinics. So if this striated space of abstract universal interventions represents an undesirable mass factory of psy-labour, how can we pre-figure an anarcho-space of immanent skilled technique (Ingold's meaning of 'technique')? How can the bored operative putting in a shift at the psy-factory be replaced by the alert, engaged and nuanced hunter-gatherer of the psyche moving with skill in a smooth space?

In answer to this I will suggest another subversive practice: *Luddite health*

promotion. The Luddite actions of the early industrial period were discussed previously [in the book] in the context of the Dark Mountain Project, and here I will briefly revisit some of the issues raised. The Luddites of the nineteenth century English midlands were generally skilled crafts people, concerned about the dramatic changes they saw coming from the implementation of standardised machine operations in their industries. **This situation sits comfortably within Ingold's characterisation of technology with the 'operative' on the 'periphery'. While the Luddites were far from pre-civilised skilled tool users, they were on this trajectory from tool use by skilled subjects in the 'centre' towards an alienated 'periphery'. Their response was "violent in its rhetoric and as direct as a sledgehammer in its actions"** ([Steven] Jones). For a core period of three years numerous autonomous groups donned masks and smashed the machines responsible for the deterritorialisation of their daily life [ed. – see *Memory as a Weapon; "An Outrageous Spirit of Tumult & Riot"*]. While being cautious not to simplify or distort historical events from 200 years ago it seems that to negotiate and accommodate became unthinkable for many in a situation that was driving thousands in the midlands and north of England into poverty and drudgery.

Returning to the alienation and limited efficacy of machine interventions in the psy-factory (remaining cautious of clumsily appropriating a 200 year old movement, as neo-luddites have been accused of) I want to open up a space where these type of questions of technology may be asked. This could be in dialogue, in epistemological questions, or equally it could be in visceral direct actions. The question of flows could be re-visited here, as it has been a topic emerging at numerous points in my investigation. Deleuze and Guattari examined the flows of desire, the decoded capitalist flows and the schizophrenic flows. The Zapatistas created their own autonomous flows, whilst ignoring or fighting the statist and neo-colonial flows of capital, commodities and rancher/paramilitary thugs. Idle No More saw blockaded flows to disrupt the violent



economy of [resource] extraction, trauma and cultural genocide. The Invisible Committee discuss the urban-suburban-exurban flows that maintain the 'nightmare' of modernity and advocate action to disrupt these flows. **The Anthropocene [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg17*] has recently been defined partly by the initiation of flows, the global exchange of species that is now imprinted on the geological record. The myth of progress is the engine that drives the flows of destruction along their linear track and surely a subversive practice of Luddite Health Promotion should look to derail this train.** There are echoes of this in the derailment of a coal train in the Mace Creek region of northwest Missouri [U.S.A.] in June 2015^[19]. In this action anonymous anarchists became part of an assemblage as they joined forces with heavy rain to weaken vulnerable sections of the line over a number of weeks. Their statement sums up an attitude of transversal movement across domains of psychological health, physical health and ecological health: *"We do this in solidarity with all prisoners and in defense of the stolen resources of this planet used to kill us. We do this for those made sick and dead and full of cancers by the forces of capitalism. When we do this we mean we have decided not to die."*

The nature of the questions and the situation of hyper-modernity that we find ourselves in will determine the level of questioning required. As with any health promotion the benefits may not be immediately apparent and there may well be some up-front costs. But with an eye to the long game and the pre-figuration of something different there could be our sanity to (re-)gain.



1. ed. – “[A] move away from a rigidly imposed hierarchical, arborescent context, which seeks to package things (concepts, objects, etc.) into discrete categorised units with singular coded meanings or identities, towards a rhizomatic zone of multiplicity and fluctuant identity, where meanings and operations flow freely between said things, resulting in a dynamic, constantly changing set of interconnected entities with fuzzy individual boundaries” (Wikipedia).

2. ed. – “17th century thinkers dethroned scholastic Aristotelianism and indeed, theology itself. Not only Church orthodoxy, but animism [ed. – see *The Stories Which Civilisation Holds as Sacred*] and magic that had survived into the Renaissance were rejected. [...] The scientific revolution of the 1600s was a decisive

break with the past, a thorough re-evaluation of what had come before. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) has come to represent the shift. Inaugurating methods of induction and experimentation, his project was to restore the dominion over creation that had been lost with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Bacon saluted America's first colonizers, their work in a “*Newfound Land of inventions and sciences unknown.*”

But Bacon did not achieve a full break with Church scholasticism[...] That task fell to René Descartes, and Michel Serres' words are worth noting: *"Mastery and possession: these are the master words launched by Descartes at the dawn of the scientific and technological age, when our Western reason went off to conquer the universe. We dominate and appropriate it: such is the shared philosophy underlying industrial enterprise as well as so-called disinterested science, which are indistinguishable in this respect."*

A self-proclaimed original, Descartes was an arch-rationalist who refused to trust his own senses. His dis-embodied approach sought to derive sensory information from mathematics instead of the other way around, and virtually equated math and natural science. Having created analytic geometry, he wanted to mathematize thought. Descartes' famous formulation of mind-body dualism is consonant with his view of reality as immutable and inflexible mechanical order. It should come as no surprise that he saw humans, among other living beings, as fundamentally machines. [...] The ideas of [Bacon, Descartes], and other mathematical and scientific thinkers interwove with and supported technological innovation during the 17th century. As Margaret Jacob notes, *"The road from the Scientific Revolution to the Industrial Revolution [is] more straightforward than we may have imagined."*

What we call the Enlightenment of the 1700s owed much to the canon of 17th century empirical philosophy and natural science. [...] Enlightenment voices decried superstition and tyranny. [...] The new outlook overturned the Renaissance belief that what came first was best, replacing it with faith in progress and the future. A favorite target of Enlightenment's materialist orientation was animism; the once-prevailing conception of a living spirit in nature was denounced as superstition.

The supposed anti-tyranny credo bears a closer examination. Voltaire and other leading Enlightenment lights were friendly with Frederick the Great [Prussian King 1740-1786], despite his despotism and support of feudalism. Frederick's proclamation of the Enlightenment as Prussia's official ideology seems like a strange fit.

Enlightenment reason certainly did some demythologizing, but it also installed new myths along with its claims and promises. One such myth held that history, in Couze Venn's words, as *"the universal and rational project of the becoming of humanity as a whole"* – a myth with grave implications and consequences for indigenous people. There is an evident connection between imperialist expansion as a system of power, and the diffusion of Enlightenment thought as a global pattern of culture.

[...] Central to Enlightenment thought and probably the most important modern philosopher, Immanuel Kant did much to shape how people understand reality even today. He also revealed something of the less than liberatory side of Enlightenment. Silke-Maria

Weineck placed his thinking *"on the side of certifiable calculations, of the exchange of goods, of sound economics."* [...] Theodor Adorno took this further, observing that *"All the concepts [Kant's] Critique of Practical Reason proposes [in honor of freedom] – law, constraint, respect, duty – all of these are repressive."* He found that *"Kant's moral philosophy [will] not let him visualize the concept of freedom otherwise than repression."* And *"reason itself is to Kant nothing but the lawmaking power[...] He glories in an unmitigated urge to punish..."* (Modernity Takes Over).

3. The age of Enlightenment and emergence of modernity coincided with the exploration and colonisation of continents beyond Europe. This is the social project of modernity that exported European/Western ways of living and governing at the same time these new rationalities were being established at home. It is interesting in this regard that although Celtic monks are believed to have sailed as far as North America in the period commonly known as the 'dark ages' (the legendary "Voyage of St Brendan") the continent was not appropriated and exploited until maritime expeditions in the centuries leading up to the Enlightenment. The appropriation and exploitation required the technology, methodology, ideology and other factors tied up with the cultural and social project of emerging Modernity.

4. ed. – “Protests against abusive practices of the Catholic Church by [Martin] Luther, [John] Calvin, [Ulrich] Zwingli, and others became a revolt against Papal authority. Protestant denominations were the result: a full break with Catholicism. And the anti-authoritarian spirit of the Reformation was not limited to doctrinal matters. In Germany, home of the Reformation, anger at Church landlords ran high; appeals to the people by Luther and other reformers brought more radical results than these preachers intended. The radical Reformation was exemplified by Thomas Müntzer, who broke with Luther early on, announcing an imminent apocalypse wherein freedom and equality would reign. Müntzer preached dispossession of the nobility, echoing the Taborite millenarians and social revolutionaries of 15th century Bohemia. The great peasant revolt in southern and central Germany (1525-1526) was the most important event of the Reformation period and one of the biggest mass movements in German history. But sadly, the Peasants' War is not what was arguably *modern* about this era. The seeds of modernity are found instead in writings of people like Ulrich Zwingli. He preached the necessity of regular, industrious habits, and warned of *"the danger of relaxing the incentive to work."* The origin of this modern, now-internalized ethos is the main subject of Max Weber's classic, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The rise of Protestantism relied upon the print culture introduced by Johannes Gutenberg's invention: a printing press using moveable type. Printed books were available in the early 1500s, accompanied by a striking increase in literacy. For Marshall McLuhan, print was a founding aspect of modernity: *"With Gutenberg Europe enters the technological phase of progress, when change itself becomes the archetypal norm of social life."* Typography made possible the first assembly line, the first mass production. Not only did authorial ownership commence, but, according to Roberto Dainotto, *"By embedding language in the manufacturing process of mass-produced books, the printing press transformed words and ideas into commodities."* Walter Ong

observed another key outcome: "Before writing was deeply interiorized by print, people did not feel themselves situated every moment of their lives in abstract, computed time of any sort." A changed sense of time seems related to a growing "passion for exact measurement" in the late Renaissance. The emphasis on precision shows that the domestication process is speeding up and tightening its grip" (Modernity Takes Over).

5. Such methodologies included inductivism, in which observations of a particular case are used to generate theories that can predict future incidences/behaviours. This, and other scientific methodologies, tends to rely on the assumption that objective truths can be discovered by the rational examination of phenomena reduced to their constituent parts. This assumption is known as reductionism.

6. All of these definitions of Modernity are an oversimplification of the issue however. The way I want to characterise Modernity is as *an affect on everyday lived experience* [ed. – i.e., as producing and being sustained by certain feelings, attitudes, and ways of relating]. An example of this is the description by Jay Griffiths of the changing conception of time as "wet and round time" and "dry and linear time" and how this is connected to social organisation, interpersonal relationships and the championing of particular technologies, in this case the clock. Paul Virilio has also taken 'time' as a focus for exploring the everyday experience of modernity, using the term "Dromosphere" to describe the changing relations of space and time being lost in a compulsive speed acceleration. He talks of a "grey ecology" as a "pollution of distances" or a "pollution of life-size" that should be as concerning as pollution of 'green' ecology. To approach modernity in this way is not to analyse cities, for example, as just another space, but to see the totality and wider implications of their very existence. Here we begin to unpeel the dark side of our 'taken for granted' epoch and in this sense "the tragic chorus is the city itself". To continue in this examination of negative 'affects' we see loss of foundations and a chimera of autonomy collapsing into fragmentation as common impacts associated with modernity. The experience of this is expressed by [Zygmunt] Bauman as a paradox: "The greater our individual freedom, the less it is relevant to the world in which we practice it. The more tolerant the world becomes of the choices we make, the less the game, our playing it, and the way we play it are open to our choice. No longer does the world appear amenable to kneading and moulding; instead, it seems to tower above us – heavy, thick and inert, opaque, impenetrable and impregnable, stubborn and insensitive to any of our intentions, resistant to our attempts to render it more hospitable to human co-existence".

7. ed. – Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German philosopher of the early 19th Century. His thought has said to be summed up by the dictum that "the rational alone is real", that all reality is possible to express in rational categories. As Jason Radegas and Lev Zlodey have put it, "[i]t is a foundation of monotheism [ed. – see **'The Stories Which Civilisation Holds as Sacred'**] and of rationalism that there is one Truth. This is a fundamental doctrine of the reality we are fighting. But even the scientists have been forced to concede that there is no such thing as objectivity. Velocity and position are relative; observation always affects the observed. Nonetheless, the possibility that truth is multiple and contradictory is still assumed to be fallacy.

Both the Enlightenment concept of logic and the State itself require all their subjects to stand in line."

8. ed. – A tendency starting in the 1950's typified by Ronald David Laing, David Graham Cooper and others. Laing wrote that "[i]f the human race survives, future men [sic] will, I suspect, look back on our enlightened epoch as a veritable age of Darkness. They will presumably be able to savor the irony of the situation with more amusement than we can extract from it. The laugh's on us. They will see that what we call 'schizophrenia' was one of the forms in which, often through quite ordinary people, the light began to break through the cracks in our all-too-closed minds." Cooper saw the condition of schizophrenia as the clash between one's 'true' identity and our social identity (the identity others give us and we internalise). From 1961 to 1965 Cooper ran an experimental unit for young schizophrenics in South Africa, which he saw as a revolutionary 'anti-hospital', before travelling to Argentina in search of revolutionary currents.

9. ed. – 'Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia' is a 1972 book by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, which, via human psychology, economics, society, and history, looks at the relationship of desire to reality and to capitalist society in particular. They critique the 'classic' psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud who focuses on the 'Oedipus complex' theory; a child's desire, that the mind keeps in the unconscious via dynamic repression, to have sexual relations with the parent of the opposite sex (i.e. males attracted to their mothers, and females attracted to their fathers), named after a 5th-century BC Greek mythological character Oedipus, who unwittingly kills his father and marries his mother. As a parody of the kind of repressive narratives they saw being deployed through this theory, two other Parisian psychoanalysts near the time of 'Anti-Oedipus' wrote a mock paper under pseudonym proposing that the anti-establishment rioters of May '68 (see **Return Fire vol.2 pg96**) were totalitarian Stalinists, and 'psychoanalyzed' them as suffering from infantile Oedipal revolt against authoritarian father figures.

10. ed. – A teleology is a belief that things are by purpose aimed towards a goal.

11. Despite the common belief in Europe that the colonial period is past, it has stayed very much present, for example, in the form of 'epistemological colonialism' – a process by which western hierarchies of knowledge are naturalised as the 'only' objective empirical logic. Thus only certain questions come to be seen as relevant or sensible and diverse practices and knowledges are dismissed as 'other'.

12. ed. – Actually, Frantz Fanon was born on the Caribbean island of Martinique, which was then a French colony and is now a French 'département', and first arrived in Algeria after fleeing the collaboratorist regime in Martinique during World War II to British-controlled Dominica to join the Free French Forces, and was deeply shocked by the racism shown towards him and other blacks within the military.

13. ed. – "Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier remains a symbol of modernist architecture and planning. Active as an architect and planner from around 1920-1960, Le Corbusier acted as a principle member of International Congress of Modern Architecture and author of The Radiant City establishing the

vision of utopian modernism that provided inspiration for Disneyland. He is responsible for redesigning Chandigarh, the capital of India's Punjab, L'Unité d'Habitation, a large apartment complex in Marseilles, designing megaprojects around the world, and inspiring the style of Brasilia [ed. – *administrative capital of Brazil*]. However, few of Le Corbusier's projects made it to construction as political and financial limitations inhibited his work. Echoing Descartes and other mechanical philosophers, Le Corbusier's position is clear: "Thus in order to save himself [sic] from this chaos, in order to provide himself with a bearable, acceptable framework for his existence, one productive of human well-being and control, man has projected the laws of nature into a system that is a manifestation of the human spirit itself: geometry". In short, modernism was the extension of industrial theory with an aesthetic concern [ed. – indeed, Le Couisbier described housing as "machines for living"]. Embodying the reductionary spirit of linear vision and it's obsession with scale, geometry and a perfection of things harboured an intense disdain for chaos and disorder. Commenting on Le Corbusier, James C. Scott writes, "visually offended by disarray and confusion [he wished to correct] not so much a disorder at ground level but a disorder that was a function of distance, a bird's-eye view". Le Corbusier's 'bird's-eye view' represents the unspoken premise of linear perspective that requires the painter or planner to disengage (separate) from their environment, to step back from the world as a means to apply the grid to achieve scale and spatial control – also known in different contexts as the scientific, anatomical, and biopolitical gaze" (What is Progress?: Revisiting Infrastructure & Civilizing Trends).

14. ed. – A good summary of 'commons' is given in this extract from 'Do or Die' #6, sadly by talking about their destruction (or, 'enclosure') in a classic case; the highlands of Scotland. "This process culminated in the infamous Highland Clearances, with the people finally and fully dispossessed by the new landlords and their sheep, and driven into wage labour in the newly industrialised cities, or onto boats bound for the 'New World' (where they would help to dispossess others in turn). A tremendous haemorrhaging of natural and social wealth was underway – through the export of nutrients (in the form of sheep and timber), and of people, who took the accumulated wisdom of an ancient, more sustainable culture with them. Both the land and knowledge of how best to live on it, were under attack.

Then, when the bottom dropped out of the sheep market, tragedy turned to farce – sporting estates – the ultimate colonial indulgence, a status symbol and bizarre playground for the elite (and ONLY the elite) – began to predominate. By 1912, "an incredible 20% of Scotland's land area was given over more or less entirely to the hunting of red deer by a small fraction of the populace" (A Brief History of the Origins of the Scottish Wildlands). Hot on the heels of the sheep, these deer began to deliver the death blow to the Scottish forests.

While one could never claim that the indigenous Highland culture was perfect – for example, it too had presided over deforestation, and helped the eradication of such species as the wolf and beaver – its community-based subsistence economy differed from the colonial English model in one crucial respect.

In a nutshell, it is that the original 'social ecology'

of the Highlands was, for all its feudal failings, what is now described as a 'commons' regime. "Traditionally, clan lands were not the private property of the chief but were invested in him on behalf of the clan. Membership of the clan [gave] clan members rights of use of land and water" (Reclaiming the Scottish Highlands) – from this tradition comes the Gaelic proverb that "everyone is entitled to a deer from the mountain, a tree from the wood and a fish from the river". It was the English that brought the dynamic of enclosure to bear on this regime, having recently pioneered it upon their own people. After the defeat of the clans at Culloden in 1745, the imposition of enclosure meant "not only the removal of land from subsistence communities, but a profound step toward viewing the land and its people as tradable, exploitable commodities" (Radical Environmentalism in Scotland). ("Labour too became a tradable commodity", as those Highlanders exiled to Glasgow and elsewhere found to their cost.) By contrast, the commons regime had a deep-rooted sense of place – so deep, in fact, that "a farmer would often be referred to by the name of the farm rather than the family name". Such an affiliation with, and reliance on, a place is in marked contrast to the 'cut and run' practice of enclosure – it is a crucial built-in safeguard against the temptation to 'externalise' the social and environmental consequences of your actions – to pass the costs on to someone else."

15. ed. – "It is vital for the rebels of today to understand the enclosures of the commons that began over 500 years ago. Rather than an act of primitive accumulation or a blind, profit-motivated process, the enclosure is first and foremost a strategy of counterinsurgency. All counterinsurgency, in fact, is fundamentally enclosure. [...] After they appropriated the natural commons and broke our relation with the land, through mechanization they broke our relation with the rural community and the rhythms of life. The third great enclosure was the reengineering of urban space to break our relation with the streets that had become our home, and then to commercialize the public sphere so that, rootless, we could be swept off those streets even at a physical level; the latter part of this process is still incomplete even in some Western countries, while the proliferation of slums, the self-organized growing out of control of many of the world's people, threatens to roll back the first part of this process. The fourth enclosure, which began when the mass production of moving images merged with an affective economy [ed. – see the supplement to this volume of **Return Fire**; '**Caught in the Net**'], is the expropriation of the imaginary from our imagination. [...] Though all of these enclosures run according to a logic that demands completion, they are all current, and once completed, they will begin again at zero, albeit more rapidly, anywhere an atavistic pocket opens up" (Jason Radegas & Lev Zlodey).

16. ed. – Some have taken issue with which of these spheres is truly 'smooth' and which 'striated'; "Smooth space" – Deleuze and Guattari's term that contrasts with the striated space favoured by the authorities – is a misnomer. It's the friction, the darkness, the nooks and crannies that the State objects to. [...] The bellicose organization of the State is nowhere more apparent than in its campaigns against the world. The war against nature has taken many forms. The world was depersonified and dismembered by science. Gardens were

replaced with monocultures because they were easier to survey, to tax, and to destroy in the scorched earth responses to rebellion. People living by natural rhythms were settled so they could be better policed. The US military defoliated the forests of Vietnam, so they could see the enemy. Mussolini drained the Pontian marshes near Rome, as Saddam Hussein drained the Euphrates marshes, as the real estate industry is draining the Everglades and the coal industry is levelling Appalachia. Each of these wild places were zones of rebellion and places of refuge for stateless or state-defying peoples right up into the 20th century. [...] As James C. Scott describes it, the State must "flatten" everything in its dominion, at every level – geographically, linguistically, ethnically, economically – to make it legible, easy to read like a tax survey, easy to police like a grid of tenement houses. The jungle of existence must be replaced with a monoculture" (Jason Radegas & Lev Zlodey).

17. ed. – We would object (as perhaps would this author) to the stigmatisation of the suicidal as 'disturbed'; indeed, we were quite touched by reading the following words from an anonymous statement from somewhere within the Spanish State, and much in agreement. "It's true that Christian morality, emetic and hypocritical, has sown a certain vitalism that was imposed in all areas of civilized culture. We have to love our life, we have to want to live, we can't say clearly that we hate our life; and when someone chooses to commit suicide, whatever the reason, and the standard reaction is to stop him/her "for his/her own sake". Even though who comes to

"save" (Christian concept once more) the suicidal doesn't have the slightest idea of what is the "good" of that person who, moreover, has not asked for help; always based on abstract and empty concepts (good and evil, fair and unfair, right and wrong...). This, especially in the past centuries, has adopted a commercial reason, since we are considered profitable subjects which squeeze to the last cent that can give back to the overflowing coffers of elites. If we die, they lose their money, and that's why they try to keep us alive at all costs, whether with preservatives and medicines and pharmaceutical drugs as with the extension of a culture that fears and hates death rather than understand it for what it is, the natural end of life, something that will come, soon or later, and that we have to assume. Something with that we have to learn to live if we want to enjoy and treasure every good moment, every glance, every life experience and every jump that we make to the swimming pool with closed eyes, with the risk of finding it empty..."

18. ed. – While we don't doubt such well-intentioned people exist in the profession (nor question the author's own experience), we also cannot cover over the history of psychiatry as an explicit weapon against the unruly – see for example our notes in **Return Fire vol.2 pg77** – not hide our suspicions about some kinds of people attracted to such a trade.

19. ed. – 31 coal carriages were derailed. The action was claimed around the time of the June 11th annual day of solidarity with long-term/eco-anarchist prisoners.

'TIES THAT WERE UNBREAKABLE'

On April 30th Tonni, an anarchist boy from Madrid, was kidnapped by his mother and father and locked up in a "family therapeutic center" (which is physically and experientially a jail).

In centers like this, hundreds of children are locked up because they are 'unsubmissive' to the demands of their families for their ideology, lifestyle, drug use, or even for being 'gay', 'lesbian', trans... This in exchange for €4,000 and the accusation of their families, without the need for a court order, unlike conventional reformatories.

Almost three months ago they wanted to cut ties that were unbreakable, they wanted to stop our actions and lock our ideas between walls full of psychologists and video surveillance. **However, not a single day of confinement has gone unnoticed, solidarity between anarchists was never 'only a written word' and overcomes all the cages, all the caresses and all the hugs that they have stolen from us.**

Last July 16th friendship and rebellion tore down the walls and our comrade Tonni escaped from the center where they were imprisoned, escaping from the authority which wanted to destroy him, to continue the struggle for freedom. There are still more walls to tear down...

We have felt everything; fear, enthusiasm, rage, motivation, anxiety, happiness... **Sometimes it seems that our enemies are always one step ahead and we can't even think of acting without them knowing. But we thought about it and we did it, and finally we are together.** Freedom is unstoppable, and this is well-known by the thousands of non-human and human animals that manage to leave behind their conditions of confinement and/or exploitation. You also can leave behind the walls that surround us and help other ones to do so.

Our love does not fit on their cages; fire to all the prisons and long live anarchy!

Following, we transcribe some words from the companion for the miserable adults: "Every time you told me that I could not count on my friends, who were bad people and who lead me on the wrong path, I got closer to them and they showed me that I could count on them. For every time you did not accept my way of being and living, I moved farther away from yours. For every time you locked me up I ran away; from the high school, from your house, from the center. And you can go and forget about me, because you will not lock me up again."

WILD PLANTS –

Rose Hips & Dandelion (root)



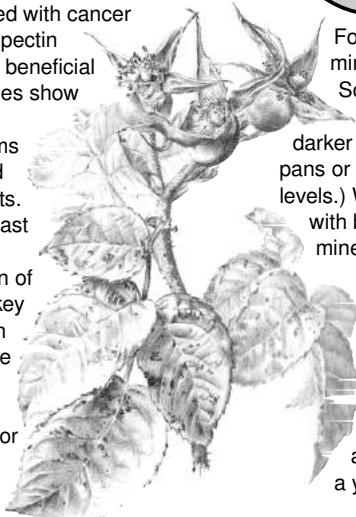
Rose Hips

Rose hips are the sweet fruit of the rose plant, and glow like rubies in the fading colours of autumn. The earliest known gardening was the planting of roses along the most travelled routes of early nomadic humans. Domesticated roses have much larger hips but they are usually not as flavorful or medicinal as wild varieties.

Wild varieties have the highest concentration of Vitamin C, with some estimates reporting 30-50 times the Vitamin C of oranges, making them excellent for prevention and treatment of colds and flu. The hips are also loaded with Vitamins A, B complex, E, K and minerals including calcium, silica, and phosphorus. They are particularly high in bioflavonoid rich antioxidants including rutin that help strengthen our heart and blood vessels, and prevent degeneration of tissue. They contain carotenes including lycopene that have been linked with cancer prevention. Natural pectin found in rosehips is beneficial for gut health. Studies show that rose hips may reduce the symptoms of osteoarthritis and help sore, achy joints. Additionally, they boast the highest known concentration of iron of any plant (and the key to processing iron in the body is to couple it with vitamin C, which abounds in rose hips, so ideal for those who are anemic). People who have menstrual periods have long used rose hips during that time; the iron (a major component of red blood cells) helps you feel lethargic during your period. Rose hips have the most nutritional value when used immediately after harvesting.

They ripen after they are touched by the first frost. They should be firm with a little give in texture and bright red. (It varies, but in general, orange hips are not quite ripe, and deep red hips are overripe. Overripe hips are sweet, but have lost much of their vitamin C.) Pick on a dry day to prevent mould.

Humans cannot eat the hairy inner seeds of rose hips because they irritate our intestines. (Other animals and birds can eat them with no ill effect and benefit from the essential fatty acids and vitamin E; we can press the oil to treat skin problems.) This isn't a problem if you just want to make a tea (because you can use them whole without breaking them open), but if you want to you can cut the hips in half and scoop out the seeds with a tiny spoon or round-tipped knife (supposedly easy once you've found the rhythm!) then rinse in cold water and drain thoroughly.



“Autumn, in the natural world, is the time for passing on. Migrant birds which have raised their young during our few uncertain months of summer warmth move away to winter in the tropics. Others, passing from the far north to the same off-season resorts, pause here to replenish the energy burnt up on their marathon flights. Flowers fade and go to seed. And these migrate too, on the wind and the fur on animals, and – because man [*sic*] is a migratory creature as well – in shoes and the slipstreams of trains. Above all autumn is a time of decay, when the remains of plants and animals that have not survived the population explosion of the breeding season begin to be broken down by the multitude of small organisms in the soil. Worms, insects, bacteria, and the moulds and fungi that flourish in the mild, damp climate of this season are all involved in turning these dead remains into the food supply for the next generation in the spring. It is one of the key links in the ecological cycle, this thriving of life on decay. Unless there were ways in which the remains and waste products of living organisms could be returned to the earth and broken down into their constituent organic and mineral chemicals, life as we know it would come to a halt. There would be no soil, just sterile ground sucked dry of its food resources and choked under the luxuriant but useless piles of corpses in which these were trapped.” – *The Unofficial Countryside*

For tea, steep in hot water for 15 minutes until the tea turns a deep red. Some people prefer to boil rose hips for 20 minutes, which makes a stronger, darker brew. (Don't use aluminum pots, pans or utensils, it will deplete the Vitamin C levels.) While you will lose Vitamin C content with boiling, it may increase extraction of minerals and pectin.

If you're not using them fresh, pat the hips dry and dry in a single layer on card or paper in a dark ventilated area until hard, wrinkly and darker in colour (usually a few weeks). Store away from direct light, in airtight containers or glass jars, up to a year.

Dandelion (root)

Compared with the leaf of this plant [*ed.* – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg53*], it's best to harvest the roots when the plant has finished flowering and starts to die back, transferring most of its remaining energy into the roots. The first autumn rains loosen the soil around second-year roots, making them easier to harvest. Dandelion draws up nutrients that have been washed deep into the soil, replenishing the upper layers so more shallow-rooted plants can use them. In addition, they create a micro-climate that draws earth worms, who help break-up compacted soil and spread those nutrients around. As well as providing a wealth of nutrients to a wide array of herbivores and omnivores, it provides bees and other insects with nectar when other plants cannot bloom.

As mentioned in the prior entry for its leaf, all parts of dandelion are bitter, due to the blood-purifying flavonoids. However unlike other diuretics (substances which can increase the flow of urine), dandelion contains vast amounts of potassium that restore the mineral balance in the kidneys as toxins are flushed out. It's ironic that the poisons gardeners use

to eradicate dandelions are the same toxins this plant offers to weed from our bodies! The plant's fibres have an astonishing ability to absorb and transport toxins from the bowels out of the body, balance intestinal flora, and soothe the digestive tract in the process. It's great after flus and colds have taken their toll. People with liver conditions, skin conditions, changes in hormones such as menopause or adolescence and arthritis (including gout) can benefit greatly from dandelion. The root is also a mild laxative, and studies have suggested it combats cancer. The bitter constituents are also anti-inflammatory. However, ulcer pain is worsened in most cases with bitter herbs like dandelion that increase stomach acid. This holds true for those suffering from bowel blockage and gallstones as well. Due to dandelion's bacteriostatic and fungistatic properties, patients using prescription antibiotics would be wise to avoid using dandelion until they have finished their treatment.

Once scrubbed clean and chopped, the root can be cooked and eaten (good in stir-fries) for those who like the flavour, or dried to use as a tea (or a surprisingly satisfying coffee substitute). If you want to make a tincture to maximise the medicinal properties, harvest shortly after the first frost when the inulin levels are higher.

Dandelion prefers loose, rich, healthy soil, but it can grow just as readily in compacted, rocky, and dry soils. It grows at altitudes ranging from sea level to 10,500 feet, in broad and open meadows as well as in the inner city sidewalk cracks, and despite a wide range of difficult obstacles such as lawn mowers and herbicides. This speaks to dandelion's ability to adapt to its environment, no matter how challenging. For this reason it is associated with the magic of adaptation. Dandelion is symbolic of the kind of magic that gently, intentionally and firmly changes those conditions that no longer serve it.

POEMS FOR LOVE, LOSS & WAR

Act II (Conclusion)

From this height I can look all my ancestors in the eyes.
I thank you all for my legacy, and you, mother, for my flesh, for my uncivilised barbarian lineage.

And now what? I have learnt to speak a language no one knows.
I have learnt to break titans of millennia of indoctrination.

I speak with the stars more than with humans. I speak with the dead more than with the living. All I'm missing is to be a wolf who wanders in the mountains howling to the full moon.

I want to stop speaking. To be nothing that stimulates the guts. Savage glances. Bodies interlacing. Mouths that can do nothing but kiss. Bodies that undo themselves loving this nothingness creator of eternities.

Words do not only open paths but also close them.

– Gabriel Pombo da Silva

[ed. – Gabriel was finally discharged from decades of prison this June; see **Return Fire vol.1 pg75** for further case details. However the Spanish authorities, who had always bitterly resisted his release, soon announced that he would be recalled; "Therefore", wrote Gabriel in his last letter (from the outside), "I suppose that I have no choice but to continue, as always, fighting from the shadows, supporting those processes and anti-authoritarian projects that I consider it necessary to give life to, with all the means I can reach from my imposed clandestinity."]



Ezra Pound's Proposition

Beauty is sexuality, and sexuality
is the fertility of the earth and the fertility
Of the earth is economics. Though he is no recommendation
For poets on the subject of finance,
I thought of him in the thick heat
Of the Bangkok night. Not more than fourteen, she saunters up to you
Outside the Shangri-la Hotel
And says, in plausible English,
"How about a party, big guy?"



The Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydroelectric project (for China's industrial boom), causing landslides, earthquakes and damage to Yangtze River ecology

Here is more or less how it works:

The World Bank arranges the credit and the dam
Floods three hundred villages, and the villagers find their way
To the city where their daughters melt into the teeming streets,
And the dam's great turbine, beautifully tooled
In Lund or Dresden or Detroit, financed
By Lazard Freres in Paris or the Morgan Bank in New York,
Enabled by judicious gifts from Bechtel of San Francisco
or Halliburton in Houston to the local political elite,
Spun by the force of rushing water,
Have become hives of shimmering silver
And, down river, they throw that bluish throb of light
Across her cheekbones and her lovely skin.

– Robert Hass

Seasons

Mama, the house is burning.
'hush child, this house is fire proof.'
As her nightgown smokes and curls
Like an offering
Like a whispered prayer
'this house has stood for thousands of years.'
Mama, the house is burning.
'this house will stand for a thousand more.'

This house burns down once a season.
It is rebuilt just in time for the next fire.
Every time.

Mama, the house is burning.
Mama, the house is burning.
All of my words just crumble
like the beams.
Snapping like broken backs
kneeling under the pressure.
Dropping to the floor.
Like spent casings.
Words slip past like smoke,
silent like flames
racing across the floor.

This house burns once a season,
every time it is rebuilt
it is missing something
that made it what it was.
Made it what we are.
What we were.
What we hope to be.

Mama, the house is burning.
'No, child. This house cannot burn.'
Mama, the house is burning.
All of my tears
will never be enough to quench the fire.
Mama, the house is burning.

– Hunter Hall



The Story of Coyote Nations (just one chapter...)

Hey is that you? Sitting there on the hill? Watching us tonight?
Have you come to let us out of here? We've been waiting for you.
Crying every night.

Trying to tell you hoping you would come.
Have you heard... what they are doing to us in here?
Listen, 140 coyote people crying in distress. Each with their own
story of separation, pain, torture and death.
Listen, they are trying to tell you,
enough to break your heart.
All true.

Brother.
You got to let us out of here.
Warrior, listen in case you're
questioning your next move.
They starve us in here, then tempt
us with sheep,
radioactive poison sheep.
And they watch us die. Feeding our
pain into a computer to study.
Sister-warrior listen,
in case you are unsure.
They mate us to have pups, then
steal them, maim them, poison them, we never see them again.
Only sometimes we hear them, only children
They cut us open, take our wombs, poison us, watch us die, see if
we can still have pups. And when they are done with us,
they dump our bodies by the ton, in mass toxic grave.



Lightning-womyn sister of mine, let us out.
Thunder-man brother, pay them back.
We are Coyote, and our medicine is strong, even now.
You and I, we are the same. You Coyote Warrior, we Coyote.
Spirit healers.
It is our way, always wild, never die.

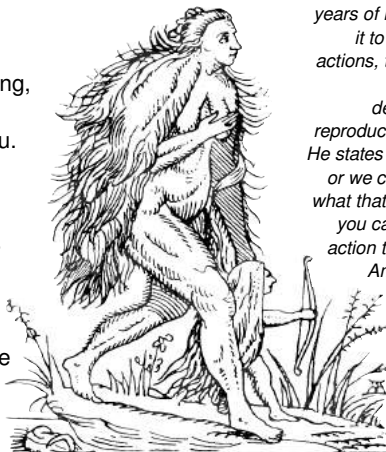
Morning has come and you are leaving, our hearts are sad,
and we cry to you.
But we listen to your promise to return.

Hey its you again! You are back!
This time you stand tall, proud, brave hearts forward
as you walk the road.
Not come to watch. To act!
We see you there, cutting fence with their tools.
Coming closer, we sing, coyotes in distress, coyotes excited.
We are sick, and our tribes broken, but tonight some will go free.
We howl. One heart together with you, to give strength to our
weak, love to the ones left behind, hearts break, crying in sorrow.

Run Coyote. Head to the hills. Run and be free.
Be Coyote again.
Do not look back.

We hear your warrior cries, you are strong,
and use our medicine well.
You take heart from us, and we from you.
Still there are some that are our sisters,
brothers, all star soldiers.
Maybe we will make it... at least some.
Coyote Warriors where are you tonight?

Today we watched the laboratory burn.
The one where our torturers hide.
We watched the flames as the sun came
up, danced and sang like Coyote again.
Now we must run, and so must you.
But forever, our hearts shall be as one.



Hey Coyote Warriors! Where are you? We've been looking for you.
We need you. We wait for you in the deserts, mountains, plains,
our home.

You Coyote Warriors belong here too.
Born to the humans, still living among them in their crazy cities.
The time for you to leave is now. Come home. There is much
to be done.
Many of our wild ones still imprisoned, remember?
Being tortured, killed, destroyed. We never forget.
Yours is to fight, this fight dog soldier. Keep our wild spirits alive!
Sacred hoop strong, it was never broken.

And your home is here, among us your wild sisters and brothers.
We have much to teach you, remind you of our power.
Come home Coyote Warriors. It is time to reweave the web,
the tribe to each other, all to the Earth Mother.
Build your fires, and there we will sing to you. Tell you of the days
long ago, when we were all one. Coyote medicine is your strength.
The earth spirits are strong, and are poised to help you...
if you listen.

Warrior societies, your time is now. Find each other.
Come back home.
You should only be among the enemy to raid.
All you warriors, keepers of the dream, do not let them have you.
Do not go down.
What makes you think you do not have to hide? We must.
We have coyote medicine to help you stay free.
Remember what it is like to live.
Wild. Proud. Together. Free.
Prepare earth warriors.
Trickster is coming.

[ed. – Based on the Animal Liberation Front (A.L.F.) raid on Animal Damage Control (A.D.C.) laboratories of the governmental Department of Agriculture in Utah, U.S.A., 24.10.92, resulting in the release of 29 coyote captives, and arson which consumed a third of the vivisection facility. The A.D.C. were – and are, renamed U.S.D.A. 'Wildlife Services' – slaughtering millions of wild beings like (across the western American states) coyotes, cougars, wolves, bobcats and foxes. A.L.F. individuals then proceeded to Utah State University, entered the office of the A.D.C. project leader (fifty yards from the police station) and seized records of dumping of radioactive coyote bodies and other sensitive details of the operation, before leaving a fire which destroyed much of his research and wrecked \$10,000 damages. These acts came during the convention of a grand jury investigation into a series of A.L.F. incendiary attacks or breakouts at the Oregon State University mink research facility, Northwest Food Farm Cooperative, Washington State University research facility, Malecky Mink Ranch, and the Michigan State University research facilities and offices, and the investigations which eventually led to the government hunt for fugitive Rod Coronado over the Oregon, Michigan and Washington actions, and similar attempts in Montana. Rod, of the Pascua Yaqui people (see **Return Fire vol.2 pg59**), was "raised with a value system that didn't see animals as property, a value system that saw the earth as our mother, that value system not being founded on anything that took years to develop through philosophical or ideological involvement but instead being what I was brought up with". Since 1986 the F.B.I. had him filed after he jointly sunk two Icelandic whaling ships and demolished an Icelandic whale processing plant before escaping, also fleeing sabotage charges in Canada and Denmark. (He also took action against the fur-trade and fox hunts in south-west England and London). He was captured in 1994 on his tribe's home reservation. He took responsibility for involvement in the Michigan arson (that destroyed 32 years of research intended to benefit the fur farm industry), stating that "I believe it to be the obligation of the earth warrior to never be ashamed of ones own actions, to honor the sacred tradition of indigenous resistance", and became the first federal A.L.F. prisoner. After his release, he was re-interred after demonstrating, on a public speaking tour, how he had constructed easily-reproducible incendiary devices, and now still faces State attention in 'freedom'. He states that "I think that when we call ourselves green anarchists or anarchists, or we call ourselves revolutionaries, I think we really have to seriously consider what that means. [...] To me the power of direct action is about recognising what you can do away from a larger movement." He has taken responsibility for the action this unsigned poem is based on. In various indigenous cultures of North America, coyote often shows up as 'the trickster'; through the antics of the coyote (and other trickster figures) wisdom and many important teachings – disguised in mishaps, humor and transformational situations – are coded and passed down to the young. Such wily characters appear in old stories from diverse cultures, embodied by a spider, a fox, a hare or some other wild being.]

GLOBAL FLASH- POINTS



MAY

01.05.15, Tuscon, U.S.A.: “[Tuscon police chief Villasenor] is now part of a federal task force on improving relations between police and the populations they try to manage. Villasenor is adept at pushing a “community policing” agenda as part of a counterinsurgency strategy [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg5*] to better control potentially rebellious populations and incorporate the official Left into this system of domination.” *Joint attack on law enforcement targets*, “in solidarity with the ongoing rebellions against police throughout the country [ed. – see *Authorities Finally Confirm Stingray (IMSI) Use in Prison Island – in Scottish Prisons*]. First, the office of the Combined Law Enforcement Association of Arizona, a statewide association of police unions, had a number of its windows smashed out. Later, the office of the Tucson Border Patrol Local Union also lost a number of windows and was redecorated with no borders slogans. Border Patrol was targeted for their role in the ongoing occupation of indigenous lands [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg67*], their contribution to countless deaths and untold suffering in the desert south of Tucson and elsewhere, and constantly increasing militarization of border communities across the borderlands. [...] For everyone they’ve taken from us, whether by murder, deportation, or incarceration.”

01.05.15, Bristol, U.K.: *Vandals reach the canvassing vehicles of Conservative Party councillor Charlotte Leslie, parked outside her parents’ home shortly before the*



*general election, which are scratched, spray-painted and get slashed tyres. The domestic heating tank is ruptured and spoils the garden. Leslie is known for attempting to whip up extra support for the police operation against combative anarchists in the region, and has also previously had her office graffitied over her vote in favour of fracking (see **Special Hydraulic Fracture**). “Do we really need to give reasons why we chose to damage the property of a Tory councillor? Have a look at the last five years of Tory rule and endless, savage attacks on our lives and you’ll find enough.” Coincidentally, the same night election signs for Leslie displayed in a garden in another part of the city were targeted, one burned (taking the host’s phone and internet cables with it).*

05.05.15, Vilvoorde, Belgium: *The fence of the police station is climbed over, an interrogation room entered by a skylight, and an incendiary charge set, inflicting fire- and smoke-damage.*

16.05.15, Wrexham, U.K.: “[A]n action took place at the site of Europe’s second largest prison in construction[...] The mega-prison, if built, will cage more than 2100 human beings at any one time. Multiple large diggers and construction equipment had their engines destroyed. Slogans were sprayed on the half-built prison fences including ‘Fuck Lend Lease’ [ed. – the construction corporation] and ‘Fire to the Prisons.’”

23.05.15, Lincolnshire, U.K.:

21 cops injured during a clash between them and around 200 of the ravers attending a party in Twyford Woods; one of the police was hit by a car, and another four also hospitalised.

Besançon, France: “During May 2015, mayhem broke out in the streets of Besançon. Flames lit up the nights of several neighbourhoods, which targeted and destroyed company vehicles, schools, various “social” state institutions... The police occupation in neighbourhoods for several months, with all that it entails, sparks a



“copshops on fire, cops in the middle”

determined resistance. Throwing molotov cocktails [targeted] CRS [ed. – *French anti-demonstration police unit*] patrols in the neighbourhoods of Planoise and 408. Stone throwing at police and putting out of action of surveillance cameras are common. Therefore, modest attacks were carried out in solidarity with these acts of urban revolt this month in liberated zones of this prison-city. A list of vehicles that had their tires slashed: A ‘Hertz’ rental car. A ‘Foncia’ estate agents marked car. A vehicle of APRR, which is part of the Eiffage Group [ed. – see below]. Around thirty bikes of JC Decaux (besides being a well-known contributor to the gentrification of neighbourhoods where they implant bike docking stations, their role of exploiting prisoners for which the company publicly boasts is now widely known). The Departmental Council of Doubs car park (more than a dozen vehicles in total: cars and vans). An excavator of the Eiffage (prison manufacturers) construction site had its tank destroyed, who are building a gigantic luxury housing complex and a shopping centre in the heart of the city

“In modern civilization, with the toxic wastes that extensively pollute the earth and the aquifer, air pollution that highly contributes to the reduction of life expectancy, the techno-industrial noises of every kind leading to paranoia and the luminous advertising signs that cover the starlight; even the car’s petrol tank light exists to remind us of the misery we experience! In the modern city and everywhere else the catastrophic tentacles of the industry and the social hierarchy lie (always talking about the artificial environment, the officials and lackeys of institutional authority), there is nothing more beautiful than the screwed up faces and the broken bones, the debris and embers of the means and infrastructure of the Enemy!”



– Claim for arson of security company vehicles, a tourist service minibus and luxury/business tourist office, and vandalism of 27 shop security cameras in Athens, Greece, January 2015

centre. Support to the rioters of Besançon neighbourhoods that are in the hands of the enemy! [...] Destroy all that domesticates and destroys us!"

26.05.15, Milan, Italy: *Anonymous attack on the offices of the engineering branch for the Italian national railways dealing with research and development, notably for the ecocidal high-speed railway between Turin and Padua. Inflammable liquid is put through a broken window, then lit with a smoke bomb. Within minutes, the fire devours the furniture, computers and all the paperwork.*

JUNE



07.06.15, Mississauga, Canada: *Incendiary attack by the Animal Liberation Front (A.L.F.) against Harlan Laboratories (who supply 'research animals' and animal feed to vivisectionists), owned by Huntingdon Life Sciences. "Fortunately, news reports have said that the devices ignited successfully, damaging one truck and completely destroying the other. Our only regret is that the flames were extinguished before they had a chance to spread to Harlan's offices."*

27.06.15, Toa Baja, Puerto Rico: *At the Sabana Seca Field Station of the Caribbean Primate Research Center, a cage is forced open and around thirty Rhesus monkeys are freed.*

29.06.15, Honolulu, Hawaii: *A congressman on the U.S.-colonised islands is confronted while filming a homeless encampment; his camera is taken and he is beaten and left with concussion and two black eyes. This congressman had previously gained notoriety by roaming the streets of the Aloha State (with one of the highest homeless populations in the U.S.) for weeks with a sledgehammer smashing shopping trolleys of vagrants' possessions, declaring it a more practical approach to "clean" the streets than passing laws.*

JULY

04 & 05.07.15, Buenos Aires, Argentina: *One incendiary attack against a luxury car parked outside the Hellenic Association, in the context of the detention of Evi Statiri in Greece on the basis of her being in a life-partnership with Gerasimos Tsakalos of*

*the C.C.F. or Conspiracy of Cells of Fire (see **Return Fire vol.1 pg40**) and the ongoing resistance of their Imprisoned*

Members Cell. Another against the train-line hours before the start of the Copa América football tournament between

10.06.15, Jalapa, Mexico: "[W]e launched an incendiary attack against the seat of the Federal Ministry of Social Development – SEDESOL – at about 4:40 AM[...] The attack was as quick as it was effective, and it was reported that: "*The disaster destroyed the better part of the furniture, papers, office equipment, electrical installations, and digital networks.*" In sum, the place more or less went to hell.

[T]hey invented a sickness for us, one that they called "poverty", and they convinced us that we suffered from it – only to sell, give, and force us to ingest the "cure": the idea of development. It cures us in that it exterminates us, and bleeds out life to better entrap us in its game, its idea of life, its social "should be" of citizenship. Development has meant nothing more than the continuous extermination of forms of life, species of flora and fauna, ways of living and organizing, thinking, loving, speaking, and celebrating.

How many languages, words, or forms have been strangled, asphyxiated by kilometers of concrete and cement? Or flattened with "mandatory, free, and public education", or "aid" programs? If these are nothing more than cruel and vile forms of counterinsurgency, it is because "public policy" is the name which governments give to their most deadly weapons: those with which they have and continue to scar the countryside, depopulate territories... They have displaced, marginalized, and intoxicated. They have waged this kind of war against us for decades, because they knew beforehand that territories and ecosystems are formidable, strong when life flows through them, and that their inhabitants and defenders resist precisely because they are part of strong ecosystems, and would never submit if they were confronted head on. [The creation of] Mexico has been the extermination of languages, ways of thinking, watersheds, wetlands, woods, forests and mountains, many of which were put up in front of a firing squad while others were struck down with no more process than a few signatures, with no sound but the closing of a folder.

[...] They know that to construct their deadly mega-projects (be they subdivisions, ports, highways, hydroelectric dams, wind turbines, mines, or nuclear plants) they need to weaken the territories, imprison their waters, divide the land, run the rivers through pipes, spill cyanide from the mines and toxic fracking liquid into the earth to pollute the aquifers, such that – trapped and without the ability to support life – we would submit to the tyranny of society and money. Essentially they have spent decades carrying out military maneuvers on our environment, setting loose a kind of total war that we and others call social war. We see social war as all of these conflicts (macro and micro) that are released in order to submit communities, families and groups to the blueprints and dynamics of Society: to the practices and values that have been put in place to constrain us, mutilate us, and suppress us.

We do not understand social war as that which we wage against the system (in the forms of and as a substitute for what fascists of the hammer and sickle insist on calling class war), but as a great offensive employing all types of resources: from public policy, with its "models for national education" to TV series, the internet, etc, with their bombardment of dynamics and stereotypes. In order for these to be reproduced permanently, social war does not try to strike at its enemy or force it to surrender, but to completely erase it, to eliminate any way of thinking or being that does not contribute to the usufruct of capital, of the World Bank, the IMF [ed. – *International Monetary Fund*], and patriarchal logics, however they may be dressed.

[...] A strong and very spirited hug to the compas in Cheran, Aquila, Ostula, Uripuchuario and other Purepecha and Nahuatl villages in the regions of Michoacán, struggling for self-determination with dignity in their chests, arms at hand, and their traditions in mind. To the Yaqui compas who proudly resist and persist [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg59**]. To the comrades in San Quintín whose subversion has burst into the media, reminding us that you are there, working from sunrise to sunset bringing jitomates to the markets and strawberries to the donuts of the same pigs who strangle them. Many of us can't see a strawberry without thinking of you, comrades. May the armored vehicles you bashed in with rocks serve as an example for many. To the comrades of Eloxochitlan, Huautla, Guixhiró, and all the corners of ungovernable Oaxaca, Magón's cradle [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg41**] and the godmother of insurrection, who have spent the last few days confronting the military, the feds, police, and [others] who want to force us to govern and be governed. [...] To the other comrades in the jungles and mountains in Chiapas, greetings from one masked face to another, for your great determination and delicious tobacco, this is a demonstration of anarchist solidarity. [...] Solidarity with the prisoners of war Abraham Cortés, Fernando Bárcenas [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg77**] and Fernando Sotelo!^[1]

[1. ed. – An anarchist sentenced to 33 years for burning a bus in solidarity with the 'Ayatzinopa 43' (radical students who 'disappeared' one evening in September 2014 after clashing with the cops, sparking riots.)]

Chile and Argentina.
 “We are disgusted by the citizens’ patriotic clamor fed by both states as much as the innumerable businesses and private sponsors. On the other hand it was a clear gesture of complicity and love with imprisoned *compañerxs* [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg34**] imprisoned in the Chilean region, prisoners that in some cases are there thanks to the cooperation of both states. The minister of transportation Florencio Randazzo (old minister of the interior who decreed the extradition of Marcelo Villarroel and Freddy Fuentesvilla [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg73**]) has to take into account that we have not forgotten. In light of the investments destined to deepen the technology of control and domestication that the same society demands and requires we will always respond with attacks, sabotage, and fire.” *In addition to aforementioned Marcelo and Freddy, their comrades Juan Aliste and also Carlos Quiduleo (see Return Fire vol.3 pg52), solidarity is claimed with many others including Natalia Collado and Javier Pino (see Rebels Behind Bars; 'Tato' and Javier Sentenced), Costa, Silvia and Billy (see Rebels Behind Bars; Let's Relaunch the Struggle Against Nocivity), and Claudio Lavazza*^[1]. “Death to the anthropocentric, techno-industrial, patriarchal, and police society!”

[1. Claudio is jailed since 1996 for hijacking and looting an Italian vice-consulate in Spain in solidarity with Italian anarchists on trial (escaping with money and passports), bank robbery in Córdoba which left two cops dead, as well as another attack on a bank in France. Underground for 16 years, he now fights against the punishment and isolation regime in prison, along with other prisoners.]

11.07.15, Modena, Italy: *Fire ravages a mobile phone mast and its cabin, “against repression and telematic control. [...] Vengeance for Emilio*^[1] *Ciao Soledad*^[2].”

[1. ed. – Emilio Cremona, an anti-fascist, had been badly wounded by far-right activists of CasaPound that January and left in a coma since. In response, shortly after in that month, during a demonstration a couple of thousand strong, attacks were made on the police using stones, bottles, flares and smoke bombs during an attempt to reach the CasaPound headquarters, smashing storefronts and windows of banks and the local police headquarters.

2. ed. – Maria Soledad Rosa was an Argentinian anarchist accused along with Silvano Pellissero and

21.06.15, London, U.K.: *Report via Rabble counter-information page, concerning heartening news of rebellion in lockdown London. “Home Office immigration enforcement have been targeting the East Street market [in Walworth] all week, with no less than five raids over previous days. Today they came again at 5PM and snatched one man from a fish shop, presumably accused of working without legal documents.*

*But this time, things were not going to go so easy for the thugs in blue. After call-outs went out through the local grapevine and also on social media, people from the area including the next door Aylesbury Estate [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg57**] rushed down to the scene. The Home Office snatch van was blockaded and penned in on a side street off the market. The bullies retreated inside the van with their prisoner while it was surrounded by people’s bodies and by makeshift barricades, the tires were let down, and it was pelted with rotten fruit and eggs from the market.*

The Home Office thugs called in police reinforcements. They arrived with six cars of cops, plus dog vans and plainclothes cops, and a helicopter circling overhead, as the street was cordoned off. However, the crowd kept on growing as more people from the estate and nearby streets joined in, local teenagers called up their mates, others arrived seeing it on social media.

The stand off continued for over an hour, the local police clueless about what to do next. Then three vans of TSG [ed. – Tactical Support Group] riot cops arrived, toled up in full body armour. The TSG pushed through, escorting the Home Office van limping out on deflated tires. They came under sustained attack as new barricades of street furniture kept getting thrown up to stop their progress and hails of rocks, bottles, road cones, etc., kept them at bay. At least one TSG cop was knocked to the floor, a riot van windscreen and other windows broken.

In the end, they managed to get their prisoner out, and also took one more arrested from the resisters. After the immigration van had got out the crowd kept blocking the TSG vans with commercial rubbish bins and other barriers to continue the fighting. Eventually, visibly shaken by the angry mob, the TSG managed to escape. After giving them a rowdy send-off, the crowd danced to a mobile sound system.

This was concerted angry action which brought together local teenagers, Aylesbury Estate residents, anarchists, and whoever was in the street and not going to take this shit lying down. If we could meet more raids with resistance like this it would seriously screw up the system of repression.

This is the response we want to be growing on our streets, every day of the week.”

Edoardo 'Baleno' Massari of action against the T.A.V. project in Italy (see **Return Fire vol.1 pg70**) which had been claimed by the group 'Grey Wolves'. (Specifically, some documents were stolen from Capris city hall – which was then set on fire, followed by the explosion of the garage.) While under house-arrest before trial, she hung herself in 1998, on the date this action in Modena commemorates. On March 28th 1998, 'Baleno' had also hung himself in his cell, also sparking many riots and international solidarity actions (at his funeral, journalists who arrived were driven out by anarchists; one particularly known for being close to cops and responsible for a smear campaign against 'Baleno' was wounded.)



11.07.15, London, U.K.: *Anarchists disrupt a public meeting between the Socialist Workers Party (S.W.P.) and the Greek ruling party Syriza. “We successfully made it through their lines of burly ‘mindors’ to reach the stage, where we unfurled a banner stating ‘Solidarity with Imprisoned Anarchists, not Syriza’ and chanted anti-prison slogans [d]riven by a rejection of the SWP’s Patriarchal rape apologist*^[1]

authoritarian politics and to make clear to Syriza that the imprisonment of fellow Revolutionary Combatants will not go peacefully no matter what place of the world they run to...”

[1. ed. – Reference to their attempt to hush up rapes within their organisation in recent years in the UK.]

15.07.15, Zapopan, Mexico: *Arson of excavators, construction equipment and transport vehicles on the building site of West Plaza Park warehouse and shipping company, which (along with subdivisions and infrastructure projects) threatens the Primavera forest. “We waited in the forest before coming out to attack. The moon and the fireflies lit up the night, before melting together with the fires of the wild ones.”*

south-west England, U.K.: “[Deep in the countryside,] we found one of the many pheasant enclosures in the area [ed. – to confine the birds before sport-shooting]. A 7ft high wire mesh fence, surrounded by electric wire, estimated at about 30m wide, 60m long. We took out our boltcutters and snipped away at the electric wire, the wire to the clip that attached it to the power source and several areas of the wire mesh fence, in total we flattened an entire 30m long side of the enclosure. We then found an empty tank with a tube that went under the fence, we snapped the tube off the tank and cut it open. We then found a shooting platform with 3 legs. We pushed cotton wool, fire lighter sticks and sponges in the foundations of 2 of the legs and dowsed them with nail polish remover,

which is just as good of an incendiary as petrol. We lit it and exited the scene.”

AUGUST

10.08.15, Liffol-le-Grand, France: *The home of a National Agency for Radioactive Waste Management engineer*

(specifically, the one in charge of land transactions) is anonymously doused in paint with a fire extinguisher, and animal faeces piled on his doorstep. The action is linked to the anti-authoritarian camp against a proposed nuclear dump in Meuse. In the weeks before, 'a few determined night owls' had visited an analysis site for the works containing multiple electrical installations and a well,



to analyse the condition of the rock and water table: the well was blocked

up with concrete, and all the cabinets were fractured and destroyed.

Bristol, U.K.: *A.L.F. sabotage at Sainsbury's supermarket which sells milk from dairy farms within the areas soon to be undergoing the next phase of the badger cull (see **Return Fire vol.2 pg58**). "We glued up their cashpoint by putting a store loyalty card covered in super glue in to the machine – the card was swallowed and will have stuck to the inside of the machine costing thousands of pounds to fix. [...] We will attack any business or individual involved in the cull..."*

SEPTEMBER

Montréal, Canada: *"The infrastructures of State and capital continue to spread their tentacles, seeking to accelerate the extraction and transportation of resources to the market. The vast territory that is the Canadian North, often sparsely populated due in large part to the displacement, isolation, and genocide of indigenous peoples, is an immense source of profit; oil, gas, forestry, hydro-dams, uranium mines, etc. Various monstrous infrastructural expansion projects are currently trying to connect the Alberta Tar Sands [ed. – see **"Another Figure of the Migrant"**] through pipelines along the St. Lawrence river to the Atlantic. These projects entail expanding and constructing new infrastructure such as ports, rail lines, and highways all along this route on colonized territories. Over the past three weeks, we temporarily interrupted circulation on the CN rail lines twice in the neighborhood of Pointe-St. Charles. We placed a copper wire connecting both sides of the tracks, thus sending a signal indicating a blockage on the tracks and disrupting circulation until the*



05.09.15, Chile: *Multiple bombings against horse racing agencies in four cities. "The fire is maintained, and we transmit that incendiary heat to our brothers and sisters who stand firm in their own anti-anthropocentric convictions; minds which are every day more liberated from the old structure of revolutionary speciesism and lash out with haughtiness – not from resignation – against the learned customs. [W]e attacked the agencies of Teletrak, located in*

- SAN DIEGO 1063 intersecting with AV. MATTA (SANTIAGO)
- GRAN AVENIDA 4452 intersecting with OVALLE (SAN MIGUEL)
- CALLE LAGUNA SUR 8438, L 3 intersecting with LA ESTRELLA (PUDAHUEL)
- AV. VICUÑA. MACKENNA 847 intersecting with DIEZ DE JULIO (SANTIAGO)
- AVENIDA ARGENTINA 531 L.6 (VALPARAISO)

[...] This coordinated feat we dedicate to all those who despise the commodities of the political struggle within the system and who lash out, smiling, in the fight. To those who form part of the anarchist war, permanently, from different places and who have set real destruction of civilization as the horizon, knowing that this thought is cultivated within us all; and only we can know within ourselves each decision, when faced with a jury, day after day in the normal life or in the darkness of the cage, [or as] fugitives. That's why we have decided to omit names and may the brothers and sisters who identify with this feel it for themselves. In each undomesticated step, the firm are present!" F.A.I./F.R.I.^[1] 'Haughty Autonomous Cells at War'.

[1. ed. – Informal Anarchist Federation / International Revolutionary Front; see **Return Fire vol.3 pg80.**]

tracks were checked and cleared. This train line in particular is being worked on in order to facilitate the transport of oil eastward to the port of Belledune in New Brunswick. [...] We conceive of our struggle as against civilization and the totalizing domestication it entails[...] Let's up the tension against this world, let's proliferate the attacks.”

07.09.15, cyberspace: *A.L.F. hack the website of vivisection laboratory belonging to a neuroscience researcher at Canada's McGill University. They "[entered] the website server and some of their directories were modified. The result was a more realistic image about what the laboratory does and a message we hope [they will never forget.] After few weeks, the website has disappeared. Which probably means it has been closed (hopefully permanently). We are proud that the goal of this action has been reached, and we'll go on until we close all laboratories. WE ARE APPROACHING..."*

20.09.15, Catalonia, Spain: *"Over recent years in Spain, specifically in Catalonia, rabbit farming has been severely affected by the crisis, and many farms have closed over the past 5 years. Several times, as we were watching possible targets, we approached to see the security inside and found out they were abandoned. [...] We believe this is a perfect moment to strike blows and cause an industry which barely survives, for several years now, to fall once and for all." A.L.F. 'The Boar family, the Zorrilla [striped polecat] and the Owl' released twenty captives from a farm in the province of Barcelona. "We dedicate this action to the anarchists who have been repressed by the operations "Pandora", "Piñata", as well the prisoners accused of belonging to "Commando Mateo Morral" [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg82**]."*

OCTOBER

04.10.15, Zürich, Switzerland: *An anonymous arson claims nine army vehicles at a logistics base; fourteen others are only saved by firefighters.*

28.10.15, La Meziere, France: *A mysterious fire destroys 100 square metres of office space at a research centre of Monsanto, near Rennes, although rapid response prevented further wreckage. The agri-business giant is known globally for its genetically-modified products and, in places like France (and not only), vast amounts of pesticides similar to their notoriously carcinogenic 'Roundup'. Cops believe the arson to be deliberate, because the blaze started in two places...*

NOVEMBER

06.11.15, London, U.K.: *Window-breaking and spray-paint attack on a team base of*

the Metropolitan Police, a day after several police were injured during a demonstration against austerity and mass surveillance (during which fireworks had been deployed to great effect against mounted officers, although fifty were arrested, three of whom accused of carrying knives, lock-picks, gas cans, smoke- and paint-grenades).

"Resistance to police control is as permanent as it is necessary. There is always a police car burning [ed. – reference to one lit up the day before]. In Lambeth, Southwark and Hackney, pigs feel blows from their own batons. A family is refusing to be evicted from their council

24.11.15, Bremen, Germany: Six police cars and vans are set alight at a local cop station. Five years earlier, a very similar incident had wracked the same spot...

DECEMBER

10.12.15, Canossa, Italy: Several hundred hares escape after the A.L.F. cut fencing at a farm where they were to be used to train hunting dogs. "We were worried that their imprisonment had made them slow and confused, but the quickness with



Lima, Peru: Burning barricade and graffiti disruption across a highway. "With this action we support the anarchist offensive around the world, especially BLACK DECEMBER (revenge for the murders of the comrades Alexandros Grigoropoulos [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg17*] and Sebastian Oversluij [ed. – see *'Education Centres' Plundered & Vandalised, Santiago*]). We welcome whoever attends the call to break the role of spectator. [...] Freedom for anarchist prisoners. Long live propaganda of the deed. Freedom for all animals."

Koridallos prison, Greece: Banners are dropped by comrades in the 1st and 4th wings: "INSURRECTION IS ALWAYS TIMELY – EVERYONE TAKE TO THE STREETS!" and "FOR THE ANARCHIST OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE SOCIAL MACHINE – BLACK DECEMBER 2015"

Athens, Greece: At the Polytechnic University, the office of the professor K. Kollias is smashed up and splattered with paint. "In 2011 the bastards Kollias and Vassiliou agreed to carry out the research program of the electrician mechanics school of the Polytechnic concerning the construction of thermal cameras and unmanned aircrafts aimed at placing them at the border, on the Evros fence, in favor of Frontex^[1]. They chose to deal with a matter, carry it out, and reap the economic and careerist benefits it would yield, knowing they are painting their hands with blood. [...] In conclusion there was a fly-posting in the area inside the polytechnic of a poster about the incident..."

[1. ed. – Frontex is the trans-national border police force of the European Union; their guards are deployed to attack migrants at all of the EUs main entry points, and they have partnerships with a number of universities across Europe to train its cops and develop technologies of control.]

16.12.15, São Paulo, Brazil: "Between the end of November and the beginning of December, two ancient trees were cut down in the square outside the Our Lady of Remedies church at the behest of the Osasco-Sao Paulo municipal authorities. And, in August 2015, the armed branches of government assassinated more than 20 people in one night in the regions of Osasco, Barueri, Carapicuíba and Itapevi. All the people who were assassinated came from the favelas and the barrios

09.12.15, Montréal, Canada: "We won't let ourselves be pacified by a sell-out agreement or by a special law. To the front: our struggle is non-negotiable..." (from the call out for the demonstration). In the evening of the one-day general strike of the Québec public sector, a 200-strong masked bloc takes to the streets during a time of tension while union leaders attempt to increase their bargaining power.

"Masked groups were seen sharing rocks, and the crowd darted south through a parking lot and housing project courtyard to get onto Sainte-Catherine street, where the police had not had time to form new lines to restrict our movement.

What followed was a half hour of riotous cat-and-mouse in which the crowd stayed one step ahead of police control. A group of six bike police on Sainte-Catherine street who were naively approaching to flank the demonstration were attacked with a hail of rocks. Surges of excitement were felt in the crowd as the cops were struck with fear along with projectiles, and rapidly fled east out of view. It was on.

The demonstration made a sprint toward René-Lévesque Boulevard, while those further back chanted calls to stay close together. The demonstration took up all six lanes on René-Lévesque, and looking around, our capacity for destruction appeared significant. The semi-armored units with plastic-bullet guns that typically march along each side [of the demonstrations in Montréal] were nowhere to be seen, having been blind-sided with volleys of rocks to the back of the head during the demo the week before. For a breathless twenty-minute stretch, the demo acted as a grand criminal conspiracy. Hammers, flag poles, rocks, and the removable metal garbage canisters on every street corner were used to smash the windows of Citizenship & Immigration

Canada, construction conglomerate and defense contractor SNC-Lavalin, several banks, and other buildings. For a festive touch, people also wrecked the Christmas decorations assembled at office building entrances, and overturned SNC-Lavalin's Christmas tree. A few participants ran ahead and broke the back window of a police van with rocks, while others shot off some very large fireworks at the remaining vans positioned in front of the demo.

Cheers erupted with the sound of every shattered window. Unknown accomplices could be seen searching for and sharing projectiles; when the demo passed a construction site, comrades ran ahead to find any materials that could be pillaged, and were successful in breaking up decorative stones along René-Lévesque into throwable chunks.

[...] Against one of the largest and most experienced riot policing squads in North America, those who took the streets on Wednesday decidedly swung the balance of forces in our favor, at least briefly."



Coca-Cola's Christmas tree torched by anarchists during action against the fare hike in Mexico City (see *Return Fire vol.3 pg42*), 15.12.13, described by comrades as "an attack against the culture of consumerism, an attack against religious traditions imposed by those who believe they're the owners of the world, an attack on patriarchy, against power and all religious and moral authority"

flat; a firework is hitting a pig van on patrol; a mob of people are pulling someone from the grips of Met officers. Everywhere we are creating our own lines of social war and resistance."

which they bound into the forest made us realise that for all the time they were locked up in small, crowded cages they had retained feet capable of that long leap toward freedom."

away from the center of these fascist states. In response to these assassinations, we have brought our fire to one of the veins that keeps this oppressive system alive. [Even though it will not bring back the trees that resisted the concrete of this unhealthy civilisation nor will it bring back the lives of the people] we claim full responsibility for the arson attack against the Bradesco bank

branch[...] in solidarity and complicity with the black memory of our dead, our kidnapped and imprisoned comrades and those still on the run.” *Another contribution for the Black December mobilisation, which by now had also been taken up in Chile, Mexico, Spain, Argentina, the U.K., Canada, the U.S.A, Cyprus, Germany, Colombia and Holland, with more territories soon to follow.*

27.12.15, Athens, Greece: *Incendiary device detonated at the National Insurance office, by F.A.I. 'Mauricio Morales'⁽¹⁾ Cell.* “Many times we see the politicians and journalists asking each other, supposedly surprised: “*But who are these anarchists who dare to challenge our democracy? Who are those who insist on disturbing the social peace and sabotage the normality and stability of economical and political life? Who are those who dare to challenge our values and our lifestyle? In the end, who are those who seek to undermine our civilization?*” It’s us... We are the ones who throw molotovs against the cops in Exarcheia [ed. – Athens district with combative anarchist presence] and other places, who burn the police patrol cars, who take part in solidarity actions with the anarchist prisoners, who translate the texts from comrades from and to other countries. We are the ones who take part in anarchist squats, enjoying every form of non-commercialized art, we open paths of diffusion of the live and radical speech through the self-organized radios or through the events in our spaces. We are the ones who through the anarchist propaganda, with texts, posters, banners, spray-painting on the walls support and promote conflict and attack against the existent. [...] It’s all of us who believe that informal organization and the coordination of the anarchist action, with the essential weapons of multiformity of theories and

19.12.15, Paris, France: “Despite the alarmist sirens, the state of emergency [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg5*] didn’t prevent us these last few days in bringing our modest contribution to the anti-capitalist offensive, more specifically to an alleged solution to the ecological crisis; the subsidiary Blue Solutions of the Bolloré Group, to the delight of their investors, green-washing their image whilst conquering new markets.

For some years the Bolloré Group, flagship of French excellence in the field of environmental innovations, sign lucrative contracts with the municipalities and RATP [*Autonomous Operator of Parisian Transports*], to step by step install Autolib’ stations supplied with the deadly energy power that is nuclear, and soon scooters, buses and trams of the same sort.

For those who do not know Bolloré, to recall it’s one of the French lords of finance, industry, transport and communication networks worldwide. Thanks to numerous subsidiaries, they built an empire exploiting resources in the former French colonies among others. To name just a few recent examples of the Bolloré empire’s abuses, we can mention the displacement of indigenous peoples land in Cambodia to grow rubber fig trees; or the proposed oil palm plantation projects in Sierra Leone on the land of local communities opposed to the destruction of their cultures and forests. Also, how many lives will it cost to build the 2,700km railway loop line of Bolloré Africa Logistics to connect the Ivory Coast in Togo?

It’s also because the Autolib’ project is part of the smart city [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg31*] project that is Greater Paris, within the revaluation and restructuring of entire neighbourhoods to the detriment of the poor who live there, to be replaced with a more docile and well-off population, we decided to act accordingly.

Lighting a simple box of fire-lighters placed under a vehicle wheel is enough to turn an Autolib’ into a shell, as anyone passing these previous days could see; Stalingrad Avenue in Montreuil, Pasteur Avenue in Bagnolet and Mathis Street in the 18th arrondissement. It’s one method among many others to render them unusable...”



FEBRUARY

05 & 07.02.16, Thessaloniki, Greece: “A pillar of the technological progress of the last decades [has been] the development of the tele-

communications sector, necessary, in its turn, for the control and smooth functioning of the techno-industrial system. Modern control and repression systems are totally based on and partly supported by telecommunications technology. Telecommunications companies, using our “need” for communication and networking inside and outside urban centres, record our conversations as well as our position with GPS systems. In good/flawless cooperation with relevant state/private bodies, they allow at anytime the collective lifting of telecommunications confidentiality calling upon national security and have often contributed to the manufacturing of charges against fighters based on wire-tapings. Among other things, Vodafone in 2006 was responsible for massive wire-tapings, while today they cooperate with Group4 Security and the Ministry of Justice for the implementation of the repressive project which has to do with the electronic surveillance bracelet destined for house arrest and control of detainees. Also, OTE (Greek Telecommunications Company) provided the necessary material and technical infrastructure to Frontex for the operational programme “Poseidon 2010” in order to secure the sea borders. [...] On 5/2 we destroyed 3 Vodafone mobile phone antennas, 1 OTE mobile phone antenna and 1 Wind mobile phone antenna

[1. see *Return Fire vol.1 pg92*]

JANUARY

22.01.16, Rennes, France: *Morning blockade, using rubbish containers and spilled oil, of the road passing through the Euro-Rennes construction;* “the city of tomorrow”, wedged between the business district’s megalomaniac construction site that is Euro-Rennes, its future LGV high-speed rail and Europe’s largest women’s prison[...] [O]nly a few kilometres from here, at Notre-Dame-des-Landes, the State and Vinci want to build an airport [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg81*]. They’ve decided to evict those who oppose it today, just as tomorrow – with their planes and runways – they intend to evict those who don’t have the right papers. [...] It is possible to fight, everywhere and directly, in different ways, as a few or as many, against these institutional structures and these companies that spoil our lives.”

[by] setting them on fire with inflammable liquid, and on 7/2 we smashed 1 Vodafone mobile phone antenna[...] It is an act of resistance against the ever-increasing control complementing the continued struggles against mobile phone antennas. Our action is dedicated to comrades T.Theofilou^[1] and G.Tsironis^[2]..."

[1. ed. – Tasos Theofilou is imprisoned for robbing a bank on the Greek island of Paros and C.C.F. membership, both of which he denies.

2. ed. – After nine years underground following a famous bank robbery, and decades of participation in anarchist activities, Grigoris Tsironis was captured with Spyros Dravilas and Spyros Christodoulou in May 2015 in a safe-house raid by the anti-terror unit. Upon the raid commencing, Spyros Dravilas, who had already escaped from prison day release twice (and inbetween liberated two other prisoners with a hijacked helicopter), put his rifle in his mouth and killed himself. His comrades and friends later asserted that "the always-smiling Spyros, the youth who had always honoured his friendships and his promises, ensuring he would do so through his dynamism, the friend who bravely faced the risks that his life and freedom ran as an outlaw, knew what awaited him. He had tasted it from the age of 21, when he first came to know of the harsh reality of incarceration. Since then, having spent several years in prison, he became a runaway and fugitive from justice until the age of 34, when he consciously dismissed the long-term deprivation of his freedom. He refused, like very few people can, to see himself walking down those miserable corridors and into the prison cells of the correctional hellholes; he refused to surrender the remaining years of an insubmissive youth to the modern galleys." Days later, cops' personal vehicles were burned on the streets of Athens in retaliation.]

23.02.16, London, U.K.: "[I]n response to the call for international solidarity with the Calais Jungle facing eviction [ed – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg14*], 30 to 40 people stormed into an elite party hosted by the French ambassador. The party was being held in private members club "Shoreditch House" in the east London hipster heartland, to launch a "Creative France" business campaign promoting hi-tech surveillance cameras, robots and other gadgets. The event was scheduled to start at 6.30PM. About 6.45, most of the mob easily pushed their way through the main entrance, while some others came in through a side door. Security guards reacted late and a scrum ensued in one bar area, while some made it up to the event area on the 5th floor. Rubbish was strewn in the lobby area. Smoke bombs were set off, which led to fire alarms going off and parts of the building being evacuated. After the initial scuffles, most of the mob were outside blocking the doors with banners and leafleting the crowds that gathered, including the kitchen workers who had been evacuated. Police cordoned off the streets around and called for TSG riot squad back-up to clear the demonstration. Just as the TSG arrived, everyone left together with no arrests..."

MARCH

14.03.16, Berlin, Germany: "Bosch is a leading company for the production of

security technology [for] border facilities, prisons, airports and railway stations. [...] The three pillars of smoke in different districts [symbolise] the transience and vulnerability of domination and their tools – three vehicles from Bosch which will no longer contribute to the social war."

15.03.15, Athens, Greece: "How many years of commercial society? How many more of "civilised" existence? And all this for what? We take part in the most paranoid experiment of human domination. From the early stages of domestication up to economy's invasion into life, oppression, exploitation and coercion have been the most structural components of society. Power's structures and logics have strived to ensure their presence over the centuries, transformed themselves, gained flexibility by stepping on human relations and finally imposed their universality through the commercialisation of existence. Margins for non-compliance have narrowed. The ways of vomiting "needless waste" are being humanised. The sometimes aggressive and sometimes passive indifference of the capitalist world towards the sustainability of human or nonhuman beings, that are deemed unnecessary in various ways, is discernible at a glance, not so far away. How many bodies stacked dead or alive in seas or the coldness of gray rooms? [...] We know that (not only in our own lives) the moments of freedom are so assimilable into the repeated everyday routine that we are unable to imagine any possible turn of events. The only sure thing is that we feel

22.12.15, Athens, Greece:

Stop 1: Family

Stop 2: School

Stop 3: Work

Stop 4: Consumption

Stop 5: Entertainment

...And among them, piled on routes, dead time where nothing can happen.

So many people, so close, watching each other's absence. Trapped in the routine of mechanized survival.

The perpetuation of frenzied commodification is effectively accomplished with the contribution of transportation. Speed is the oil in the gears of urban onslaught. Control and oppression is added to all this, with cameras recording every move, with security guards – observers of normality, ready to repel anything deviant, with miserable micro-authoritarian inspectors securing the payment of the ticket.

[In the early hours] we placed an incendiary mechanism at the windows of OASA [Athens Public Transport Organization], in Exarhia. [...] GUERRILLA SIGNALS TO THE COMRADES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE WALLS "

this world to be unbearably hooked in our skin, and the more we attack it, the less it leaves its marks on us. [W]e torched and destroyed a van and an ATM of the Hellenic Post (ELTA) branch[...] Because of the fire's extent, the branch required a new facade as well. [B]ecause memory is integral to the continuation of anarchist struggle we cannot but recall the death of comrade Lambros Foundas [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg62*], on March 10th 2010, after an armed clash with cops."

28.03.16, Valparaíso, Chile:

'Individualities for Street Struggle' ignite a barricade against the mega-project IIRSA^[1] and in defence of the Earth; a car which attempts to breach the blockade has the driver ejected by the masked fighters, who torch the vehicle. "From the mining projects to the expansion of the ports, these are only gestures that add to the techno-industrial devastation. [...] Each one will know what to do, how and when. We only hope for the destruction of civilisation."

[1. ed. – Initiative for the Integration of South American Regional Infrastructure; a heading for over 500 projects that seeks to eliminate "natural barriers" to the production and free movement of commodities and energy on the continent. Infrastructure under construction or completed includes pipelines, sea and river ports, power lines and fibre optic cabling, hydroelectric plants, mega-mining, transgenic crops etc. Essentially, a massive attack on biodiversity, indigenous groups, the usual.]

29.03.16, Finland: "We burned two cars of the private security company Securitas. With this attack we want to bring to light the co-operation between Securitas and Fennovoima nuclear energy company that is known for its destruction of the environment. The 1st of April will be the first day that Securitas will be in charge of the construction site in Hanhikivenniemi, where the latest nuclear plant is meant to be built. With this arson we welcome Securitas to Fennovoima!"

APRIL

03.04.16, Spain: "Capitalist society is held up by two fundamental pillars: repression and social control. This time we have wanted to hit a part of the system of social control via communication antennas. [L]ed by the stars, we approached two antennas in the road between Iruña and Irurtzun (Nafarroa) and with the help of pliers we opened a breach in the wire mesh that surrounds the antennas. With wooden-handled mallets we destroyed the electricity meters inside both antennae and we broke the two AC units inside each, as well. With axes we cut the cables to the antennas' electrical device as well as wires to the distribution substation that power the antennas. [...] It's a shame that the fire we had hoped to gift in the end did not happen... Do not fret, as we will take care of that next time." *In solidarity with José Adrián Poblete Darre, Xavier Corporales*

31.12.15, Germany: “3 acts of arson and sabotage against the open cast lignite mine operated by RWE at Hambacher Forest [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; Some Light on the Investigation Leading to the Imprisonment of the Comrade Arrested on April 13th*].

We set up home made stingers on the road used by the mine security forces to harass and distract them whilst we set fire to various bundles of cables and some wiring boxes by the side of the train tracks which are used to transport brown coal from the mine to nearby power stations. Halting the trains for some time.

Then we put the torch to a telecommunications mast on the edge of the mine and watched from a distance as the entire device went up in flames and continued to burn for over an hour.

And finally, just after midnight we attacked again, setting up more stingers on the security road closer to their compound. We then set fire to a burning barricade of car tyres and a large pile of logs by the roadside to lure security into our traps before retreating again into the forest to the sound of fireworks.

By making use of home made stingers (wooden boards with large nails through them) we send a warm and rebellious embrace to imprisoned anarchist comrade Emma Sheppard^[1] ...

[1. ed. – December 31st (traditionally a night of anti-prison/anti-repression action) of 2014, traps were set outside the South Gloucestershire police operational headquarters north of Bristol which three squad cars hit and were damaged. Cops managed to capture only one of the assailants, Emma. In a court guarded by armed police, the judge decreed that despite the ambush only causing £1,500 damage it was held in reference to £20-million-worth of unsolved anarchist attacks around the city within four years, and jailed her.]

Barruecos and Antonio Chavero Mejías, “who are on hunger strike in the murderous and torturous state jails...”

12.04.16, Mission, Canada: *A lock is cut off a gate to access a large piece of log-loading forestry equipment and a rock placed on the accelerator, driving the machinery over the precipice of a ravine. The company laments significant losses.*

26.04.16, Toulouse, France: *Molotov attack on a police station. “We did this for the pleasure[,] to mark a rupture. Because we are happy and angry at the same time. We no longer want to be there where we are expected.” Solidarity with “comrades from Brussels” (see *Rebels Behind Bars; 'If Fighting for Freedom is a Crime, Innocence is Really the Worst of All'*).*

MAY

16.05.16, Basel, Switzerland: *Fire set against a car belonging to BAM. “All over the world the ‘Bam International Group’ plans and builds zones of confinement and control such as prisons in Belgium and Germany, schools, biotech centres, police stations and other major infrastructural projects for the maintenance of the existent. The Swiss subsidiary of ‘Bam’ is also enriched by this horrible work, such as the judicial centre of ‘Burgdorf’ in Bern. New prisons are being planned and built everywhere, as well as the extension of the walls of the prison for undocumented of ‘Basslergut’ in Basel.” The authors claim this flame as the same as that “which has continually sprung up in and around the Belgian prisons in recent years (and is in*

torn down, screws assaulted or locked in, while people in solidarity gathered outside. In the end the army were sent into more than one prison to quell the disorder.]

28.05.16, Montréal, Canada: “About 30 people, all in black bloc, strolled down rue Notre-Dame and looted the yuppie boutique grocery store “Le 3734”. As most of the crowd held down the street outside the store, a few people went inside and filled duffel bags[...] Meanwhile, the storefront was redecorated with graffiti reading ‘Fuck Empire’ and wheatpasted posters that communicated some of the intentions behind the action. After throwing smoke bombs ahead of and behind the crowd on Notre-Dame, people dispersed via the train tracks before police could arrive, and no arrests have been made. In the



The simple home-made stingers in Bristol, and the result

fact very current^[1] [...] Offensive solidarity with all lovers of freedom who hold their heads high. 1,000 reasons to attack”

[1. ed. – Initiated during a strike of prison guards in all of French-speaking Belgium, riots spread through a great many prisons in that country during the month before, with cell doors broken, sections of the prisons burned or flooded, walls

days that followed, we re-distributed the food to people in the neighborhood who wouldn’t regularly have had access to it. The poster left behind read as follows: “With the arrival of the condos in Saint-Henri, a multitude of expensive businesses, hipster restaurants, and bourgeois grocery stores followed. Nevertheless, despite this affluence of food, the neighborhood remains practically a food desert for people with little money. Such a paradox it is to live in a world that produces so much food, but that isn’t accessible for those who are hungry! May 28th, we tried to recalibrate things a bit, to the extent of our means. [...] Long live degeneration! Tonight is the great banquet, we celebrate complicity and abundance!” ”

“We want to break with everything established, we want to live our lives freely, and so we are against all authority that denies our free development. We are against hierarchies and this system of domination that subjects us to a uniform way of thinking based on a predetermined attitude and, for their own benefit, denies us to think for ourselves. We grew up fooled to believe that ideas and acts go separate ways in life, and to obey so as not to suffer, and in all of what this entire techno-industrial civilisation condemns us to, to live miserably. We believe that the fight must transcend from simple words to actions. By this, we perceive life as the need to act according to our acratist [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg82*] ideas, full of vengeance, without waiting for the moment of social revolution. We have already begun.” – *Free and Informal Association of Wild Ones*



“And if your heart isn’t broken by the knowledge of what they are doing to the world we love, then I feel sorry for you. Maybe you’re no longer alive. But if the death of the planet we love makes you cry, then take those tears and turn them into action.”

– Rod Coronado^[1]

1. ed. – see *Poems for Love, Loss & War*

REBELS BEHIND BARS

– text by prisoners & repression news

'If Fighting for Freedom is a Crime, Innocence is Really the Worst of All'

– about the forthcoming anti-terrorist trial against anarchists and anti-authoritarians in Belgium

In late 2008, amidst diffuse hostilities triggered by the revolt in Greece following the assassination of Alexis by police [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg17*], the Belgian Federal Prosecutor launches an investigation of anarchists and anti-authoritarians. In 2010, on the basis of a list of actions that the police attribute to the “anarchist movement” and while the struggle against the construction of a new detention centre in Steenokkerzeel is underway, magistrate Isabelle Panou is assigned to the investigation, now under the anti-terrorist law. In May, then in September 2013, a dozen searches took place within this investigation, the searches targeting different homes as well as the anarchist library Acrata in Brussels. It is on this occasion that the existence of an anti-terrorist investigation first emerges. This investigation is led by the anti-terrorist branch of the Federal Judicial Police backed by the State Security and the General Intelligence and Security Agency of the army as well as various anti-terrorist branches of other European countries. The investigation is closed in 2014, culminating in the referral of twelve anarchists and anti-authoritarians to the Court Chambers.

After a session for the legalization of the specific methods of research used in this investigation (shadowing, phone tapping, microphone placement in one house, secret searches, attempts at infiltration, placement of video surveillance devices outside homes and inside one home) in October 2015, the case is referred to the Court Chamber. The sitting of the Chamber is scheduled for May 10, 2016 and will determine whether a trial should be held, and if so, under what charges^[1].

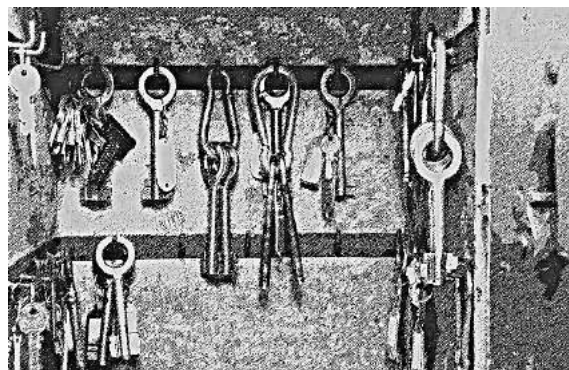
In this investigation, the Federal Prosecutor has attempted to draw up no less than 29 individualized charges. Nine comrades are accused of belonging to a terrorist organization and involvement in terrorist activities for more or less extended periods. Three of them are also accused of being the “leaders”. In addition, three other people arrested in the wake of an attack on the police station of Marolles^[2] are accused of belonging to this terrorist group for a day, as well as various charges related to the attack. This is as far as

concerns the general accusation.

This is then complemented by more specific charges such as participation in an unauthorised demonstration outside the detention centre 127bis in Steenokkerzeel (transformed into “attempted arson” and a “terrorist offence” by the prosecutors), preparation and participation in an attack on the police station in Marolles (qualified by the prosecution as a “terrorist offence”), assault and wounding of police officers on several occasions, obstruction of the public highway, damage in various forms, shoplifting, arson of prison guards’ cars in the Ittre prison car park, incitement to commit terrorist offences... **It should be noted that these specific allegations are each aimed at specific comrades, that is to say not everyone has been charged with all the allegations.**

The backdrop to this investigation that has gone on for several years and produced no fewer than 32 boxes of papers, is that the Federal Prosecutor hypothesizes that an “anarchist terrorist group” would be active, in particular in Brussels, and that the accused would have “participated” in or “favoured” those activities. For example it has produced a list of about 150 attacks, a good number of which incendiary, against the structures of domination, police stations, courts, banks, companies that enrich themselves out of incarceration, construction sites, cars of diplomats, Eurocrats and NATO officials, mobile phone antennas... All these attacks took place in Brussels and surrounding area between 2008 and 2013.

The invention of a terrorist group that would be responsible for all of these facts (if only by the fact of “having rendered them possible”) allows pretty pirouettes for the prosecution: a library becomes a place of recruitment, discussions become clandestine meetings, leaflets and newspapers of anarchist critique become urban guerrilla manuals, demos and rallies become calls to terrorism, the affinity ties between people in struggle and the self-organization that might flow from them become “a structured terrorist group.” The invention of an “anarchist terrorist group” is obviously a rather clumsy attempt by the State to reduce anti-authoritarian and revolutionary subversion to the work of a single “structured group”. In trying to put a handful of inconvenient anarchists behind bars the State is seeking to discourage the refractory ones from taking direct action against what oppresses and exploits us



and impose absolute silence on any desires, possibilities and critical reflections that clash with this authoritarian world.

What has been committed to trial therefore is a mosaic of struggles, revolts, ideas, direct actions, critique, revolutionary imaginaries, agitations that have been attempting to attack dominion for years. **In this, the possible trial concerns not only the comrades accused, but also each individual, every anarchist, every revolutionary, every rebel against order, every insubordinate to authority who refuses to stand idly by in the face of exploitation and oppression.** What is being targeted is the search for autonomy in action, self-organization in the struggle, direct action in all its diversity, the choice to defend and disseminate anarchist and revolutionary ideas, to participate along with other rebels in self-organized and autonomous combat. And finally, without any doubt, a combative approach of anarchism that starts off from the individual, affinity, informality.

It would be absurd to separate the repression that is striking some anarchists and anti-authoritarians today from all the repression that is seeking to subdue (often preventively) any criticism of the established order and revolt. By dint of “terrorist threats”, refugee crisis, the fight against crime and very real wars, State repression today is going into top gear. At a time when change and restructuring is changing the grounds of social conflict faster and faster, neutralizing those who disturb their thinking and their actions is part of a set that targets the exploited and oppressed: the hardening of the conditions of survival, the militarization of borders, the imposition of massive technological control, the construction of new detention camps[...]

Defending oneself against this repressive coup that wants to send comrades to court on charges of terrorism is to defend any possibility and space of anarchist and anti-authoritarian action. [...] And, by solidarity with the accused comrades, to face the State repression aimed at paralyzing all subversive action.

If fighting for freedom is a crime, innocence is really the worst of all.

1. ed. – In the end, as comrades in solidarity noted shortly afterwards, the May 10th session "was cut short, the judge having raised the issue of the language in which the prospective trial should take place. Indeed, all of those potentially charged declared nothing during their hearings, but most of them had nothing to say... in Dutch! While the procedure was continued in French [ed. – the other 'official' language in Belgium]... Not knowing how to solve this "problem" at the time, the Chambre du Conseil was postponed. No new date has been set as yet."

2. ed. – As a part of an ongoing struggle against prisons and the construction of a new deportation prison specifically, anarchists called for an offensive demonstration against borders and all types of imprisonment. Across half of Brussels, the State responded by issuing a prohibition to gather as more than five people, enforced by civil and riot police (some patrolling with machine-guns). A few hours after the demonstration should have taken place, dozens of people attacked the Marolles police station; it and numerous police cars were heavily damaged, and two policemen were injured. Four people were arrested in the area afterwards and accused of this attack.

'Tato' and Javier Sentenced (Chile)

[ed. – continued from *Return Fire* vol.3 pg79]



"FIRE TO THEIR PRISONS AND THEIR MACHINES"

Prefix: Note that in a letter in June, Natalia 'Tato' Collado mentioned that she does not have any relationship with Javier; therefore they are mentioned as part of the same case, but not related in a way beyond that.

On trial, both anarchists were found guilty of burning the bus, and both sentenced to 3 years and a day of prison, without the possibility of legal benefits. Considering that the investigation process lasted approximately one year, the comrades should be finishing this sentence in May 2018.

ONWARDS; THEY CANNOT CONTROL THE WILD



The mural, in Lima, Peru, reads "JAVIER PINO & NATALIA COLLADO STANDING UP AND FIGHTING: DOWN WITH ANTHROPOCENTRIC SOCIETY"

'MUCH MORE THAN A BLOW'

[ed. – Comrades from Barcelona offer their thoughts on anarchist understandings of, and responses to, repression. Since these words were written, Spain has seen a wave of repression against anarchists [ed. – see *Return Fire* vol.3 pg82], although we are pleased to note that 'Operation Pandora part II' charges have now been dismissed.]



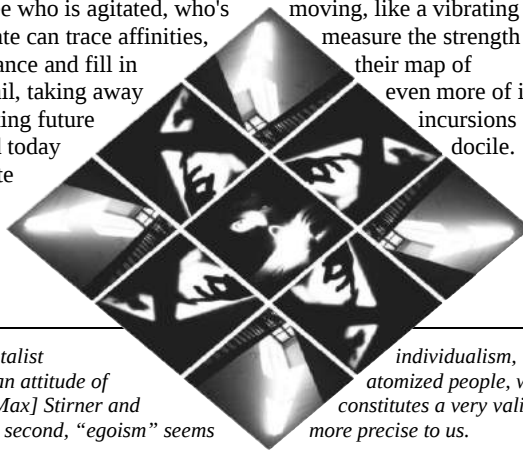
In general, the insurrectionalist analysis of repression has been that of a blow or a series of blows that seek to punish the most combative sector and discourage future attacks. To this vision corresponds the following practice of response: knowing the list of court cases, defending the freedom of those charged, and counterattacking in order to demonstrate that the repression has managed to sow neither fear nor paralysis. Or to summarize: in the face of repression, continue attacking. And why not? To water down combativeness because there have been consequences is a disgraceful error, and one committed by the Organization [ed. – slang for the anarcho-syndicalist union C.N.T., National Confederation of Labour, in Spain] and its Libertarian Movement several times during the 20th century.

But repression is much more than a blow. It forms part of a whole process of social engineering that seeks to transform the social terrain to facilitate total surveillance and restrict the possibilities of struggle. The repressive part of the process tries above all to isolate a subversive sector from society.

[...] Repression functions like this: before any arrests, there exists a continual campaign by the State to convert everyone into civil snitches, individualistic^[1], unsolidaristic people, and superficial morons. This is achieved through advertising, TV shows, movies (being that we are social and symbolic beings, narratives are extremely influential on human beings), consumerism, laws, economic competition, narcotic apparatuses like Twitter and cellphones, etc. [Silvo] Berlusconi, [ed. – four times the Prime Minister] in Italy, directed the perfect example of such social restructuring: before entering politics, he consolidated a media power that pursued this transformation of values in Italian society in order to "take the water away from the fish." From a solidaristic and combative society that supported the forceful struggles of the 60s and 70s – struggles subdued only thanks to the ensemble formed by the compromising nature of the reformist communists, the vanguardism of the radical communists and a good application of state terrorism – a superficial, consumerist society emerged in the 2000s that didn't care about the totalitarian practices that the State used to repress anarchists; anarchists that remained alone and as such were extremely easy to repress.

If the people with the most radical critiques don't intervene to sabotage this process of social engineering, spreading counter-narratives and constructing material bases capable of supporting another way of existing, everyone will have just two options: either become superficial idiots in order not to remain isolated, or become rarities that belong to one or another urban tribe (one of which could be the anarchists).

[...] The State deals out the repressive blow and observes the results. Far from being the only ones repressed in the last few years, anarchists share this honor with *independistas* [ed. – Catalan separatists], Muslims, immigrants, Roma people, and many more sectors of society. Each blow plays a distinct note as if one were dealing with a musical instrument. After a blow, they see who is agitated, who's moving, like a vibrating guitar string. In doing so, the State can trace affinities, measure the strength of support of each bastion of resistance and fill in their map of even more of its incursions on docile. governed society with more detail, taking away opacity in the interest of facilitating future a territory previously hostile and today The effect of this continuous state cartography operation is that of increasingly controlling society through the isolation of any subversion.



1. We don't want to confuse this capitalist which is not an ideology but rather an attitude of the individualism that comes from [Max] Stirner and critique of capitalist society. For the second, "egoism" seems

individualism, atomized people, with constitutes a very valid more precise to us.

Some Light on the Investigation Leading to the Imprisonment of the Comrade Arrested on April 13th [+ related events] & subsequent resistance (Spain, Germany, Holland)

What Led to the Arrest of the Comrade in Barcelona

On April 13th with a brief press release issued by the Cos of the *Mossos d'Esquadra* [ed. – autonomous Catalan police force], the police operation in which the comrade arrested in Barcelona currently captive in Cologne (Germany) accused of expropriating a bank in Aachen was described.

According to this press release, the operation responded to compliance with an International Letter of Request; the magistrates of Aachen had issued an arrest warrant two days before the operation for the anarchist militant in Barcelona. What the note did not explain, and what was not publicly known previously is how the arrest and the searches by the CME in the Gracia and Carmelo districts of Barcelona were not the simple execution of an international request, but the culmination of a long and focused collaboration between the German and Spanish police and judicial systems, with the active participation of the Catalan autonomous police. The involvement of the *Mossos d'Esquadra* in the case begins long before last April and, as has been shown, went far beyond a purely passive and executory role.

An Ordinary Morning in Aachen

On the morning of November 14th, 2014 a group of armed persons entered the Pax Bank^[1] branch in the city of Aachen, in Westphalia, in the west of the country. After emptying the safe and tying up the bank employees, they leave the office without causing damage or personal injury. In the following days, the police brigade in charge of investigations, the *Landeskriminalamt Nordrhein-Westfalen* (NRW LKA), will link this expropriation with two other assaults that occurred in recent years in the city^[2] and will launch a true – and unsuccessful – media campaign of denunciation, publicly spreading the details of the robbery and offering rewards of thousands of Euros to anyone who can provide information on suspicious persons. The LKA insisted so much in this strategy, as to decide to use for this campaign a despicable popular television program, broadcast on one of the country's leading channels: 'XY Aktenzeichen XY... ungelöst' ("File XY... unsolved"). It is a reality show of openly para-police character where there are morbidly exposed cases that the



police have not been able to solve, showing images from security cameras, clothing found at the place of the "crime", identikit and reconstructions of the facts to impress and encourage the mass of spectators to assist the state organs and to denounce other people.

The Wig, the Gloves & the Can

Four months after the action, in March 2015, the investigation takes a new direction with the arrival on the scene of the Catalan police. They send a note in response to the request made by LKA, internationally, in January, by circulating the extracted genetic profiles from DNA samples^[3] that would have been found at the crime scene, looking for possible matches on databases from other states. According to the *Mossos*, the profile of a sample taken from a wig found near the Pax Bank in Aachen in November would coincide with a sample from its genetic database, a trace extracted from a glove found in the street after a direct action of a political nature, that occurred in the district of Sants in Barcelona in June 2009. From here begins a joint investigation in which the police forces of both states share information and undertake intensive research into what the German press has defined as "the movement of occupied houses of the extreme left of Barcelona" and, according to the arguments presented to the media by prosecutors and police in Aachen, has been the main stage of the investigation. During the investigation (still according to the police version), at the end of June the agents of the information division of the *Mossos* surreptitiously collect an empty beer can abandoned on the road by the accused comrade. From this can DNA samples would have been extracted, in order to make a direct comparison with the remains of genetic material found near the Bank Pax after the expropriation. Four months later, in late October, a report of the biological laboratories of the *Mossos* confirmed the correspondence between the two samples. However, it would take nearly six months until April 12th this year, for a European Arrest Warrant against her to arrive from Aachen, and she was arrested the next day at her home in the Carmel district.

Repression and Social Control: DNA & States

The police process leading to this arrest therefore confirms what many already suspected, namely that the Catalan police

have spent years collecting biological specimens in a massive and systematic way during actions, demonstrations, searches and protests to make a database of genetic data to increase control over the antagonist movement. What was initially introduced as an exceptional measure, arguing the need to protect against repeat offenders and similar cases, it has been implemented as a repressive and standardized technology at the service of the persecution of political activists. In the Spanish state police this *modus operandi* has long been practiced by the regional Basque police (*Ertzaintza*) in the repression of the Basque left and struggles in *Euskal Herria* [Basque Country]. As reported by the magazine *Gara* in 2007, the *Ertzaintza* began construction of a genetic information database, with the collection of cigarette butts and glasses during parties, toothbrushes during searches, or plastic nozzles used in false traffic stops with breathalysers. The problems of reliability and probative value attributed by experts to DNA collection techniques have not prevented the Basque regional police from initiating legal proceedings based on the genetic profile as the only evidence, which with the invaluable help of special courts of the Spanish *Audiencia Nacional* have often resulted in long prison sentences for the accused.

At European level, the use of gene technology in police and judicial matters has continued to gain ground from the late 80s when Interpol imported from the U.S.A. the strategy of the creation of databases for identification of persons through DNA profiling. Despite the differences depending on the socio-political and legal context of each place, in general, the common trend internationally is the exponential growth of the personal data stored in these databases and the gradual elimination of legal restrictions that limit the introduction and development of new samples.

The use of genetic technologies by the police has increased significantly throughout the European Union, and the criteria for their use are becoming more and more lax. We are therefore faced with a huge leap forward, not only in repressive techniques geared toward dissident minority areas, but in States' ability of social control of the entire population, in general. Faced with this challenge, the enemy of the status quo has to choose between being intimidated by the control mechanisms of power or produce political strategies and practices to address them,

knowing that the idea of a totally controlled society is just that, the dark unrealizable fantasy of a logic of dominion that will always find resistance.



1. ed. – “Pax-Bank [was] founded in Cologne in 1917 as a bank cooperative of priests for the ecclesiastical community itself, under the principles of “self-help, self-responsibility and self-management”. Referring to historical events, both the October 1917 revolution in Russia and the growing social tensions in Germany itself, which ended in the fall of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s monarchy and then transformed into the revolution of November 1918, it is not surprising that in those times, when the Catholic Church felt directly threatened by the “red tide” of the revolutionary uprisings, the church decides to protect its capital, in this case not only “spiritual” but rather economic, with the founding of said bank. In addition, in 1920, by virtue of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost all its colonies, where its “civilizing work” was evidently accompanied by “ardent missionary work”. [...] Of course, the Pax-Bank is absolutely silent regarding its relations with the new political power that came to rule its homeland between 1933 and 1945, that is to say the Nazi party NSDAP, who, thanks to the unconditional support of German capital, was able to unleash its expansionist war machine, occupying up to half of the continent and perpetrating the Holocaust and the extermination of peoples considered inferior. [...] In 2009, [Pax Bank] investments in the US pharmacological company Wyeth, the producer of birth control pills, came to light. In the same year, investments in the British arms company BAE Systems, a producer of nuclear submarines and fighter jets, and British-American Tobacco Imperial, a potentate of the tobacco industry, were discovered. The Pax-Bank was quick to apologize to its clients and, as good Christians, its clients accepted the confession and knew how to forgive” (Pecunia Non Olet).

2. Recall that recently a comrade accused of having participated in one of these expropriations, which took place in July 2013, was re-arrested in Amsterdam and extradited to Germany [ed. – see below].

3. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a chemical component of the cell nucleus that contains the genetic information that is transmitted through heredity in living organisms. This acid is found in all the cells of human and non-human animals, plants and other organisms, except red blood



cells. DNA is used in various techniques (biogenetics, nanotechnology, bioinformatics, etc.), but what interests us in this text is the “forensic” use in police, judicial and penal contexts. In these cases, the DNA extracted from hair, saliva or blood is used, and as a result what is called genetic fingerprinting or “DNA profile” is obtained. It is the sequence variations of this fingerprint or profile that [ed. – supposedly] differentiate people, as if it were a “human bar code.”



The context that this anonymous text was released in, is that of a tangled investigation and inter-force collaboration spanning Europe, from West to East, North to South. The trail of events that led to the situation described above could be said to have started with what the German police describe as a “series of robberies” of banks in Aachen between 2012 and 2014 (resulting in a good amount of cash seized), but in reality goes back further; to the unknown police sampling which entered the genetic archives here in the U.K.

After one robbery in 2013, in which at least one of the assailants emptying the safe was said to be a woman, a strange thing occurs; having already combed the bank for clues without success, the German cops announce that eleven days later they discover two air pistols inside, containing DNA traces. That DNA, upon German cops appealing to their international counterparts, was linked to that taken by British cops of an anarchist woman resident in Amsterdam, Holland.

Near the other robbery mentioned earlier, of Pax Bank in Aachen, police recovered the wig mentioned in the article above; the Catalan police responded with their link. Because at this time they didn’t have a face for this supposedly-recurring trace, just a target-group from the nature of the action from which they first recovered the sample, Catalan police secretly collected the DNA of many female radicals, following them one by one and picking up the cigarette butts and empty bottles that they left behind. In June 2015 they make their match; an anarchist already imprisoned for a period of time during Operation Pandora [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg82**].

The other (Dutch) anarchist was arrested as she attempted to cross the Greek-Bulgarian border in July of 2015. After three weeks in Bulgarian detention, she was extradited to Germany and put into ‘investigative detention’ – a condition allowing the prosecutors to keep suspects in custody for long periods without making specific accusations. However, despite the subsequent formalisation of charges against her, after five months in these prisons the court judged evidence to be

insufficient, and she was released. However the prosecution shortly after appealed; she awaits trial, but out of jail.

During her imprisonment, she released an unsigned letter containing the following: “I do not want to enter a discourse that speaks in terms of innocence and guilt, for the juxtaposition at stake is not between these two “categories” formulated in the language of domination, the language of law; a language absolutely antagonistic to my own. It is, simplistic put, between those who desire freedom and those who steal it from them. And this has little to do with the double row of bars blocking my window, with the triple layer of walls and gates surrounding this place. As one of the philosophical cadavers of the university has written in not too distant history, “prison continues, on those who are entrusted to it, a work begun elsewhere, which the whole of society pursues on each individual through innumerable mechanisms of discipline”. This work however simultaneously continues inside and outside of prison; prison is not “external” to society, it is simply another one of the many expressions of domination.

And in this panoptical world [ed. – see **Panopticons Then & Now**] every act of rebellion, whether it is robbing a bank or stealing a loaf of bread, is a negation of the omnipresent control imposed upon us, a deafening or barely audible No in the face of domination. Expropriation is merely one of the means in the vast array of those available to take back what is stolen from us on a daily basis – our self-determination, the freedom and possibility to construct our lives according to our own wishes and desires.”

In the raids that followed in Barcelona, two private homes and the Blokes Fantasma squat were invaded and the twenty or so people living in the building were detained for twelve hours, and the woman previously held under Operation Pandora was kept awaiting deportation to Germany. Two days before, her European arrest warrant had been issued by the same investigative judge handling the Dutch woman’s case. Before she is taken out of Spanish borders, she participated via phone call with public events around the multiple days of clashes and looting in Barcelona that followed the eviction of the Banc Expropriat occupation at the end of May; afterwards, and also due to her “inciting mutiny” among the other prisoners in the isolation ward, she was subject to various disciplines and denied contact with her partner and at least one other.

Finally, the third piece of DNA ‘evidence’, alleged to be upon clothing recovered by the cops near the Pax Bank heist; Catalan police conducted a fake traffic stop of the

type described in the article above on another Barcelona anarchist, and claim a match to the DNA retrieved. This time their prey is also well known to them; an anarchist who had done over a decade in the prisons of Portugal, where he is from, and agitated inside against the prison regime, founding a library inside, and having been among those tried for the events in Caxais in 1996^[1].

* – Following unrest in the prisons of Portugal against appalling conditions that produced various riots in the '80s, the final straw seems to have been when an amnesty for leftist urban guerrilla prisoners was not extended to other prisoners when a new president was elected, contrary to tradition. The better-known disorder in Caxais (following a series of rolling hunger-strikes and work stoppages, including blockade of supply van entering prison and an escape after strikers deliberately forced their transfer to a civil hospital) occurred when prisoners refused to re-enter their cells; in the following police riot, 180 were arrested and mostly beaten heavily. 13 years later, the State brought charges against 25 (ex-)prisoners over the affair; anarchists disrupted the court sessions and piled abuse on the public prosecutor, while being joined in their cries for freedom by some of the accused, until the judge closed the one session unable to maintain order. Tags against courts and prisons were spraypainted on a National Defence Ministry building and the Law School in Lisbon, as well as in the street of the Oeiras court where the trial was held, and north of the border in Galicia the offices of Portuguese Innovation and Integration Agency (a "lucrative entity for the promotion of enterprise and technology as one more piece of complicit machinery of the state and its development of police, judicial and prison repression") were attacked in solidarity.

June this year, this fighter was also raided in Barcelona at gun-point, and deported to Germany. Mid-September, the Aachen court also decided that, before their extradition for the appeal hearing in Germany, the Dutch anarchist awaiting trial 'outside' should also be re-imprisoned. The following night, people gathered outside the prison she was held in, "to break the isolation that those cement walls and barbed wire try to impose. The fireworks and voices reached the other side of the wall, with more prisoners sending back echoes." Again in October, anarchists demonstrated outside the Cologne-Ossendorf prison over the border in Germany, where the Barcelona anarchists are held. November 4th was the first trial session for the Dutch comrade (the two robberies are being tried separately), and despite a heavy police presence and the riot squad in the courtyard, comrades of the accused made their presence known. For updates, visit solidariteit.noblogs.org

Whatever comes next, this case can tell us much about the extent that police have since a long time been coordinating to repress those who break the stifling order of capitalist normality. It tells us much about the extent and repercussions of contemporary surveillance – not only the DNA sampling, but also the biometric analysis of the banks' camera footage of the masked robbers (shape of head and jaw, way of walking, etc.) compared with

the accumulated recordings of the accused walking down the video-surveilled streets in their daily lives, is an important piece in the case. But not only that; the case also tells us that for anarchists, solidarity can be more than a written word.

Since the early days of the Spanish State's arrests, its consulate in the German city of Munich was defaced, while back in Barcelona the German Business School was also attacked and left with broken windows. Bank branches themselves have seen a large focus during the offensive, being smashed and defaced in Holland, Germany (including Pax Bank themselves in Erfurt) and Spain, while flames ravaged luxury cars of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, a mobile phone antenna over the border in Haren, and construction mega-project equipment in Toulouse. The detention complex has also been targeted, like a premises of the company responsible for maintenance of electronics in German prisons (and related surveillance of those held inside) being smashed up, or the paint-bombing of the Aachen courthouse in the run-up to the first court sessions in November. From Bristol (England) to Pontevedra (Galicia), to Greece and across the Atlantic, anarchists have hung banners about the case or publicly defended the act of stealing the money we are forced to live by in capitalist society from those who enforce the above; regardless of whether the accused were among such robbers.

We end on one such solidarity action, which brought us great joy to hear about, and pledge that no matter how the authorities try to ensnare us for our defiance and lucidity, there always seems to be another trap waiting to be sprung on them in turn; on their banks, their police stations, their infrastructures, the places they eat and rest.

COMMUNIQUE FOR COORDINATED ARSON ATTACKS AGAINST ENERGY MULTINATIONAL RWE (GERMANY)

In the late hours of 25-11-16, we carried out coordinated arson attacks against the German energy multinational RWE in the vicinity of the Hambach opencast lignite mine [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg91*]. We have delayed this communique until now for strategic purposes.

After a scout of the area, we split up and set fire to six pumping stations, two electrical

transformers, one digger and a substation of the electrical grid.

Pumping stations are key pieces of the mines infrastructure used to lower the water table and prevent the flooding of the mine. They most often resemble a section of exposed pipe and an electrical box surrounded by construction fence. We prised open the electrical boxes using a crowbar and placed simple timed incendiary devices and a bundle of bicycle inner tubes inside to ensure the flames caught nicely.

The incendiary devices were composed of a candle secured to a firelighter cube with a strong rubber band. The candles burnt down slowly, then ignited the firelighters once we were safely away from the area. After smashing a window to gain access, we used the same devices to burn out the cab of the digger.

For the transformers and the substation we burnt car tires filled with gasoline soaked rags. We placed these beneath exposed insulated cabling on the substation and inside the

transformers. Within several minutes these targets were engulfed in flames and as we departed the substation exploded, sending arcing electricity and purple flames ten metres into the night sky. Although this caused a blackout two kilometres wide, the local media-scum failed to mention it in any of their press, downplaying it to the burning of the two transformers alone.

As the techno-industrial megamachine grinds on every day, destroying and polluting all that is still wild and beautiful in this world, we feel that actions like this are a necessary measure to stay sane and remind ourselves that we are still alive amidst all of the destruction and misery of modern society.

After all, the only way one can enjoy the industrial landscape at all is by crawling around in the tall grasses and nettles with the other animals and finding a good vantage point from which to observe pillars of black smoke rising from the scorched machinery and infrastructure of civilization.

We wish to send a wink of complicity to the captive anarchists accused of bank robberies in Aachen and to Chilean prisoner of war Kevin Garrido, held for explosive attacks in the city of Santiago^[1].

For the multiplication of attacks against RWE!
For anarchy and wildness!

Death to civilization!

– Scoundrels In The Night

1. ed. – At the prison guards school, a police precinct and an electricity firm; arrested with him and accused of the first was Joaquín García. Joaquín got pre-trial release after several months and went on the run, but was caught on a rural bus in Tirúa and sent back with additional charges for the revolver he was carrying.

“Our comrades who have been kidnapped or persecuted by the enemy due to their ideas and practices are not mere victims of repression. They are prisoners of war – all of them. Let's not victimize them, which is an old-fashioned strategy used by “Leftist fighters”. Simple and real solidarity (collecting food, money, clothes etc. for prisoners) is necessary, but it is not complete. It must be accompanied by direct attacks against the Regime. Only if it is, will it include the joy of vengeance [and of resistance,] whilst winking at those 'who are inside,' provoking flaming smiles in dark dungeons, and hatred and fear in the authoritarian hordes.” – *About the War*



Let's Relaunch the Struggle Against Nocivity [+ updates] & random moments of solidarity (Italy)

Five years have passed [*at the time of writing*] since we were arrested in Switzerland when police at a checkpoint on the Albis pass, Canton of Zürich, found explosives, propane gas canisters, petrol cans and several copies of a claim by Switzerland Earth Liberation Front [E.L.F.] in the car we were in. The target of the proposed attack was the Binning and Rohrer Nanotechnology Centre, a structure that was under construction at the time, property of IBM in collaboration with ETH, the Federal Polytechnic of Zürich.

The [Swiss] trial took place a year and a half later where we were accused of: preparing deliberate arson; concealing and transporting explosive material; unauthorized trade (importation) of explosives. Federal prosecutor Hansjörg Stadler demanded sentences of 3 years and 4 to 8 months, broadly accepted by federal judge Walter Wütrich. The court confirmed all the charges, except that of illicit traffic (importation) of explosives, a charge we were cleared of.

Parallel to this, the Public Prosecutor of Turin had begun a thorough investigation

of the explosive cartridges that the Swiss authorities had found on us to find out where the material had come from. When the investigation was completed, prosecutor Enrico Arnaldi Di Balme issued three more charges against us: terrorist activity involving lethal and explosive devices, possession and transport of explosives in the public space and receiving stolen goods (explosives), all charges aggravated with ‘terrorist intent’.

In these last 5 years our analysis of the present has been reconfirmed, and consequently our anarchist and environmentalist beliefs have simply strengthened. Nano-bio-technologies are the latest path beaten by the techno-industrial capitalist system in the plunder and devastation of the Earth. These paths, like all the previous ones (think of the Industrial Age), are presenting as miracles what we can easily imagine are destined to turn into nightmares. These technologies are born from the new vision of the world of the computer era that has substituted the mechanistic one of levers and gears with a mathematical one of information bits where the whole of reality must fit into one algorithm. This new vision has now taken root as it is more suited to the needs of the present system. In asserting itself it has opened up hitherto undreamed possibilities for science to carry out what the moment and self-cannibalism of the system are urgently pressing it to do: appropriate everything in the universe and break it down into its smallest, infinitesimal components, into ‘bits’.

In other words, to achieve some universal basic unit with which scientists can reduce the whole of the existent to a level of interchangeability and equivalence so that through the engineering of this new (inaccessible up until now) raw material it will be able to make anything in the universe usable for the needs of power. These technologies are therefore the pillars upon which the system will be able to re-arrange the processes of production and supply that are vital to its growth, a growth to infinity on a planet that has already been plundered beyond the limits of its possibilities. And, as in the case of GMOs [*Genetically Modified Organisms*], the convergence of the sciences is the latest promise of a development trend that is supposed to tackle the ecological crisis that ecocidal progress itself has taken us to.

As we have written elsewhere, the Binning and Rohrer Nano-technology Centre was rendered operative and inaugurated a few months before our trial in Switzerland. For

almost three years it has been offering 950 square metres to collaborators in the basic research for new materials and elements of nano-metric construction. This site will allow the researchers of IBM, ETH and their partners to push the knowledge and above all the application possibilities of nano-technology far beyond, very far beyond, the current use reached by cosmetics, tyres and nanotech sprays. That is what the director of the structure Matthias Kaiserswerth is promising. For us, even if the men [*sic*] of IBM and ETH boast of having a laboratory that is unique in the world – and in certain aspects they are right – the reality is that the places where the engineering and manipulation of life and the planet are being pushed forward are numerous and scattered a little everywhere. From the research centres of the multinationals to the universities, from scientific hubs to international research institutes: this world is moving parallel to the reality we know, planning and building a future that will be imposed upon us, some aspects of which we can already see around us. **This world has a name and address.**

We have felt the urgency of trying to build struggles against this development more and more throughout the years, starting by understanding how indispensable bio- and nano-technologies are to the system and their potential harm. It is important to clarify that this harmfulness does not so much concern damage to human health or the environment as the relation between power and technology that is becoming a remodelling/substitution/destruction of living ecosystems. It is a far wider concept of nocivity [*toxicity/harmfulness*] directly linked to nocivity as a whole: the system itself. We still feel this urgency, and given the advance of the technological and industrial system we are still convinced that it must be translated into a radical critique, which cannot ignore the economic and social context of which these nocivities are both a product and a necessity. In turn, this



YOUR CHOICE.

critique must be able to transform the oceans of ink and words required to express and deepen it, into struggle and direct action. So we are still convinced of the need to develop radical environmental struggles against this deadly techno-industrial system; but we want to point out that the struggle needs to be seen as a real possibility to put everything into question, not just a space to find a role in the political theatre or for offering ‘eco-sustainable’ alternatives to the system.

What we see is how the places of techno-scientific power are being decentralized and molecularised into a

constellation of interests and ultra specific projects, although these are still necessarily all interconnected.

Intervening and striking where it hurts most is always less evident or easy to understand. A constant source of inspiration in this respect are those all over the world who, still feel the urgency of the struggle, are carrying out projects, campaigns and mobilizations in defence of what they feel they are a part of, and sabotaging and attacking the gears of the techno-scientific patriarchal and capitalist industrial system.

We know that putting oneself on the line through the struggle probably means having to face repression sooner or later, and there's no escape from that. What one can and must avoid is leaving those who have been struck by the repression alone. Support for prisoners is something that can't be forgotten, and besides solidarity and basic support, it is just as important and fundamental to carry on the struggles that the comrades are paying for. As far as we are concerned, now outside these walls, we really appreciate the efforts of so many who have organized events and initiatives over recent months. As well as the warmth of their immediate necessary support they have given space to our case and above all, to the topics we want to discuss and express what we feel. This is fundamental for us.

April 23rd [2015] is the day set for the preliminary hearing, where it will be decided whether or not this 'déjà vu' trial is to take place. For our part, we are not as interested in drawing attention to our specific case and the trial against us, as in the desire to succeed in also transforming this moment into an occasion, mobilization, to re-launch these topics and feelings we share.

Not putting repression at the centre of things, but acting without delegating to others, against bio- and nano-technologies, nuclear power and all other forms of nocivity produced by this system of death; against the present moment of annihilation and devastation.

For earth liberation, for animal liberation

– Billy, Costa, Silvia.

[Luca (Billy) Bernasconi, Costantino Ragusa & Silvia Guerini,] February 2015



The banner, in Bristol, U.K., reads "CAPITAL IS AS 'GREEN' AS NUCLEAR IS 'SAFE'; AGAINST INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY HANDS OFF BILLY, SILVIA & COSTA"

In the more than a year and a half since these words were written, the legal labyrinth has only continued; although defence lawyers had called on the judicial principle of 'ne bis in idem', according to which one can't go on trial twice for the same case, the investigating judge agreed to the prosecutor's demand. Swiss and Italian security forces had already attempted a string of appeals to try to further indict the three while they were still in prison, on top of what the comrades described as "intense espionage activity, mainly addressed against the network of solidarity that had been created in the meantime and later against the most radical ecologist milieus that were more active in the struggle outside in order to follow our case and make questions such as that of nano-technology known".

The last session of the trial took place in Turin on March 2nd, 2016. Prosecutors demanded 5 years and 8 months for Costa, 5 years and 4 months for Silvia and Billy. The verdict reading was given shortly after (the three comrades themselves didn't attend); the principle of 'ne bis in idem' was upheld, so the trial was ruled inadmissible. However, the State Attorney of Turin has appealed the verdict, focusing on the transport of stolen explosive material and the 'fact' that the attack on IBM was prepared in Italy, not Switzerland. Their main 'proof' of this is that all three participate in the 'Coalition Against Nocivity', which during its active years has created an active projectuality against bio- and nano-technologies. IBM is in many ways the origin of the nano-technology boom thanks to the invention, in 1981, of the scanning tunneling microscope in another laboratory in Zürich. Now they are working to digitalise the world thanks to the chips, sensors and connections made possible by these same nanotechnologies (see 'Smarter Prison?', first released online in solidarity with Silvia, Billy and Costa in this legal process then printed as a supplement for **Return Fire vol.3**).

(Also, during this same time period, Silvia and Costa also had other charges resurrected from a decade before. In 2005, a high-voltage pylon owned by the electricity firm Terna⁽¹⁾ was dynamited in the southern Italian province of Pisa, causing heavy damage, and an interim work agency was also bombed in Pisa itself. In total ten from the circle of the 'Il Silvestre' group, who bring out the eco-anarchist journal 'Terra Selvaggia' (see **Return Fire vol.3 pg55**), were arrested, but later acquitted. Five were once again charged, including Silvia and Costa, in 2015; but in the end dropped once again.)

Now, the comrades await more news. Like then, and like always, we will affirm our closeness with the ideas and decisions of

these brave individuals, and the radical currents which have produced them. They have been backed since their first arrest in Switzerland with a range of solidaritaristic actions around the world, a scant few of which we list below; whether the judges return the case of Silvia, Billy and Costa to the courtrooms or not, let's turn up the heat on the nano-world and the capitalist order which wants it.

1. ed. – Silvia and Costa noted upon being informed of the resurrected charges that "[t]o the inhabitants of areas stretching along the line between the Pisa Mountains to the Apuan Alps in Tuscany, roars of revolt are nothing new. The La Spezia–Acciaio railway track has been the target of protests for over thirty years, not only because it carries French nuclear waste but also because it causes electromagnetic pollution. On this railway track alone dozens of dynamite attacks have occurred over the years[...] Repression has also been there over the years: eco-anarchist Marco Camenish's arrest in the 1990s [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg75**], also accused of sabotaging the pylons of the [Terna] railway track, did not stop the attacks; on the contrary in the following years such attacks also became the expression of solidarity with him and his struggle inside Italian and Swiss prisons."

RANDOM MOMENTS OF SOLIDARITY

21.05.10, Bristol, U.K.: "A 'T-mobile' repeater was destroyed by fire. [...] Destructive acts against the telecommunications infrastructure of capitalist economy are simple and reproducible, as are attacks against other facets of industrial society. [...] Far from being a faceless abstract enemy, the conduits of commodity production remain attackable at many points, vulnerable to our courage, rage and joy." *Cells of Fire: Storm of Butterflies'*

24.06.10, Switzerland: *A field of GM corn is destroyed.* "The opposition to genetic engineering is part of an opposition that broadens to oppose total control of society and the living, that is being created thanks to the development of nano- and bio-technology. [S]olidarity with concrete actions with those and those who are opposed to this techno-scientific capitalist system and particularly with Marco Camenisch [see footnote above], Silvia, Costa and Billy..."

13.08.10, Castelvetro, Italy: *The group 'Black Like the Night' release thousands of quail from a battery farm.* "To Billy, Costa and Silvia, because it is in direct action that we stay on the common path that leads to the destruction of civilisation, because it is in the attack that our hearts manage to feel close to theirs. In the breath of a dream that burns and opens the cages."

24.09.10, Bern, Switzerland: *Demonstration outside the regional prison; ten of the forty people penetrate the courtyard in front of the building and lit firecrackers, greeting Costa, while other prisoners beat on the walls in response and lit lighters behind the opaque glass. This is two weeks into a hunger-strike declared by the three and Marco, as "a continuation of all those strong affinities and relationships as "green/anti-civilisation" anarchist individuals that connect us since many years", as well as for "all of you revolutionary individuals*

of every inclination that – as individuals or in groups – support us with your true and free revolutionary love, with your initiatives, with your resistance and revolutionary offensive in open daylight or open nightlight...”

12.12.10, Varese, Italy: “[W]e sabotaged a Shell petrol station [by cutting] the tubes operating the petrol and sealing the ATM with liquid steel. [...] Solidarity with all the rebels attacking those responsible for dominion!”

14.12.10, Lisbon, Portugal: *Paint-bombing, graffiti and lock-sealing for the Swiss embassy, once again also for Marco too.*

30.05.11, London, U.K.: *Windows broken and locks glued at the Swiss embassy in solidarity. “Freedom for all!”*

Argentina: “We sealed the locks and stained the walls of one of the torture and murder centers of animals, the Veterinary Medicine Society, which kills animals and teaches others to do the same. We will not give them peace, as this war began a long time ago...”

Russia: *Visit by the E.L.F. (& Informal Anarchist Federation / Animal Liberation Front) to “two commercial fishing resorts. They breed fish to be hunted by tourists.” Two phone masts burn.*

14.01.16, Trento, Italy: *Arson of two mobile phone towers. “Let’s stop electronic control and electromagnetic pollution. For Silvia, Costa and Billy, still on trial.”*

06.03.16 northern Somerset, U.K.: *Multiple rails are sabotaged with a portable disc-cutter on a freight distribution trainline, carrying fossil fuel, construction materials and brand-new vehicles. “Severing the lines that feed the machine is not impossible. [...] The war is not over when those moments stop, it sparks up in little raptures here and there, showing that we are not crushed, things can be brought to a grinding halt again, even for a split second.” This line had also been subject to a £100,000 attack in 2005, smashing cars being transported as they passed.*

“[T]he sure thing is that we are not alone. We live in a home full of voices, dreams, desires, laughter, melancholies, actions... Our home has no hosts and guests; it belongs to all of us. In our home we do not speak just one language but many and we always communicate with our eyes. The basement of our home is full of weapons, explosives, plans, communiques, whatever the enemy snatches from us, our hands and desires will never remain unarmed. At the table of our home there are always spaces and glasses of wine for new friends and comrades who we never met before. There are as well some empty places for the brothers and sisters who are absent, for our dead, for the wanted, for the imprisoned, but their glasses are always full because they are always next to us too. Our home has no doors, no rooms, not even walls. Our home has no roof because it would hide the sky and stars. Our home has no windows because it would stop the wind. Our home has no street or number. Our home has no name and lives in our hearts.”

– Lone Wolves Are Not Alone...

'THE IMPACT OF ROBOTICS'

On May 9th a protest was held in Pisa [Italy] outside the Sant'Anna University on the occasion of its Open Day, to question the role of this university with regard to the processes of preparation and implementation of war and concerning the role of scientific research in the construction of the world in which we live. Here follows one of the interventions made during the protest, on the theme of robotics:



Sant'Anna is distinguished mainly for robotics and bio-robotics studies and projects. These disciplines open the way for further technological and scientific advance in a society that is seeking to integrate more and more robots and machines with the living being for both civilian and military purposes: examples of this are industrial automation machines, exoskeletons, bionic prostheses, home automation, and so on.

In order for this mechanic scenario to be possible it is necessary both to develop an ethics applied to robotics that prepares the ground for human-robot coexistence both from a social and legislative perspective on the one hand, and on the other solves problems that could arise as the impact of robotics creates profound changes.

The introduction of technological innovation has caused radical social and organizational changes in general; think of how our lives have changed with the introduction of the computer or the telephone. It is no different in this case as it is equipment designed to be operational in an environment that they are making totally artificial and to make the human being increasingly dependent on this artificiality which only scientists and experts know how to foresee. Machines equipped with artificial intelligence that communicate via wireless, accumulating and exchanging data, replacing the human being in its activities and even in their everyday decisions, nullifying any kind of critique and reducing us to mere cogs.

These are studies and projects that are born from the arrogant idea that the human being can control, manipulate and experiment on the living in general, using it to their liking and adapting it to the needs of the current production and techno-scientific system.

Robotics and bio-robotics are examples of a new approach to science, that of the convergence of different areas and studies that are moving toward the

same goal: controlling living beings and the earth that hosts them. So, to design a machine similar to us it is necessary to combine the results from bio- and nano-technology, neuro-science, computer science, engineering, cognitive sciences and life sciences. Sant'Anna University is a pioneer in these projects of implementing the human being with man-made structures; sensory capacities, motor and human perceptions transferred into the robots. They are trying to design a future that increasingly disables the human being, already unable to live without technology.

We know that the apparent medical reasons, need for companionship, improvement of human and productive performance that these gentlemen [*sic, i.e. the scientists*] are preaching to have these atrocities accepted, represent a practice to justify the deadly techno-scientific advance. And that is also why we reject any kind of education to technology as it is a means of mental prerogative that leads to a constant mechanization of the existent.

The industrial economy; the growth of the world population with the consequent need for more and more resources and agricultural food production; the organization of large urban agglomerations, as well as the "management" of environmental disasters, are consequences arising from the continued exploitation of the earth and the anthropocentric logic and dominion caused by a process of thousands of years of civilizing process, whose resolution cannot be entrusted to specialists and machines. **Precisely the ones who caused these problems.** We are moving towards a robotic and artificial ecosystem that has little that is natural and a technology that is progressing very quickly, always leaving us less space and freedom. If this is the future that faces us, the present still conserves some wild spaces, albeit shrinking, and is still inhabited by individuals who do not want to delegate their lives to intelligent machines and to the phantomatic technical machines and scientists that are behind them.

MEMORY AS A WEAPON

'ONE GOD & ONE STATE'

[ed. – Extract from John Zerzan's longer text 'Arrivederci Roma: The Crisis of Late Antiquity', investigating the fall of the Roman Empire]

Oswald Spengler declared an endpoint to civilization to be the triumph of the inorganic world-city over the organic land. (See especially "The Soul of the City" in *The Decline of the West*, volume II.) The marxist Kautsky, Spengler's opposite politically, also observed the loss of contact with nature and the unmooring of the individual from ancestral supports. Excessive urbanization was the main cause of the Roman collapse, in the opinion of Guglielmo Ferrero.

It was "a world of dwindling towns and bloated cities"¹¹ in which the countryside was taxed and exploited to sustain urban living, resulting in rural depopulation. Meanwhile the urban framework was itself falling apart. The mounting stresses on Roman civilization, its empire in retreat, meant a "hard" regime tending toward what we would call privatization. Less expenditure for public buildings and public cults. "The cities, which had created and sustained the higher forms of economic life, gradually decayed, and the majority of them practically disappeared from the face of the earth," to quote Rostovzoeff.

"Mass unrest," often due to food shortages, was "an inevitable phenomenon in cities of the Roman world," in A.D. Lee's words. Robert Knapp found that "the natural recourse was to riot." There was substantial social war violence from the Middle Empire to the end of late antiquity. The fourth century soldier and historian Ammianus Marcellinus wrote of the prominence of violent unrest in Rome, blaming the ruling class for disturbances and squalor. Significant riots include a 348 clash over delay of the grain subsidy and repeated incidents in 365 over the high price of wine.

Antioch saw major riots in the 5th century, and Peter Brown characterized Alexandria as "a notoriously riot-prone city," to cite just a couple of non-Rome locations. Solomon Katz mentioned "terrible peasant revolts" in various parts of the Empire, while outlawry became an important presence.

Between the late third century and the first half of the fifth, the Bigaudae, described as both brigands and revolutionaries, embodied outlaw peasant rebellion in parts of Gaul and Spain. Their egalitarian risings against the rich were a powerful radical critique in action.

What came to be referred to as paganism was a mainstay of Greco-Roman civilization. It was the official ensemble of gods and rites, emphasizing the citizen's responsibility to imperial authority, and embodying unity. In this way paganism was close to a general attitude of patriotism, respectful of civic tradition. Victor Ehrenberg declared paganism to be "a political rather than a religious matter[...] no question of belief or even emotional feeling." Its ritualism left little room for spirit, its orientation more empirical than a matter of faith. And since its gods were tied to the reigning politics, paganism tended toward the same breakdown Rome was experiencing. Its gods belonged to an early age, and were far from omnipotent. Civilization renders citizens powerless, and its religious parallel is a monotheistic, unrivaled power over its subjects in the spiritual realm.

The word pagan originally meant one who lives in a pagus, or village. It didn't exist as a religious term before Christians began calling non-Christians pagans. But the usage is clear enough to us, and though it had about seven centuries of tradition behind it by the 400s, paganism was lacking in substance. Too impersonal and far from totalizing, this civic religion was unable to bear much weight. It was overdue for a crisis, along with the rest of the ruling order. The old gods were too limited and too formal. They fell into the shade.

Roman globalization acquainted people with other options, via travel, trade, and conquest. With increasing insecurity, a feeling of "cosmic pessimism"¹² grew steadily stronger. So-called "mystery religions" arrived, mainly from the east, as misery begot mysticism. Mithra worship became a mystery cult from a branch of Persian Mazdaism, via the Greeks. It was fairly strong in the army, but its appeal was limited by its exclusion of women. From Egypt arose sun-worship, the cult of Sol Invictus with his December 25 birthday, and also an Isis cult. Dionysus emerged, a powerful, universalizing god of salvation, prefiguring the Christian savior in several respects. Native paganism in its last stages took on a neo-Platonic coloring, a decidedly monotheistic move like most of the other religious tendencies, but not decisively enough.

The emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in 312, made it Rome's official

religion, and declared paganism illegal. Anti-pagan repression was often laxly pursued, however, and two centuries after Constantine the old cults lingered. Paganism persisted in part because of its lack of a center; still largely polytheistic, it was multiple and versatile. But especially in its old Roman dress, paganism continued to fade in the sixth century, its sacrifices and temples abandoned. By the 390s the Christian church, a unified institution, had already visibly secured its hegemony.

Christianity had rather suddenly and unexpectedly succeeded, providing a personal religion in place of an impersonal civic one. "Seldom has a small minority played so successfully on the anxieties of society," as Peter Brown put it. Its central and original message of love was preached to the poor, the burdened, the outcast, not excluding women and slaves. Christian populism caught on with many in Roman civilization, especially the miserable urban masses. It not only offered heavenly reward, but also a stronger sense of belonging than that of the devotees of Mithra or Isis, for example.

Another central focus was of course Christian belief in a resurrected figure, Jesus as divine Saviour. It is clear that the early Christians expected an impending return of Christ, which gave their efforts a special intensity. The unique status of women and Christian care for the sick during epidemics were more down-to-earth contributors to success. The original churches were homes, which in itself gave women prominence, but during the third century the status of women was beginning to decline.

The Gospel of Luke, written in about 100, contains many condemnations of the rich, e.g. "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (18:24). These were typical radical sentiments – which became inconvenient as the Church grew to be a powerful financial institution by the end of the 3rd century. "The time was ripe for a reconciliation of state and church, each of which needed the other," in Rostovzoeff's judgment. Early on there were Christians who appreciated the relation between one god and one state, the helpful implications of monotheism for a universal and unified civilization. Constantine, less abstractly, came to the conclusion that Christianity was the only glue that could help hold conflicting social elements together. The old ruling elites, or *paideia*, were no longer able to maintain control. With Christianity as the new public religion, religious and secular authority became integrated in a more binding and powerful partnership.

Preaching in fourth century Antioch, John Chrysostom proclaimed, “Oh! how passing wonderful is the power of Christianity, that it restrains and bridles a man [sic]...” Ambrose of Milan, another Church father and an aristocrat, in the same vein in 388: “The bishops are the controllers of the crowds, the keen upholders of peace...” He also asserted that “priests should have nothing of the masses about them, nothing of the people, nothing in common with the pursuits and manners of the barbarous multitude.”

Christians had made the poor visible, and soon enough this made them more amenable to control. **The Church took over much of the state’s almsgiving and adopted a new style of pacification in civilization’s never-ending task of securing its authority.** More or less always stated in religious terms, the power of bishops, with their scores of guards, could hardly develop otherwise than along lines in tandem with the secular economy and society.

Rather like “closed shop” employment, where expulsion from the union spells loss of that employment, excommunication had temporal as well as spiritual consequences. It enforced the temporal power; e.g. soldiers who refused to fight in a war that the Church deemed just faced excommunication. Bishops preached increasingly to the elites, and the papacy made more and more of Rome’s glorious past. And yet Christianity never lost its power to offer a radical sense of community, even if that community was more symbolic than actual.

A monolithic and centrally organized religion and its professional hierarchy took charge of various administrative functions of the Christianized empire, including roles performed by barbarian authorities. The growing Church to some extent took over what Rome had created. Of course, there existed various philosophical differences; the searching criticisms of Augustine and – as we have seen – Salvian come to mind^[3]. A united front against common enemies of Church and State certainly held sway, however. It is clear that almost every emperor urged the Church to define correct doctrine so as to enforce its official monopoly. Intolerance in matters of dogma was a new arrival to the Mediterranean world. Doctrine is of supreme importance for [ed. – apparently] the first time in civilization.

A striking counterpoint to the accommodationist, power-oriented direction of the Church was a primitivist monasticism that swept the Roman world in the 300s. It began in the deserts of Egypt, where the number of radically ascetic monks neared 200,000 by the beginning of the fourth century. The impulse to return to a pre-Fall, Eden-like simplicity pitted the movement against the Church hierarchy, civic authority, urban life, and even culture itself. Historians such as Rufinus described the ability of monks to mingle with wild animals. Their revolt favored egalitarian virtue over the achievements of civilization. “They had dropped out of the world, because they found society more than they could endure,” concluded Michael Grant. Bishops frequently allied with local elites to bar monks from their towns and to defend the ancient customs. “Emperors, too, in their edicts, declared the inmates of the monasteries to be fanatical, unruly, and rebellious.”

Violence was a not uncommon response to this challenge, which reached a high point with the Circumcellions in North Africa, in the second half of the fourth century. The anarchic offshoot of a non-radical sectarian heresy, Circumcellions (vagabonds, literally) sought to restore the [ed. – alleged] primitive equality of humankind. These millennium-seekers attracted fugitive slaves and destitute peasants, and their base consisted of native Berber and Punic elements. Hostile to urbanism and the dominant order, they preserved their independence until the Muslim conquests of the eighth century suppressed all forms of Christianity in the region.

[...] Another transition involved the symbolic institution or dimension of time. For the Greeks, cyclical time still held sway. Their sense of historical or linear time remained quite tentative at best. Roman Stoics (e.g. Cicero and Seneca) introduced a progressive, non-repetitive concept later developed further by Augustine. We have been under the sign of historical temporality ever since. Restlessly striving to dominate it somehow, while unable to escape the helplessness resulting from civilized, complex society.

Rome’s thousand years were, at base, just another civilization that came and went, subject once again to longings and anxious disquiet and requiring yet another new model of the same. Carlin Barton, in her often brilliant *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*, refers to the Roman confrontation with time: “They were terrified by beginnings; this dread was one of the sicknesses of Roman culture.” One symbol of which was the gladiator, that

figure of ultimate despair, with its thrill of what became inescapable. A fitting face of civilization.



1. E.T. Salmon, *The Nemesis of Empire*
2. E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*.
3. [ed. – from earlier in the original text:] *On the Government of God* was Salvian’s 5th century Christian take on the virtuous simplicity of barbarians vs. debased Romans. Earlier and more famously, the historian Tacitus praised moral, democratic, hospitable, and happy denizens to the north in his *Treatise on the Situation, Manners and Inhabitants of Germany*. [T]he “barbarian” as a figure served various ideological purposes [to the late Roman Empire]. Violent barbarians were used to justify huge military expenditures by the state. Portrayed as noble savages, they were a means of criticizing degenerate civilization. [...] Petrus Patricius described the Scythians, in the east, as having “jeered at those who were shut up in the cities, saying, ‘They live a life not of men but of birds sitting in their nests aloft; they leave the earth which nourishes them and choose barren cities; they put their trust in lifeless things rather than in themselves.’” In modern times J.B. Bury referred to Slavonic barbarians of late Rome “who could defy the justice of civilization in thick forests and inaccessible ravines – regions echoing with the wild songs and romances of outlaw life.” But the “barbarians” in Europe had been practicing domestication for at least four millennia, and the processes of state formation had been going on for four hundred years in the Germanic world. Nonetheless not all the earlier, freer modes were extinguished. Bury again: “The east German barbarians were still in the stage in which steady habits of work seem repulsive and dishonorable.” [...] Aside from the nature of barbarian society and/or its dialectic with Rome – and the difficulty of generalizing about various groups – there were some connections with Romans that may seem surprising. Peter Sarris wrote of 4th century Goths and their “campaign of destruction aimed at members of the Roman governing classes” – in which “the barbarians were expressly aided [by] members of the Roman lower classes.” In *On the Government of God*, the Christian author Salvian declared, “A large part of Gaul and Spain is already Gothic, and all the Romans who live there have only one wish, not to become Romans again.” Joseph Tainter saw it similarly: “Contemporary records indicate that, more than once, both rich and poor wished that the barbarians would deliver them from the burdens of the Empire.”

A SHORTER HISTORY OF A NORTHWEST E.L.F. CELL

[ed. – Here we present a tale that was first serialised in the now-defunct Seattle periodical 'Tides of Flame', not long after documentary-makers had released a longer film called 'If a Tree Falls...' about the rise and fall of one Earth Liberation Front (E.L.F.) group active in the '90s and '00s. Whereas that production came off as somewhat victimistic and defeatist (not to mention giving snitches and investigators themselves an inordinate amount of airtime), what we liked about this series was their placement of these events into the social context from which they arose; including more general activity across 'North America' from Vancouver to Mexico City, by the E.L.F. and others. Ordinarily, we would never read stories like this in print. The tragic part, of course, is that this amount of detail is publicly-known only because of the betrayal at the heart of the saga of Operation Backfire, the largest domestic terrorism investigation in the history of the U.S.

Doubtless, this raises the question of what end 'biography'-type accounts serve; but despite the danger of creating 'celebs' of the struggle, and them transforming from life-sized to larger-than-life, we have found it inspiring and empowering in our own time to come across such narratives. More than anything, what made us want to share this is the fact that rather than only cheerleading (though there may be an element of that at times!), we have here a very human telling of lives that merged, strengthened, but then split, fell apart, and dispersed – a common experience of those who enter environments of struggle. The recent renewal of excitement over the novel 'Letters of Insurgents' is for good reason partly because of such an aspect being portrayed so heart-breakingly powerfully. Here, too, we have the people who change, drift apart, who keep struggling and who don't, who enter the frustrations (and potential pitfalls) of 'wanting to go further' or who just fall apart under pressure. Certainly not all of these E.L.F.ers were anarchists, but these aspects their stories will resonate with many of us within that space; regardless of whether the 'urban guerrilla cell' was a method we see (or have lived) as our own.

The critiques – those of interest to us at least – leveled at the E.L.F. model at the time (such as that the radical environmentalist or animal liberation discourse 'specialised' these struggles by failing to tie them into capitalism or civilisation more generally, such as that for all that the occasional communique might have referred to

other other "isms" that the perpetrators were concerned about, these were called into existence as a list of single issues, "a broad liberal program that has taken on extreme tactics"), or those since (such as the worthwhile essay 'The Telescope or the Kaleidoscope', critical amongst other things of the founding principles of the model such as non-violence) won't be discussed here. Suffice to say that we find the inclusion of the Mexican and Russian groups significant in the text, in that this charts the drift from a more leftist, eco-activist discourse to an anarchist, anti-civilisation and insurrectional one that the E.L.F. has seen internationally, even as the (former) fighters described below languish in prison, on the run, or in the worst cases under the protection of their new-found Father State for their services. Both the struggle mentioned below in Khimki forest, and the eco-radical scene in Mexico which has since splintered into various directions (not all of them anarchist), on a practical level have eschewed non-violence (as you will see from the early E.L.F. Mexico action claim we have included to end on); and despite occasional uninvited interventions of the survivors of the North American E.L.F. Press Office still talking in terms of 'environmental justice' and the like, the generation of E.L.F. that exists today whose actions they reference would seem to have largely moved beyond such incoherent arguments, targeting all domination.

We publish this in solidarity with many earth-defenders of the world, whatever name they do or don't use. Whatever one makes of claiming actions under an acronym such as the E.L.F., it is inspiring to know of the high-impact actions that these people regularly carried out in these past decades – without fetishising the level of material damages above other considerations, it seems that those of even humble means can devastate the facilities and infrastructures that surround us, and that is a tale worth telling. But this is also a cautionary tale; and not just of what is at stake in terms of repression (sadly, since this was written two of the four fugitives – Rebecca Rubin [see **Return Fire vol.2 pg73**] and Justin Solondz – have been jailed) and the potential for today's comrade to become tomorrow's traitor to the State. Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher, two who did not snitch and who served their sentences with apparent dignity, have since release been outed as 'anti-modern' fascists and white separatists by longtime E.L.F. prisoner supporters and their former comrades. To us, as well as various strains of eco-radicalism in both Russia and Mexico also having gone in differently disgusting directions at times, this renews the importance of never separating 'ecology' or 'animal liberation' from our broader anarchist ideas, or making 'marriages of convenience' with such characters; rightists, leftists or the so-called 'apolitical', always distanced from our anti-politics.]

Sunshine. A hippy name, dark hair, fierce eyes. Josephine Sunshine Overaker. She went out one night with her boyfriend in the woods of Oregon, put bombs under a US Forest Service truck and on the roof of the Ranger station.



She spray-painted a circle-A on the side of the building along with the words "STOP RAPING OUR FORESTS." She laughed hysterically as she fled into the woods, the flames dancing behind her in the darkness, a demon beside her, and the future filled with fires and shadows. Over the next ten years, Josephine would transform from a free woman into an exile, living an anonymous life and outrunning her past. We do not know where she is, nor what she is doing, but she has eluded the clutches of the police, this person with the name Sunshine.

She and two other men launched the first attacks of a fledgling Earth Liberation Front (ELF) cell in the Pacific Northwest. The arson described above took place on October 28th, 1996, in Detroit, Oregon. Two days later in Lane County, Overaker and her group of three burned down the Oakridge Ranger Station. All of them had been involved in peaceful protests to stop the devastation of old growth forests in Oregon. They had seen these tactics fail endlessly and had seen Forest Service Rangers brutalize and imprison their friends who were attempting to defend the earth. When these arsons took place, many environmental activists did not know what to think. The most lucid of them were happy, understanding that their opponent had been attacked. Unfortunately, some activists were afraid and wanted to distance themselves from what had happened. They had no idea of what would come next in the summer of 1997.

It is not known why Overaker did not participate. What is known is that her group had grown and six of them burnt



down a horse slaughterhouse in rural Oregon on July 21, 1997. The Caval West slaughterhouse bought wild horses that had been captured by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and turned them into meat. The massive fire they lit completely destroyed the plant. It never opened again. For months peaceful protestors had written letters and children had held signs outside saying "DON'T KILL HORSIES," all to no avail. *The ELF managed to destroy a despicable company that murdered the last remaining wild horses in Oregon. The ELF destroyed it in one night and with one action.*

On November 30th, 1997, Overaker, her boyfriend, and three others burnt down a Bureau of Land Management wild horse corral in south-western Oregon. Before burning down the facility, the group freed 400 horses back into the wild. **Whereas the previous year the cell had focused its attention on the Forest Service, their activity in 1997 was dedicated to freeing wild animals that were being imprisoned and slaughtered.** The members of the group proved themselves to be against anyone who wished to destroy the wild earth, whether it be a private company or a government agency.

In 1997, different ELF cells that did not know each other carried out attacks in Utah against a fur-breeding plantation and at UC Davis in California against their still under-construction Center for Comparative Medicine. Both of these targets suffered arson attacks for their practices of enslaving, torturing, and murdering animals. **At the time, the action against UC Davis was seen as an insane act against a benevolent institution. Now, with everyone obsessed with free-range chicken and green technology, many people might not view the arson with the same outrage** expressed in 1997.

In Olympia on June 21st, 1998, the group launched a new offensive on the US Department of Agriculture, the greedy overlords of the forests. But on the day before the attack, Overaker was caught shoplifting items needed in the planned arson. After being released from jail, she was told she could not participate in the action. Knowing this was true, she decided to establish a firm alibi while her friends continue onward. The next morning, four members of her cell burnt down a US Department of Agriculture building.

Simultaneously, a separate ELF cell burned down another Department building in a different part of town. On one day, the entire Puget Sound area saw fires burning in the capitol.



The Canadian lynx, threatened by the ski expansion at the Vail resort torched in 1998

Despite being far ahead of most people around them (who were busy loving Clinton and "prosperity"), these groups were pursued by the FBI, labeled as terrorists and vilified by large segments of the environmental movement. Groups like the Sierra Club publicly denounced the ELF and applauded the government's efforts. Nevertheless, true to themselves and their ideas, this Pacific Northwest cell of the ELF proceeded to scope out a ski resort in Vail, Colorado, make their plans, climb up a mountain and burn down a multi-million dollar project that would ravaged the ecosystem around it. On October 19th, 1998, everyone watching the nightly news saw images of a giant ski lodge burning atop a snow covered hill. The arsonists had the remarkable experience of enjoying the true splendor of a mountain before burning a structure that ensured that same mountain's destruction.

This was the high moment of the group. It appeared as if they could do no wrong, that the tide would turn, and that people would rise up and escape the stupor of the late nineties. **We have focused our narrative around Josephine Sunshine Overaker for a simple reason: she is one of the few who did not betray their friends, renounce their beliefs, or go to jail. She is one of the few who remained free.** The saddest part of the story is far off, so for now, please take comfort in the fact that she is free, that not all was lost, and that the struggle continues to this day across the same planet she fought to protect.

On the FBI wanted poster, where she is described as a terrorist, it lists Overaker's possible professions as a firefighter, a midwife, a sheep tender, or a masseuse. This is the type of person they fear and seek to destroy.

Just before Christmas in December of 1998, the northwest Earth Liberation Front cell decided to strike the headquarters of US Forest Industries in Medford, Oregon. At the time, the group was based largely in Eugene and it was from here that they planned their attack. The members of the group who decided to carry out this

particular action were Jacob Ferguson, Kevin Tubbs, and Kendall Tankersley. After deciding on a date, the three decided they needed a fourth member, and so Kevin Tubbs asked his friend Rebecca Rubin, another member of the group, to help them.

They drove down to Medford, placed an incendiary device near the building and left. But the next morning there was no news of any arson. After scouting out the headquarters, Jacob Ferguson saw that the device was still there in plain sight having failed to ignite. He

contacted Kendall Tankersley and asked her to retrieve the device while he drove on to Sacramento to be with his mother for Christmas. When Tankersley drove back to Medford with an anonymous person who knew nothing of her task, she decided to not risk returning to the building.

After Christmas, Ferguson and Tankerley arranged to meet in Ashland, just south of Medford. Ferguson had his young son with him and the three returned to the headquarters. Ferguson got out of the car, made a new ignition device, and then drove with Kendall and his son to Dunsmuir, California where they rented a hotel room. **The next morning they learned on the news that their arson had been successful. The entire headquarters of US Forest Industries was destroyed for a loss of \$900,000.** In the communique that was released in the middle of January, 1999, the group wrote, *"This was done in retribution for all the wild forests and animals lost to feed the wallets of greedy fucks like Jerry Bramwell, U.S.F.I. President. This action is payback and it is a warning to all others responsible that we do not sleep and we won't quit. For the future generations we will fight back."* This last line is significant, given that Ferguson's young son was in the car and the fact that we are writing about them now, thirteen years later *[when published]*.

In May of that year, different members of the group reconvened to plan another attack. Their next target was to be a meat company in Eugene. On May 9th, Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, Chelsea Gerlach, Josephine Overaker and (presumably) Joseph Dibee set out to burn down the Childers Meat Company. **After Overaker and Dibee cut the fence, others placed and lit an incendiary device near a gas line in the building. As they were all driving away, they heard on their scanner that the fire had been reported.** By the next morning, the building had been totally destroyed. In their communique released shortly after, the group wrote, *"As long as companies continue to operate and profit off of Mother*

Earth and Her [sic] sentient beings, the Animal Liberation Front will continue to target these operations and their insurance companies until they are all out of business." Rather than claim this action as the ELF, they claimed it as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a sister international group.

Over the course of 1999, the group did not commit any other large actions. After having grown to be over a dozen strong, the members navigated and agitated inside the growing links between the anti-globalization movement and the environmental movement. At the time, the potential for a mass revolt against global capitalism seemed possible. All across the world were millions of outraged people attempting to fight against the de-regulation of the global market and the destruction of their traditional ways of life. For the members of the ELF, this was their chance to bring the fight to capitalism itself. They did not want a more humane capitalism as did their contemporaries, instead they wanted its complete destruction and an end to its war on the natural world.

Their opportunity for displaying their views in a more social manner arrived in the form of the planned protests against the WTO [ed. – World Trade Organisation] conference in Seattle in the fall of 1999. Several of the original members of the cell

protesters were tricked into blaming the anarchists for the violence of the police.

The smashed windows of the banks in downtown Seattle have until recently been regarded as the most heinous crime, oftentimes overshadowing the brutality of the police during those fall days. By the end of the WTO conference, the SPD had established a nightly curfew and invaded Capitol Hill. To the current and future ELF members present for the chaos, these experiences only cemented their conviction that the system they were fighting destroyed not only the natural world, but also human freedom, life, and joy. They knew the state would crush even the most minimal sign of disobedience.

To usher in the millennium, Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Josephine Overaker and Chelsea Gerlach decided to burn down the Boise Cascade lumber company regional headquarters in Monmouth, a town less than a hundred miles south of Portland. On Christmas Eve, 1999, the group completely torched the headquarters of the company, causing them a loss of \$1,600,000. In their communique, the group said it targeted the company for its ravaging of the Northwest and its intention to set up operations in the forests of Chile. Their communique ended, *"Let this be a lesson to all greedy multinational corporations who don't respect their ecosystems. The elves are watching. Earth Liberation Front."*

And then, on New Year's Eve, the same four members hoped to trigger the type of Y2K panic that the capitalist media had been predicting. They drove out to the plains near Bend, Oregon and took down an electrical pylon for the power grid. As the tower began to

fall, electricity arced across the sky and dust flew into the air. However, there was no disruption because the power was rerouted. North America continued to party as the 20th century became the 21st. There was no communique released by the group. On the morning of January first, this old crew of accomplices awoke to the future, unaware of what the next few years would bring.

The Northwest ELF cell whose exploits we have been narrating transmitted their plans to each other by attending what they called "book clubs." A given book, such as *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. LeGuin, would serve as the text in which the cell would decode their plans. With a key that read something like LINE 5, LETTER 26, the cell would assemble whole sentences until

they had received their instructions and targets. In this way, they resembled the Red Army Faction of the 1970's who used *Moby Dick* as their transmission device. This is just one of the ways in which the ELF cell maintained their secrecy and were able to remain free from incarceration for as long as they were active.

After their actions during the turn of the century, the cell was inactive until September of 2000. They chose the West University Public Safety [police] Substation in Eugene, Oregon, as their next target. After months of repression by local authorities against the anarchist and environmental movements, the cell believed that the radical community of Eugene would welcome a blow inflicted on the same police that had brutalized and jailed many of their friends. On the night of September 6th, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and Chelsea Gerlach placed two incendiary devices beside the substation. One device failed to explode while the other, placed on a bicycle locked near the substation, tipped over and caused only minimal damage to the substation. The group did not issue a communique, given the relative failure of their action.

The cell struck again on January 2nd, 2001, this time with two new, younger members. Daniel McGowan and Susan Savoie accompanied Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, and Kevin Tubbs on a journey from Eugene to Glendale, Oregon. Their target was the Superior Lumber Company, a purchaser and processor of the felled woods of Oregon. The two new members served as lookouts while the other three placed two incendiary devices in the headquarters of the company. Once they were done, the group returned to Eugene. McGowan and Savoie were entrusted to write the communique. The two traveled north to Portland where they wrote the following words: *"What happened should shock no one. This year, 2001, we hope to see an escalation in tactics against capitalism and industry. While Superior Lumber says, 'Make few items, and do it better than anyone else,' we say, 'choose an earth raper, and destroy them.'"* During the whole of 2001, various ELF cells struck targets such as the University of Idaho Biotechnology building, various Bank of New York branches and an Old Navy on Long Island, a Nike outlet in Minnesota, and a genetically-modified cotton plant in California. In addition to this, a separate Northwest cell was spiking trees across Oregon, rendering entire portions of land purchases un-loggable. The actions and methods of the ELF were on the ascent, with the new cells proliferating at a quickening rate. However, there began to be signs of some impending calamity, some change in the weather.



attended the protests. Amongst them were other young people who had been brought up in the environmental movements and the struggle to save the Pacific Northwest forests. Daniel McGowan, Joyanna Zacher, Nathan Block and Susan Savoie were all to become members of the ELF cell and all contributed to the anarchist effort to directly attack the storefronts of businesses and banks, bypassing representation and moving directly into action. The now infamous Black Bloc began its corporate property destruction after the SPD [ed. – Seattle Police Department] had begun to pepper-spray and assault peaceful protesters blocking WTO delegates from their meeting. Despite this very clear sequencing, large segments of the unionists, mainstream environmentalists, and anti-globalization



\$1 million damages at Romania Chevrolet SUV dealership

In 2000, a man named Jeff Luers torched three SUVs at a dealership in Eugene. Unfortunately, he was being followed by undercover agents and was arrested shortly after his action. In March, the ELF cell decided to avenge his pending conviction. Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and William Rodgers planned with another two new members to torch ten times more cars than Luers. It was decided that everyone participating in this action should not be Eugene residents. The two new members, Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher, were involved in the environmental and metal scenes in Olympia and had met William Rodgers there. **The group of five proceeded to the [same] Romania Chevrolet Truck Center in Eugene and torched 35 SUVs. In reference to Jeff Luers, the cell wrote in their communique, "The techno-industrial state thinks it can stop the growing resistance by jailing some of us, but they cannot jail the spirit of those who know another world is possible."**

Shortly after this, ten members of the cells decided to stage a double hit against two targets in different states on May 21st, 2001. One would be the Jefferson Poplar Farm in Clatskanie, Oregon, while the other would be the UW Horticultural Center in Seattle. The former was chosen because it was believed that genetically modified trees were being grown there. The latter was chosen because a specific professor had his offices in the building and because he conducted genetic research on poplar trees.

Meyerhoff and the four new members, Savoie, McGowan, Block, and Zacher traveled south to the poplar farm. A separate team of five composed of Rodgers and four other new members traveled north to Seattle. The new members were Justin Solondz, Briana Waters, Jennifer Kolar, and Lacey Phillabaum. Before embarking on their journeys, the cell utilized Olympia as its home base and used the houses of their friends to make their incendiary devices. **At the poplar farm in Oregon, the first group set two structures and eighteen**

vehicles on fire. They also tagged the words ELF and YOU CANNOT TAME WHAT IS WILD on the wall of a nearby barn. The damage from this action caused nearly \$1,000,000 in damage. The communique issued for this action stated that the group "torched Jefferson Poplar

because hybrid poplars are an ecological nightmare threatening native biodiversity in the ecosystem. Our forests are being liquidated and replaced with mono-cultured tree farms so greedy, earth raping corporations can make more money."

The Seattle arson completely destroyed Merrill Hall at UW [and 13 SUVs], resulting in over \$3,000,000 worth of damage. **The group of five waited nearby, listening to their scanners, and did not leave until they heard confirmation that their fires were raging.** The group then returned to Olympia. Shortly after the simultaneous attacks against these producers of genetically modified plants, it was discovered that neither establishment was actively engaged in genetic modification at the time [ed. – since this has been proved untrue; the University of Washington's own website cited the professor whose research was targeted as "just one of many UW professors using genetic modification in their research", with a grant from the timber industry]. For several of the cell members, this was a terrible shock and caused Daniel McGowan, Brianna Waters and several others to leave the group.

And then September 11th happened. Already considered domestic terrorists, the ELF cell now had to be even more careful in the new climate of fear. Despite this and the problems with the previous action, a group composed of mostly old members decided to return to its roots and destroy another wild horse corral. In the summer of 2001, Joseph Dibee and Chelsea Gerlach had done reconnaissance of a Bureau of Land Management wild horse corral in Northern California. After choosing to attack this specific corral, Dibee asked Kevin Tubbs, one of the founders of the cell, to participate. Next, he asked Darren Thurston and Rebecca Rubin to be involved. Once they agreed, he picked up the two Canadian citizens after they illegally crossed the border and brought them to his house in Seattle.

Tubbs and Meyerhoff soon joined the three and they began making their incendiary devices. After making the last of their preparation, the group traveled to Olympia where they joined up with several unknown individuals. From there, they traveled to Eugene to pick up Tubbs before finally arriving near the corral on October 14th, 2001. **Shortly after midnight on October 15th, the group let the horses out of the corral and then placed their incendiary devices throughout the structure. With the fire burning behind them and the horses running wild, the group returned to Olympia.** Dibee, Thurston and Rubin continued north to Seattle. On October 16th, Jenifer Kolar returned Thurston and Rubin to their border crossing and the pair re-entered Canada. There, Thurston issued the communique for the action.

And so it was that the various members of the once powerful ELF cell returned to their respective towns of Eugene, Olympia, Seattle and Vancouver. The arson of the horse corral was to be their final action and the hysteria of 9/11 only cemented their conviction to cease their activities. Some wanted to continue attacking, even going so far as to suggest committing targeted assassinations against high capitalists and leaders of industry. Ultimately, however, the group freed one last group of wild horses and then scattered themselves across the Northwest. Other cells continued to act in the region, but this particular group of people moved on to different projects. No one suspected them, nor could anyone imagine they had lit up the nights with fire and caused a panic in the timber industries of the the Pacific Northwest. Their lives from hereon out were varied and complex...

After the disbanding of the cell, the arsonists and saboteurs dispersed into their new lives, scattering themselves across the country. **We do not have the means to narrate the stories of each person who participated in the ELF actions nor what they did once the cell came to an end. Nevertheless, we will provide a few stories about some of the people we respect.** As you will find out next, not all of the people who participated



in the assault against capitalism remained loyal to each other.

Joseph Dibee lived in Seattle after having participated in three arsons, including the synchronized attacks against two targets in Olympia. Oddly enough, he found employment with Microsoft and eventually contributed much technical expertise to the Internet Explorer browser. His work became his life and he sometimes spent 100 hours in the office. The same feverish personality that led him from a life of activism to urban guerrilla warfare seemed to still burn inside him even while he worked for one of the two major computer companies. Outside of work he went on hikes, kayaked, flew planes, scuba-dived, and explored the natural world he loved and had striven to protect. He was well-liked by his friends and co-workers. Apparently, his services were much appreciated by Microsoft as well.

Daniel McGowan, the young man who wandered into the Pacific Northwest and fell in love with the remnants of untamed nature, eventually returned his birthplace: New York City. He had grown up in a Catholic family and his father had worked as a cop for the NYPD. After rejecting a life in business, something his father frowned upon, Daniel had chosen the life of an activist. When he returned home, he eventually found employment with WomanLaw.org, a nonprofit group that helps victims of domestic violence avoid the traps and pitfalls of the judicial system. He met a woman named Jennifer and eventually married her, his new life becoming simple and increasingly removed from his previous one as an urban guerrilla.

Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacker remained close to the world they came from. They were in the Olympia metal scene and lived as a couple in a small house in the woods on Delphi Road. Nathan eventually began growing pot and soon had forty plants with which he could support himself. He and Joyanna were well-liked and well-known amongst their friends. Even their landlord described them as very nice people.

Justin Solondz remained in Olympia for a while after the cell disbanded. At the time he was dating Brianna Waters, another member of the cell. Both of them had attended the Evergreen State College and together they fought to save a forest in Oregon, working with the townspeople and making a film of the popular struggle against the logging companies. We have limited access to the facts, but it is known that at some point he and Brianna Waters separated and in 2005 he traveled to Europe to begin a life of wandering.

While living these new lives, the world became increasingly bleak. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq took place, the public became infected with patriotic hysteria, and the housing bubble continued to bloom, creating new profits and expanding the market recklessly. It seemed as if everything that they had been fighting for had turned to nothing. All of the forests were coming down to build new developments on land that was once wild. The public was swept away into the netherworld, electing the overtly-fascist Bush administration for another term in 2004. Pockets of rebellion survived in some major cities but the fight against capitalism entered a low period in the US, and a sense of defeat hung heavy in the air.



Though it may not be widely recognized as such, everyone in this country experienced a fascist coup following the attacks of September 11th. A small group of people took power and drastically altered the entire social landscape, first by providing cheap housing and easy credit to the public and then by cashing out, leaving everyone else to fend for themselves. In Chile, on September 11th, 1973, another group of fascists seized power and proceeded to turn the entire country into an experiment from which a small group of people could extract profits and then vanish.

The former members of the ELF cell lived through the rising fascism as best they could, always aware of the gravity their past actions held in the current political climate. Rather than see an uprising against the world system that was killing the planet, our protagonists beheld a public that continued to willingly plunge into its own destruction. **All of them grew apart, numbing themselves to the horror unfolding around them, learning to live inside of it and survive as best as possible.**

We do not know what the exiled ELF fighters would have gone on to do had they not been caught, but based on appearances they did not engage in clandestine struggle ever again and many of them permanently renounced their former tactics. When they were apprehended, the most hidden and rotten parts of the former fighters came to the surface. Only the strongest held onto themselves through the hell that we will describe...

After the final actions of the Northwest ELF cell in 2002, the strength of the national environmental began to fade. The tactical and theoretical unity of the anti-globalization era no longer kept people together and working for a common purpose. The majority of the mainstream support that had once bolstered the larger environmental network was slowly absorbed into green capitalism, becoming infatuated with corn-based fuels, windmills, and soy products.

Simultaneously, the effort to discredit the data regarding global warming reached a disturbing high and was accompanied by the overt fascism being stoked by the Bush administration. It was in the midst of this counter-revolution, with the forces of order and reaction destroying the gains of the anti-globalization movement, that the FBI began what was to become known as the Green Scare^[1].

It started simply enough. The FBI had a small lead and one suspect.

His name was Jacob Ferguson, the young man who had also helped start the ELF cell. The FBI brought him in for questioning, threatened to put him in jail, and told him he would not see his son for decades. Although they only suspected him of a few minor acts of arson and doubted they could even connect him to them, the fearful Ferguson quickly revealed everything he knew about the activities of the cell. Much to the surprise of the FBI, this young man had participated in nearly every attack carried out by the cell. Totally consumed by fear, Ferguson agreed to act as an informant.

In 2005, Ferguson wore a wire and went on an FBI-funded trip across the country to meet up with his former comrades. **He went to New York City and recorded a conversation with Daniel McGowan in which he was able to manipulate his old friend into admitting guilt to several arsons. When Ferguson brought up the possibility of someone becoming an informant, McGowan replied that it would be "some Judas shit."** Ferguson conducted similar operations against Stan Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and William Rogers, otherwise known as Avalon. With the information that Ferguson collected,

the FBI began to organize the logistics for taking down the entire cell.

On December 7th, 2005, the FBI arrested seven people in different locations across the country. Just over a month later, three more people were arrested in what the FBI called Operation Backfire. Josephine Overaker, Rebecca Rubin, Joseph Dibee, and Justin Solodnz were able to escape apprehension. When the captured members of the cell learned the extent of Ferguson's treachery, the same fear that possessed him began to infect their minds. Having left behind their guerrilla activity, many of the former fighters had grown used to the comforts of a normal and affluent life. It was the fear of losing this that drove the majority of the cell to begin testifying against each other.

The worst casualty of this betrayal was Avalon. Once he learned that most of his comrades were going to collaborate against each other, he wrote a simple goodbye note that read: "To my friends and supporters to help them make sense of all these events that have happened so quickly: Certain human cultures have been waging war against the Earth for millennia.

I chose to fight on the side of bears, mountain lions, skunks, bats, saguaros, cliff rose and all things wild. I am just the most recent casualty in that war. But tonight I have made a jail break – I am returning home, to the Earth, to the place of my origins. Bill, 12/21/05 (the winter solstice.)" After writing this note, Avalon put a plastic bag over his head and killed himself inside his prison cell.

By the end of Operation Backfire, only Daniel McGowan, Jonathan Paul, Joyanna Zacher, and Nathan Block refused to testify against any of their former comrades or each other. All of the others made selfish and cowardly deals in order to preserve the privileges and comforts they had come to value over the earth they once fought to protect. Whether they betrayed each other or not, each convicted member of the cell generally received 4-7 years each. Except for Jacob Ferguson. He received no jail time.

Despite this, multiple other ELF cells continued to operate in the greater Puget Sound area during this time. On April 13th, 2005, an ELF cell burnt down a house that was part of a new golf course subdivision in Sammamish. They left a message painted on a bed sheet that read "Where are all the trees? Burn, rapist, burn. E.L.F."

Between July 27th and July 29th, another cell burnt down two [uninhabited] homes built in what had once been forests in Whatcom County. Starting on November 25th and lasting until the end of January, 2006, the ELF burnt down houses and construction equipment in Bothell, Kenmore, and Camano Island every week and half. While there is no direct confirmation, this offensive could be seen as retaliation for the arrests taking place during this time period.

Just as Briana Waters was being sentenced for her role in the infamous UW arson in March, 2008, another ELF cell burnt down four multimillion dollar Street of Dreams houses in Woodinville. This was to be the biggest environmental arson in the Puget Sound area and served as a reminder that the fight to save the planet still had life left in it. Law enforcement who responded to the inferno found a bed sheet nearby with these words painted on it: "Built Green? Nope black! McMansions in rural cluster developments are not green. ELF."

We will conclude the story of the Northwest ELF. For now, take comfort in the fact that the dream some of them once had survived repression, suicide, betrayal, and entrapment. It lives on still in dozens of cells across the planet, fighting for the health and continuity of the earth.

While the Green Scare of 2006 may have been the end for one particular cell, the repression certainly did not stop the idea and concept of the ELF from growing. In the immediate aftermath of the arrests, multiple new houses were burnt by cells in



they threw multiple Molotov cocktails at the facilities for the new metro line, the construction of which had already resulted in evictions and tree clearing. Then the group destroyed a large telephone wire box belonging to Telmex^[2], rendering over 100 lines useless. In addition to this, they completely destroyed eight telephone booths owned by the same company. Finally, the group burnt an ATM at a Banamex bank. The communique claiming this action ends, "How beautiful it is to see revenge of the exploited and the oppressors squeezed! How beautiful is the fire that frees! How beautiful is the abolitionist fire of the anti-authoritarians! No to metro line 12! Stop the deforestation and the displacement of entire families! For every eviction or abuse of power... fire in the streets!"

Although not officially claimed by the ELF, this group operated in the same manner and their action signaled the beginning of a new offensive against the destroyers of the earth. A few months later, the *Frente de Liberación de la Tierra* (ELF) burnt a construction machine that was being used to build a new campus at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in DF. They also destroyed the new administrative offices in the campus.



Lobby, truck & two vans of an industrial poultry operation arsoned in Athens, Greece, by E.L.F. 'Synapses of Ignition for the Polymorphous Anarchist Struggle', 13.05.15

In the beginning of their communique they write, "We were informed that the university had been destroying a large part of the ecological reserve where a so-called 'education' center is being built. Several

Guelph, Ontario. The communique issued after these arsons contained language against unrestrained development and were dedicated to the memory of Avalon, a member of the Northwest cell who killed himself while imprisoned by the state.

And then, in the last days of 2008, a group calling itself Eco-Anarchist Cell For Direct Attack decided to go on a spree in Mexico City (DF). First

varieties of trees and diverse plants were cut down, considered to be in the way of their ability to expand their facilities and their mastery over nature. The progress and education that they extol in their classrooms is always based on domination and anthropocentrism. In this act by the UNAM, it is more than clear that not only do they wish to dominate and mold the minds of students, they also seek to expand the same control over the land and the animals that inhabit her [sic].”

Over the course of 2009, ELF cells across Mexico began attacking targets in a diffuse offensive.

Telmex remained one of their primary targets, as did the practice and spectacle of bullfighting. Multiple groups and cells set barricades aflame in the middle of highways, burnt construction equipment, burnt police stations, and freed abused horses. In 2011, an ELF cell aligned with the Informal Anarchist Federation [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg80*] bombed a police station

in Coacalco. One month later, a different ELF cell burnt facilities belonging to the National Institute of Forestry, Agricultural, and Livestock Research in Texcoco. These facilities were used to do genetic research on plants. The attacks in Mexico continue to this day.

In Russia, the ELF has also found rich soil. In 2011 alone, there were dozens of instances of arson and sabotage committed by the ELF, the first of which was the torching of construction equipment in the forests outside Moscow on New Year’s Eve. Most of the activity centered around the defense of the Khimki forest, one of the few remaining wild places in the Moscow area.

The government and developers had plans to destroy it, put in a large freeway, and build housing and strip malls. In a rare development, the ELF and the general public had united in their efforts to stop development and had forced President Medvedev to halt the project in the

summer of 2010. A communique for an action in July of that year reads, “On July 17 2010 a tracked tree transporter was torched by a group of ELF activists. The action took place at the road construction site near Sheremetjevo airport in Khimki forest, North of Moscow, Russia. We support local activists in their fight against deforestation campaign of Moscow authorities, although we disapprove of their half-hearted liberal tactics.”

The battle for the Khimki forests has still not ended, but it represented a new era for the ELF. Unlike the schisms and splits that had occurred in the US between the environmental movement and the ELF guerrillas, the two sides in Russia were able to work together in their fight against Moscow and the international development companies. When suddenly the president himself suspended the project, it was as if the endless circle of history had been broken and for once, a group of humans using a diversity of tactics was united against the exploitation of the earth.

The last action [at time of writing] related to the defense of the forest took place on July 21st, 2012^[3]. The full communique reads, “After having received news of new tree-cutting activity in Khimki forest, we decided to visit the workers. We aimed for 2 trucks and excavator parked on the clear cut. They were completely destroyed. Our solidarity goes out to eco-activists who broke the arm of private guard who was guarding the clear cut (this piece we learned from news). Enough of pseudo-legalism! Do like us, do better than us.”

The rulers of the world will never succeed in wiping out any of these groups, including the ELF. While the cell in the Northwest may have been arrested and neutralized, their efforts and examples live on from Indonesia to Mexico, from Russia to Chile. We wish everyone good luck, especially YOU.



28.07.10: After an attack on their camp by Nazis hired by the construction firm, Vinci, opponents of the Khimki felling storm City Hall by the hundred (while police forces are massed at the forest cutting) with fireworks, stones, air-guns and smoke-bombs, hacking down the door with an axe. Cops flee, two cop cars molotoved. Soon after over the border in Belarus, Russia's embassy is hit by molotovs in solidarity with the struggle, as was the same with paint-bombs in Istanbul, Turkey.

'BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON'

Last night, November 4th [2009], we went out among friends by the light of the moon in order to sabotage companies that destroy the environment.

This time it was CARSO’s turn, a firm linked to CICSA, one of whose owners is the bastard son of Carlos Slim; it is also one of the companies that, together with ICA and ALSTOM, is currently destroying large portions of ecosystems with the construction of a new metro line in Mexico City, imposing their damned progress on animal species and different types of trees.

A construction site belonging to CARSO was found on the outskirts of the outer Mexican expressway network in Mexico State by crossing the expressway and a sewage canal. The terrain was perfect; many trees covered our dark shadows.

Armed with our backpacks, masked up and full of resolve, we crossed the lanes with automobiles passing by at high speed, jumped the small barbed wire fence, and then cut the wires in order to make our escape easier; previously we had made a path in order to go down the hill covered by grass and weeds growing around the banks of the canal, so we followed the path and found ourselves behind a tree, where we divided our equipment and split up.

Some comrades went to the left and others went to the right; the signal to start attacking was the flash from a Molotov, which sadly was not what we expected,

but the menacing fire that illuminated the walled-in CARSO construction site began, followed by a shower of stones, bottles, and acid bombs (made with marbles and small metal objects). Federal Police (PF) inside the site started to come out in order to see who was attacking them, but they were unsuccessful, because after something was thrown we took cover behind the trees and branches. **When our escape began, the police could not come over to stop us because the sewage canal separated us from them, and they had no path or bridge by which to cross it.** Before leaving the terrain, we flung explosives made from dynamite, paper, and a fuse, combined with metal objects for greater destructive power. These weapons exploded, leaving an echo in the middle of the night and alerting the wicked Federal Police.

This attack was not only against a construction site that is destroying the environment, it was also against the police, as we demonstrate that we can be strong if we intend to and if we fight for what we want.

Solidarity with the prisoners and people under investigation in Guadalajara, Mexico City, León, Mexico State, and the world!

Because we all have something of Barry [Horne]^[1] in us whenever we leave words behind and start acting, we remember him with this action!

– Earth Liberation Front

1. ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg64*

1. ed – Named in reference to the 'Red Scare' of the 1940's and '50's, which also saw legal and extralegal action by the U.S. government (against those accused of communist or anarchist sympathies or activity), aiming to harshly punish a few individuals in order to repress many more.

2. ed. – As comrades of those lands noted, "Telmex is a company that not only promotes bullfights, damages and destroys the planet with its telephone antennas, promotes massive lazy stupidity with its internet cables, and gives people cancer with its telephones and telephone antennas; Telmex also builds private prisons and prisons with private-federal investors in Mexico. Carlos Slim, the owner of this Mexican monster is also owner and co-owner of other companies that participate in megaprojects of urbanization, gentrification and environmental destruction, companies such as ICA, for example.

[...] In this scenario of attack, Telmex has always been a target of anarchists and other groups fighting for animal or earth liberation, and we see no reason why today, when Telmex is acquiring another major role as a prison-building company that supports the idea of prison, it should stop being one. Evidence of the attacks against this company is the fact that, from 2001 to 2012, 696 attacks were carried out – of those that were recorded – against Telmex properties around the country (attacks that consisted of the destruction or disabling of telephone booths, destruction of telephone and internet control boxes, burning of company trucks, burning telephone towers, a bomb threat at Carlos Slim's Plaza Delta Mall, an arson attack at a Telmex collections office), actions carried out from various perspectives and motives, but always with the intent to sabotage the communications monster. The most recent actions reported were the burning of a company truck in January 2016 and the disabling of 13 telephones in Ciudad Nez, State of Mexico, on June 17, 2016.

Sabotaging this company isn't as difficult as people think. According to what we've seen, the majority have been sabotages easily reproduced by anyone, such as disabling payphones. Some have been burned, others destroyed with a firework set off with a cigarette embedded on the wick as a timer, and many more sealed with rubber cement and paperclips. In the best cases, disabling telephone and internet control boxes have been done with rudimentary incendiary devices or with acid sprinkled on the cables inside the box, or simply cutting the small cable lines. Against telephone poles (not cell towers) some have opted to knock them down or have simply cut the wiring. Against trucks belonging to this ecocidal company, rudimentary incendiary devices have done their jobs well. But above all it is the creativity that materializes from our desires for the spread of sabotage and its replicability. There is no difference between big or small sabotage, they are all indispensable in the process of insurrection.



July 2011: excavator clearing forest in Sörmland, Sweden, gets cables cut, E.L.F. tagged, then fire-bombed

We are not for "striking a blow at the heart of the state," as along with this claim being part of the logic of the taking of power, it otherwise would delimit the insurrectionary goal into a centralized attack when part of the goal is that sabotage spreads and is not a single attack every now and then carried out by a group of professionals, but rather many daily attacks against a world that stifles freedom, carried out by those who want to, as every attack is liberating. Nor are we for "hitting where it hurts," as along with this claim smacking of the quantitative, it delimits the insurrectional goal into attacks against a single structure within the pillar of domination, when part of the goal is the generalization of revolt, that the attacks be against all aspects of domination or that the goal be to attack, from the largest to the smallest, at an individual or affinity group level. Besides, hitting where it hurts, does the occasional – due to the need for specialization – attack really hurt? Why settle for what hurts the system? Why not destroy it? For us, revolt and insurrection are daily acts that take place within ourselves and are externalized from us as strikes against power.

We are in favor of an anarchy that understands attack as multiform and daily, carried out by those who desire to be free in the here and now, far from all specialization and professionalization (of the pen and the act). We understand anarchy as a tension with what exists, as a project for the destruction of power, and we are fighting to build a reality of struggle and true confrontation with domination. Telmex is just one of the pillars that sustain power, the state and capitalism. Telmex has many branches ready to receive an attack from those freedom-seeking individuals".

3. ed. – See **Special Hydraulic Fracture** for more recent action around the Khimki defence. Earlier, workers' sheds had been molotoved, and 12mm carbine weapons fired on site machinery.

"For nearly two centuries, pre-luddites throughout Europe delayed the widespread use of new machinery. Their outrage and sabotage moved town councils and emperors alike to ban the new inventions. But in the meantime, the political power of the merchants grew, new opportunities to sell textiles opened up in the form of overseas markets, and the downtrodden came to accept their position and identify as workers, and thus would react more to their exclusion from work than to their much deeper oppression, the loss of skill and handicraft, the further expulsion from the land represented by the move from cottage to factory labor. Once these changes were cemented, the political elite reversed their position, advanced the interests of the merchants and industrialists, and protected the machinery like a sacred object, with lethal force. The luddites are remembered, curiously enough, because they lost. In being crushed, they could be presented as backwards, archaic, an inverse symbol for progress."

– Jason Radegas & Lev Zlodey

"An Outrageous Spirit of Tumult & Riot"

"John Goodair had a factory in Stockport, Cheshire, the size of a city block with eight thousand spindles and two hundred looms.

On April the 14th 1812 a mob of two to three thousand (in a parish of only fifteen thousand) descended on his mill and mansion after smashing the windows of other industrialists' houses. At noon, led by two men dressed as women who proclaimed they were 'General Ludd's wives', the crowd stormed his mansion. The following is part of a letter written by his wife: "Everything, I have since learnt, was consumed by the fire, and nothing left but the shell. The mob next proceeded to the factory, where they broke the windows, destroyed the looms, and cut all the work which was in progress; and having finished this mischief, they repeated the three cheers which they gave on seeing the flames first from our dwelling. It is now nine o'clock at night, and I learn the mob are more outrageous than ever..."

– *Rebels Against the Future*

In fifteen months at the beginning of the second decade of the [19th] century a movement of craft workers and their supporters declared war on the then emerging industrial society.

The movement spread across the Northern counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. It smashed thousands of machines, looted markets, burned down factories and spread hope of a way out of the bleak future being offered the majority of the British people. It was a movement that, in the words of the late radical historian E.P. Thompson; "in sheer insurrectionary fury has rarely been more widespread in English History".

It is important to understand the birth of industrialism. If we are to successfully dismantle the present system, it is essential to know how – and why – it was constructed.

The Birth of the New Society & the Destruction of the Old

The elites that built up Industry had been growing in power, and the ideas and technologies that allowed them to grow had been festering for centuries. Its conception may have been long before, but its birth was a sudden calamity that accelerated change in society at an unprecedented rate. The Industrial Revolution, from roughly 1780 to 1830, mutated everything. It altered the way the majority of people lived, first in Britain and now all over the world. Just as societies are being shaped all over the globe into one monoculture; so the life systems of the

planet are also changing unrecognisably. The results of the society that was born in those 50 years will rebound through millions of years of evolutionary change. Norman Myers, a leading biodiversity scientist, has said: *"The impending upheaval in evolution's course could rank as one of the greatest biological revolutions of paleontological time. In scale and significance, it could match the development of aerobic respiration, the emergence of flowering plants and the arrival of limbed animals."*

Change beyond imagination.

But change has to burst forward somewhere, and it burst forward here in Britain.

Lancashire, say 1780: *"The workshop of the weaver was a rural cottage, from which when he tired of sedentary labour he could sally forth into his little garden, and with the spade or the hoe tend its culinary productions. The cotton wool which was to form his weft was picked clean by the fingers of his younger children, and the yarn was carded and spun by the older girls assisted by his wife, and the yarn was woven by himself assisted by his sons..."*⁴¹

A family often had no single employer but hired its looms, supplied with the raw materials by businessmen who then marketed the finished products. Workers had a large amount of control over their own labour. They produced only enough to keep themselves comfortable and if the fancy took them they might not work for days. Even after the enclosures took away large amounts of common land they subsisted for a great percentage on what they grew in their gardens. Basically they shaped their work around their lives, rather than their lives around their work. These were a strong people.

Lancashire, say 1814: *"There are hundreds of factories in Manchester which are five or six stories high. At one side of each factory there is a great chimney which belches forth black smoke and indicates the presence of the powerful steam engines. The smoke from the chimneys forms a great cloud that can be seen for miles around the town. The houses have become black on account of the smoke. The river upon which Manchester stands is so tainted with colouring matter that the water resembles the contents of a dye-vat.... To save wages mule Jennies have actually been built so that no less than 600 spindles can be operated by one adult and two children.... In the large spinning mills machines of different kinds stand in rows like regiments in an army."*

Insurrections and riots were so common throughout the preceding centuries that the

English poor have been characterised as one of the greatest mobs of all time. The spectre of revolution in France and America left the English rich with the realisation that they were walking on a knife edge: or more accurately that of a guillotine.

Enclosure had given the new ruling class greater control over the land but crafts people still constituted a major counter current to the prevailing order. They had to be domesticated.

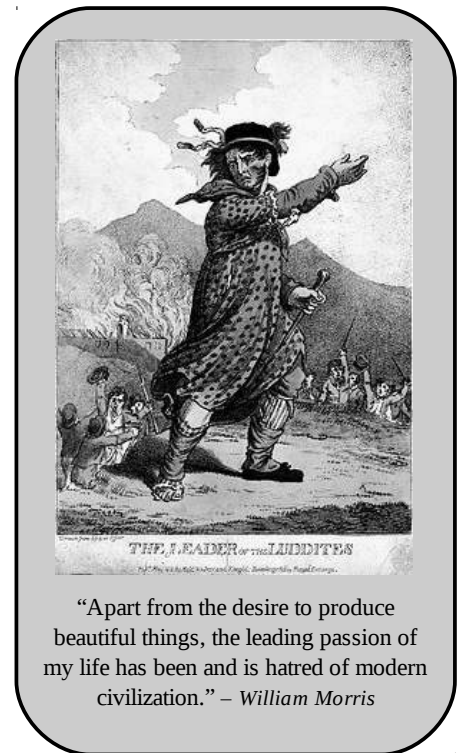
Factories were not built simply because of technological innovations, but more as a project of social control to limit the power of the 'poor'. To break their spirit.

In 1770, a writer envisioned a new plan for making the poor productive: The House of Terror, in which the inhabitants would be obliged to work for 14 hours a day and controlled by keeping them on a starvation diet. **His idea was not that far ahead of its time; a generation later, the House of Terror was simply called a factory.** Andrew Ure, one of the greatest proponents of Industry, wrote in 1835: *"If science was put to the service of capital, the recalcitrant worker's docility would be assured"*.

Factories meant regimented and unprecedented work hours, horrific pollution, dangerous working conditions, unsanitary living space with virulent diseases, early death, a starvation diet and a total lack of freedom. Nobody entered the factory system willingly. Men, war widows, young women and very often children, lived in a system one Yorkshire man described in 1830 as: *"[a] state of slavery more horrid than ... that hellish system – Colonial Slavery"*. These workers, who one doctor surveying Manchester in 1831 described as *"a degenerate race – human beings stunted, enfeebled, and depraved"*, were the refugees of a destroyed society.

Just as small farmers had been pushed off their land by enclosure, so the crafts people were purposefully pushed from relative autonomy to a situation of dependence. Whole regions, thousands of communities were broken up and reorganised to suit the wishes of the factory owners. Much of the populace were thrown aside to starve, or forced to become wage slaves in factories literally modelled after prisons. Cities and misery multiplied.

Petitions were handed to parliament, meetings and rallies were held but nothing came of it. With nobody to turn to but themselves, the weavers took direct action.



"Apart from the desire to produce beautiful things, the leading passion of my life has been and is hatred of modern civilization." – William Morris

The Birth of Luddism

"The night of November 4th, a Monday, was cloudy but still not winter-cold. In the little village of Bulwell, some four miles north of Nottingham, a small band gathered somewhere in the darkness and ... blackened their faces or pulled up scarves across their faces, counted off in military style, hoisted their various weapons- hammers, axes, pistols, "swords, firelocks, and other offensive weapons" (as one report had it) – and marched in more or less soldierly fashion to their destination. Outside the house that was most likely the home of a master weaver named Hollingsworth they posted a guard to make sure no neighbours interfered with their work, suddenly forced their way inside through shutters or doors, and destroyed half a dozen frames.... Reassembling at some designated spot, the little band responded in turn to a list of numbers called out, and when each man had accounted for himself a pistol was fired and they disbanded, heading home.

A week later, this time on a Sunday night, the workers attacked again: same procedure, same target, only this time Hollingsworth was ready. In preparation for a renewed attack, he had sent some of his frames to Nottingham for storage and had arranged for seven or eight of his workers and neighbours to stand watch with muskets over the seven frames remaining. When the attackers approached the house they demanded that Hollingsworth let them in or surrender his frames, and when he refused a shot rang out and a fusillade of eighteen or twenty shots was exchanged.

One young man, a weaver from the nearby village named John Westley was shot –

while "tearing down the window shutters to obtain entrance by force" ... before he died he had just time to exclaim "Proceed, my brave fellows, I die with a willing heart!". His comrades bore the body to the edge of a nearby wood and then returned "with a fury irresistible by the force opposed to them" and broke down the door while the family and the guards escaped by the back door.

They then smashed the frames and apparently some of the furniture, and set fire to the house, which was a gutted ruin within an hour; the men dispersed into the night, never identified, never caught. That same night just a few miles away in Kimberly, another group of men raided a shop and destroyed ten or twelve frames...

On Tuesday a cart carrying eight or nine looms to safety from the Maltby and Brewwet firm in Sutton, fifteen miles north of Nottingham, was stopped ... and men with their faces

blackened smashed its cargo with heavy hammers, bent the metal parts to uselessness, and made a bonfire of the wooden pieces in the middle of the street.



That evening a thousand men descended on Sutton from nearby villages, assembling at a milestone on the main road to the north, and marched on the town with their axes and pikes and hammers; about three hundred of them were said to be armed with muskets and pistols. The number of machines they broke is given as somewhere between thirty-seven and seventy, said to be "the frames of the principal weavers" of the town, one of whom, named Betts, whose shop was completely destroyed, was reported to have died soon after, "deranged."^[2]

Luddism had begun.

An Outrageous Spirit of Tumult & Riot

With weavers' taverns acting as rallying points, news spread from village to village. Inspired by the success of the first actions, communities all over the North started to act. At least a hundred frames were attacked in the last week of November, another hundred and fifty or more in December.

"There is an outrageous spirit of tumult and riot," the magistrates of Nottingham told the public in November 1811. "Houses are broken into by armed men, many stocking frames are destroyed, the lives of opposers are threatened, arms are seized,

haystacks are fired, and private property destroyed."

The spirit of rebellion rapidly spread across the Northern counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

Posters were pinned up on the doors of offending workshops, warning them to concede to the demands of 'Ned Ludd's Army' or suffer the consequences. For many businessmen the threat worked as well as the act.

Most luddite literature makes reference to 'General Ludd' but there was no such leader. Instead it was a reference to a (conceivably true) folktale of the time. The story goes that a Nottingham lad at the end of the previous century had been enraged with his loom and had set his hammer to it.

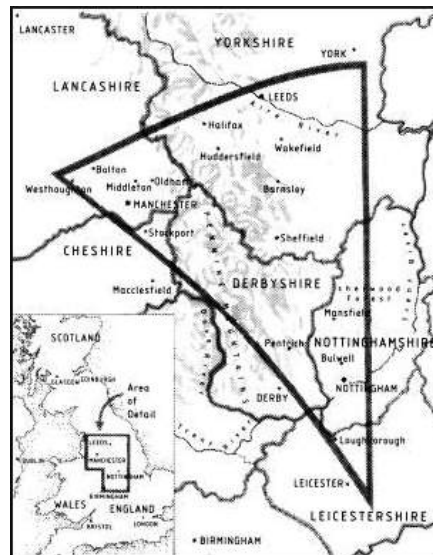
Machine destruction had been a tactic of the weavers and their kind since at least midway through the previous century. What was different about the Luddites was exactly the opposite of how many imagine them. Read many accounts, especially those written by supporters of the trade unions, and the Luddites

come across as mindless and disorganised, who if born a few centuries later would probably be kicking in bus shelters. True, Luddism was not the act of pre-organised political groups. However it was often *much more powerful*; a defensive reaction of communities under threat.

The blackfaced figures marching over fields towards the hated factory had probably known each other since they were kids. They had played at similar 'games' (maybe 'hunting the French') as gangs of children. They had been brought up with stories of struggle, in which the actors were as often as not their parents, grandparents or 'im down the pub'.

Though actions in nearby villages would often be done at the same time to stretch the soldiers, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any serious co-ordination across the counties. But such co-ordination was probably unnecessary and dangerous.

Many Luddite attacks included women (although unsurprisingly this was not the norm). On the 24th April 1812, a very successful attack was carried out on a mill outside Bolton only an hour or so after the



soldiers sent to protect it had left. "About fifty assembled near the mill...[descending on it]... they smashed through the gates and started to break windows in the mill, led by two young women, Mary Molyneux, 19, and her sister Lydia, 15, who were seen, according to court papers, "with Muck Hooks and coal Picks in their hands breaking the windows of the building"... shouting "Now Lads" to encourage the men on. With the windows broken, men took straw from the stables and set a series of fires inside: "The whole of the Building," wrote the Annual Register correspondent, "with its valuable machinery, cambrics, &c, were entirely destroyed."^[3]

The spirit of revolt spread well beyond the confines of the textile workers. Riots broke out in many towns and food was redistributed. The whole of the north-west was verging on insurrection.

Hangmen, Prison Ships, Spies & Battalions: The State fights back

[...] Battalions of soldiers were sent to the North. But with the eyes and ears of the community protecting them, the Luddites were often one step ahead. No intelligence system in the world is better than the collective solidarity of a community. Byron^[4] joyfully summed it up: "Such marchings and countermarchings! From Nottingham to Bulwell, from Bulwell to Banford, from Banford to Mansfield! And when at length detachments arrived at their destination, in all "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," they came just in time to witness what had been done, and ascertain the escape of the perpetrators, to collect the fragments of broken frames, and return to their quarters amidst the derision of old women and the hootings of children."

The state dramatically raised the stakes. Frame breaking itself was punishable only(?) by 14 years transportation to Australia. On March 5th 1812, a bill was

passed to make the breaking of machines an offence punishable by death.

With the normal means of suppression failing the state organised an army of occupation in the north-west. More and more soldiers were sent. By May 1812 there were 14,400, including thousands of cavalry men and full artillery units. **Three months before, the Home Secretary had admitted that the force sent to crush the Luddite rebellion in Nottinghamshire was the largest ever used in the history of the country.** But as of the 1st of May, an army seven times as large was operating in the 'Luddite Triangle'. The scale of the presence was such that one out of every seventy people in the counties was a soldier. There were a thousand soldiers stationed in Huddersfield, a town of only ten thousand.

[...] Professional spies were brought in, informers paid. Generous bribes for information (in what was for many a famine) were posted up. Communities, for the most, stayed strong. Surprisingly few turned traitor. However, many in the movement were scared into the inactivity. **Luddite attacks on frames decreased. But this wasn't solely because of the state.** True, the towns were awash with soldiers, but there weren't that many frames left to smash. Luddism changed form.

The Death of Luddism

To attempt to repeat the actions of the previous months would have been mad. Those luddites still active (a considerable number) changed tactics. Understanding that the rich had quite literally declared war, Ned Ludd's Army began to arm itself. Luddite gangs roamed through the counties gathering, by force, guns from any source they could.

"[John Lloyd, a government agent], told the Home Office that 'bodies of a hundred and upwards ... have entered houses night after night and made seizures of arms' ... Vice-Lieutenant Wood the same month reported that there had been 'some hundreds of cases' ... leading him to fear it would all end 'in open rebellion against the government of the country ...' A Parliamentary Committee reported in July 'considerable' theft of guns and ammunitions in most towns, and in Huddersfield of 'all of the arms' ... 'every article of lead', wrote a correspondent from the West Riding, 'such as pumps, water spouts is constantly disappearing to be converted into bullets.' ^[5]

[...] Although unions were technically illegal under the Combination Acts, courts often held them to be legal. **Many voices within the establishment saw the unions as a way to pacify the workers. When you're talking, you're not fighting.**

The unions themselves (then as now) told the workers to stay away from sabotage, and to negotiate with the factory owners rather than fight the system itself. In [John] Zerzan's words: *"Unionism played the critical role in [Luddism's] defeat, through the divisions, confusion, and deflection of energies the unions engineered."*

Less than a decade later, in 1825, the unions were officially recognised by the repeal of the Combination Acts – a measure supported by the majority of the British state.

The insurrection never came and Luddism slowly died, not with a grand finale but more with the actors leaving the stage one by one. The final event that can be accurately named Luddite came in June 1817. A state infiltrator named 'Oliver' convinced two hundred people from Pentrich, Derbyshire, to march out and join "a cloud of men" sweeping down from Scotland & Yorkshire on their way to London. Instead they were met by two mounted magistrates and a company of soldiers. Forty six were arrested, three of which were executed, fourteen transported to Australia and nine imprisoned.

Luddism was the last fitful struggle before, like a broken-in horse, the English poor lay down, resigned to wage slavery. The meagre struggles that followed rarely aimed at reclaiming peoples' lives from work; but merely getting a better deal for the slaves.

The poor started to identify themselves more and more with the idea of work, abhorrent only 50 years before. Concepts like the 'dignity of labour' and 'laziness is sin' multiplied. As Leopold Roc put it, *"There is always a tendency to rationalise insults when revenge does not take place."*

The strange belief spread that technologies created to bolster obedience and elite power were 'neutral' – and could exist in a free world – in fact were the key. The idea that we should organise our lives around work was the very opposite of what the Luddites stood for.

The workers' internalisation of industrial logic would be more disastrous than any army the manufacturers could muster. Even when the 'workers' movement seized power, its aim became to run industrialism itself. Revolutions came and went but to paraphrase the Anti-Election Alliance, 'Whoever you deposed, the industrial system always got in.' Party and trade union leaders easily made the transition to factory managers.

The internalisation of industrial logic by 'liberation' movements would lead to the 'revolutionary collectivisation' of the Soviet peasantry and its associated gulags, and many of the worst moments of the 20th Century. Whole generations were held both in slavery to industry and in awe of it.

The Rebirth of Luddism?

But many of us have begun, in recent years, to see industry for what is. To reject industrial logic and embrace our desires.

[...] Feeling out of place in this society, alienation is very painful. Much like realising that we are descended from apes, in fact are apes, gives us a feeling of innate connection with the rest of life. Walking the streets of Manchester or Leeds, knowing that you walk the same streets as machine-destroying, free-food distributing, prison-breaking crowds, gives one a feeling of being rooted.

Machine haters walk again in the Luddite Triangle[...] The successful campaign in the early 90's to stop peat extraction on Thorne Moors just outside Leeds, came to a close when saboteurs destroyed 100,000 worth of machinery. Two weeks later the company (Fisons) sold up. The Lancashire M65 campaign^[6] was a turning point in tree-based campaigns, and before the A30 Fairmile eviction^[7] was the longest eviction in British history.

[...] We are told by the media – the advance guard of the spectacle – to constantly change so that we can continue to be news. But nothing is truly new – with the exception of the scale and complexity of the problem. Our struggles are recent battles in an old war.



The 'Luddite Triangle' today: Yorkshire Dales 'national park' is torn apart by quarrying. In 2008 an aggregate processing plant had holes drilled in the engines and tyres of all their bulldozers, control rooms broken into and all computers and instrument panels smashed, as well as keys to all buildings and machinery stolen. 'Stop Glensanda' was sprayed on site (the company's Scottish super-quarry leveling 'Mam' and 'Lag a 'Mhaim' peaks).

The spectacle attempts to destroy its real history and that of its opponents while creating a sanitised version of the past, which it can then sell back to consumers as a commodity. When we learn about OUR history, our ancestors, it is both inspiring and instructive. By looking at past conflicts we can learn more about our 'new' ones. By learning about the mistakes of the past we may avoid making them in the future.

1. Quoted in 'Rebels Against the Future', by Kirkpatrick Sale

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*

4. – [T]he romantic poet [George] Byron, whose close friend (also a great poet) Percy Shelley set up a fund for Luddite orphans. Largely in reaction to Luddism his wife, Mary Shelley, wrote 'Frankenstein', still the most eloquent and beautiful treatise against the machine. Interestingly her parents were William Godwin, one of the founders of anarchism, and Mary Wolfenscraft, the founder of feminism. In a further historical twist, Byron left his first wife and his daughter was brought up to hate the values he stood for, nature and love; growing up instead to be obsessed with machinery and mathematics. Working with Babbage, inventor of the first computer, she founded programming. In honour, the US nuclear missile control computer is named after her.

5. – 'Rebels...'. [ed. – Three Luddites also ambushed and fatally shot mill owner William Horsfall of Ottiwells Mill (who had pledged that he would "ride up to his saddle in Luddite blood"), on Crosland Moor in Huddersfield.]

6. ed. – "The campaign began in May 1994 at Cuerden Valley which has now been totally devastated by Stage One of the £142 million (!) 12 mile M65 road extension, which stretches from Junction 29 on the M6 to Blackburn. There has been serious opposition since work began, with constant direct action, squatting of properties en route, and tree-sitting. The most well publicised period of the campaign has been

the recent defence of the Stanworth Valley 'Village in the Sky', at the beginning of Stage Two of the motorway. A small group of people squatted the ancient wood and despite the grim weather conditions, and lack of full time people over winter, they managed to construct the largest tree village in England, if not the world! There were over 40 tree houses ranging between 30 and 70 feet in the air protecting both sides of the approximately 100 metre wide valley. High tension cable walkways connected all the treetop homes and crossed over the River

Ribblesworth, that surged (due to the rain cloud vortex over Lancashire), through the middle of the valley" (It's (Not Really That) Grim Up North). The campaign added an extra £12.2 million onto the cost of the road, an important part of the historic mass resistance to what the government had in 1989 announced as "the biggest road building scheme since the Romans".

7. ed. – Fairmile anti-road occupation in east Devon, begun in 1994 and evicted in 1997.

"Last Wednesday in the evening a riotous mob of weavers, Sheermen, etc., assembled together and preceded to the town of Shepton Mallet [Somerset, south-west England] with an intent to destroy, under the cover of night, a spinning machine lately erected by the clothiers, for the advancement and benefit of the main factory, and to pull down the houses and take away the lives of those persons who encouraged and promoted the use of it. The mob attacked the poor house where the machines were worked, and before the soldiery could be had out to oppose them, broke into the same, and not only destroyed the particular objects of their resentment, but committed other injuries to a very considerable amount. They had scarcely effected their purpose, when the military, proceeded by the magistrates, advanced, and secured five of the ring leaders, but in conveying them to the prison they were attacked by the whole body, with an intention to effect a rescue. Driven to the extremity, no alternative was left – the command to level their pieces was given, and one man was killed on the spot, and six were wounded, some of them it is feared mortally. This intimidated the mob and they retired with the utmost precipitation." – *The Bath Chronicle*, 18.07.1776

"Protesters and security guards clashed repeatedly as fences were brought down around the bypass route. Around 150 people gathered in Alice Park for what was billed as a 'mass trespass'. They walked along the London Road to the southern entrance of the construction site, where security guards were waiting for them. While half the protesters attacked the gate, others pulled down an undefended part of the fence and streamed onto the site. Within minutes, they were wandering around the half built road near the water meadows, lights were ripped off construction vehicles and their windows were smashed. Demonstrators then turned their attention to the gate on the northern side of the A4. They hurled rocks at the guards at the other side, slid under the gate and shook the gate until it collapsed. Chief Inspector Paul Dennis of Bath police said: "Criminal damage was caused on some of the machinery. They then set about damaging fences and some were throwing rocks at security guards." He added that one protester had been arrested for criminal damage and one for assault.

Last night, 20 other demonstrators were occupying Bath police station, demanding to see their friends." – *The Bath Chronicle*, 13.03.1995

'THE CULT OF UTILITY'

Luddism was heir to the millenarian movement of the preceding centuries^[1], and although it no longer expressed itself as a universal and unifying theory it remained radically foreign to all political outlooks^[2][.] every economic pseudo-rationalism. [...] It was in Protestantism, and more precisely its Anglo Saxon Puritan variation, that the cult of utility and progress found its source and legitimacy. Having made religion a private affair, the Protestant ethic confirmed the social atomisation caused by industrialisation: individuals found themselves alone before God in the same way they found themselves isolated with respect to commodities and money. As well, it professed the precise values that were required of the poor: honesty, frugality, abstinence, thrift and work. [...] In the industrial areas, the union was the direct offspring of the chapel, and lay preachers were transformed into trade union representatives. **The campaign to civilize the poor that was conducted by the bourgeoisie gained the upper hand over social hatred only on the rebound. Once it had**

been relayed by the workers' representatives, who, in their struggles against their masters, now spoke the same language as they did. [...] It was during the second third of the 19th century, when the poor were subjected to the most degrading and mutilating conditions in every aspect of their lives, and when all resistance to the founding of the new capitalist order was defeated, that Marx, Engels and their followers madly greeted with satisfaction the birth of "the revolutionary army of work," and considered that the objective conditions for a victorious assault had finally come together.

1. The millenarian movements, active in Europe from the 13th to the 17th centuries, attempted to realize a Golden Age or state of grace in real life. They grew out of a messianic Christianity which saw temporal authority – church and state – as the anti-Christ and a hindrance to the arrival of the millennium, the 1000 year rule of Christ on earth. Its adherents flaunted economic, sexual, religious and civic taboos, using a wide variety of tactics – some of them violent – to achieve their utopia.

2. During the same period in France, the silk-workers uprisings, which were also directed against the process of industrial domestication, were on the contrary already contaminated by the political lie.

POWER DOWN

– no to the 735kV power line (Canada)

735,000 volts. This is what will pass through the new very high tension line that Hydro-Québec wants to construct as of this year. The trajectory of this line is 400km long and will transport electricity from the Chamouchouane central to Sanguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, passing through Lanaudiere, towards an eventual post that does not exist at the moment, in Terrebonne, called Judith-Jasmin. This will be linked to the Montreal region by a second segment of 19km towards the Bout-de-l'Île post. This is the most important hydro line in 20 years, estimated at 1.3 billion dollars. In fact, it's the 12th line of this scale in so-called "Québec".

But firstly, they need to clear-cut the path where pylons will be planted. The deforestation has already begun in the north and in Lanaudiere. It has caused multiple expropriations and partially crosses the hunting grounds of Attikamekws in the north, St-Michel-des-Saints, St-Zenon, Ste-Emelie-de-l'Energie, St-Alphonse-de-Rodriguez, Rawdon, etc.

The project has been contested by many residents, farmers and ecologists for the past 6 years: "Useless, environmentally devastating and economically unjustified" (Citizens Under High-Tension). Beyond any doubts, it is a categorical refusal. The BAPE (Bureau of Public Audiences on the Environment) has recommended the government wait until they have more information, to deepen the study of the impact and to take into consideration the opposition of the area. Nonetheless, the State has adopted a decree imposing the pursuit of the construction. Hydro-Québec gave 4 million dollars in compensation to the Regional County Municipality of Lanaudiere and another one million to Manawan as compensation to make them swallow their salads. But there are still people who oppose; most have land concerns, they are angry property owners because the value of their houses will decrease or because they have farms and their animals can't handle the strong electromagnetic fields of these high-tension lines. They refuse to sign the letters sent by Hydro-Québec that requests residents permission to cut trees on their lands as Hydro will not have compensated them personally in cash. In response Hydro is harassing them and has obtained an injunction. Even if it is heartwarming for people to be mobilizing

against Hydro-Québec, **this refusal only slows the process of systemic destruction and doesn't aspire to halt it.** We can even say that the motives of this opposition are absolutely contradictory to the desires of wild freedom that live in us. Our desire is to expand the field of possibilities, so we wish to propose other avenues to break the realization of this hydro project. As of this moment, the project is going ahead and the deforestation has already begun.

Another National Myth

The Hydro-Québec mafia has no interest in retreating faced with a project like this that represents enormous profit. In fact, the era of combustible fossil fuels is in decline [ed. – see **Special Hydraulic Fracture**]. Facing the drying up of petroleum resources, the costs of extraction and transportation have become too high. **The turn to green has been in the works for a few decades and in this context, hydro-electricity, perceived as a renewable and green energy, becomes a precious commodity.** The large global corporations of commerce and finance are in the process of restructuring and transforming the industry and transportation in order to adapt to "green energies". The new Minister of Transportation of Québec has for an innovative mission the electrification of public transportation with new hybrid and electrical vehicles. Electrical cars become more and more accessible, Hydro installs battery recharge stations in every corner of so-called "Québec", even field vehicles will be electric in the near future. And all this with the objective to maintain the speed and the productivity of the industry. The infrastructure projects of energy transportation, as with roads, railroads, ports, pipelines and airports, are indispensable to the expansion of industry, a tentacular project in itself.

A myth is built around hydro-electricity as a green and renewable energy source. We brag about it almost as if it was the national joy of so-called "Québec" with its numerous fresh water rivers of



high flow. In reality, we should perceive hydro-electricity as an exploitable resource, commodifiable as much as iron, uranium or petroleum. Today, the territory is completely disfigured, there remains only a few high flow rivers that haven't yet been invaded by dams. The electricity itself that they speak of is actually a gigantic enterprise of ecosystem destruction, of river pollution and the destruction of ways of life of communities that depend on the river for survival. When a dam is constructed, the river is blocked and a reservoir of water that floods a large surface of the territory is created. The river in question overflows from its bed near the dam and dries up along all its length. The trees and plants that have been flooded die and release methane and carbon dioxide into the water and the air. The methane and the carbon dioxide are greenhouse gases; it is reported that 12% of greenhouse gases emitted on the colonized lands of the Canadian State originate from hydro-electric dams. Another consequence of these floods is the methyl-mercury contamination of the water, originating from the release of fossilized inorganic mercury in the soil. Once the ground has been flooded by water, the mercury is released and transforms into methyl-mercury, a neurotoxin that is consequentially found in the food chain. The fish, animals and humans that consume it may develop a variety of illnesses, such as cardiovascular disorders and cancer. It has been accordingly discouraged for people to consume the fish of these rivers for a period of 30 years following the flooding of a basin. To summarize, the plentitude of fresh-water rivers of so-called "Québec", in the past potable, have all become toxic. The animals and the humans that depend on them for drinking water and food are poisoning themselves or losing a source of potable water. **As a result: thousands year-old ecosystems and ancestral forms of life disturbed and destroyed.**



The first intention of Hydro-Québec is evidently the creation of consumer markets with the United-States, with a pretty discourse singing praise for hydro-electricity as being cleaner than coal electricity. On their website, they make the comparison. What they don't say, is that its the shitty industry put in place with its logic of monopolization since the beginning of colonization by the Europeans 500 years ago that causes the destruction of life. Hydro-Québec therefore explores all the American markets and talks of even undertaking other projects of dam construction for the few fresh water rivers still intact. They obviously don't have any reservations regarding the real damages caused by their thirst for wealth.

The Bleeding of Electricity

Hydro-Québec owns approximately 62 hydro-electric centres. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the great rivers of the James Bay area and the North Shore have been used to feed a hydro-electric complex (i.e. the Caniapiscou, the Opinaca, the Eastmain and Ruper), and seriously disrupted following the installation of hydro-electric centers (i.e. Sainte-Marguerite, the Romaine and Toulnostouc). These famous high tension lines transport the electricity coming from the North and supplied to the entire province, its urban centers, its suburbs, its industries and its mines. As an example, supplying a single mine in heating and electricity, to render its below ground environment inhabitable for the people who work in it, is the equivalent energy consumption of a city like Trois-Rivieres. As those who oppose the project say, the province has no need to produce more electricity. In fact, most of the electricity produced is already surplus. At the moment we consume only 15% of the electricity produced, the rest is lost through transportation, or even wasted because it isn't profitable to stockpile it in batteries. Actually, if the produced current isn't consumed right away, its lost. Therefore, this 735,000 volt line will transport energy coming from the dams in the north: James Bay, Manicouagan, and the new dams of La Romaine on the North-Shore, **projects that have faced intense resistance by the inhabitants of the region during the past years.** The State accordingly justifies this project by saying the new dams provoke congestion on the existing lines.

Let's not forget that Hydro-Québec is a State company that has the monopoly on matters of electricity, that frequently gives contracts to companies with cloudy numbers, that imposes high fees, that expropriates land in exchange for ridiculously low compensation, and who works solely with the goal of favoring industry. Here, what is important to us goes far beyond the value of houses. There is the annihilation of the environment, a reality erased by all kinds

of false publicity of Hydro Québec. Because in reality, the energy of the industry comes from a carbon thermal center, nuclear reactors or hydroelectricity, **the paradigm stays the same:** productivity, the pillage of territories and the expansion of the market. No energy dedicated to industry could be clean.

We are fighting to re-appropriate our lives. We have the intention of destroying what destroys nature, because we need it to be well and live healthily. Industry, dams, mines, and deforestation are devastating parasites. It suffices to imagine being a bird flying in the sky contemplating the scenery to realize the devastation that has been initiated is irreversible, to see the holes in the forest, to see the flooded lands in the basins of the dams. We quickly understand that the ecology is far from being a priority of Hydro Québec and its shareholders. They pay themselves hunting and fishing trips in resorts for the rich, and appropriate the rest of the lands by buying cottages, they build chains and fences, put up signs that say "private property, access forbidden". Those responsible for these companies aren't entitled to forgiveness.

We honour all acts of resistance, we salute the courage of communities struggling for self-determination and wild freedom. We are those who oppose the ravaging deforestation in the forest of Ouareau, with the Cree who are opposed to the clear-cuts in the forest of Broadback, with Six Nations who are also fighting against deforestation in the Red Hill Valley related to the high tension line in the south of so-called "Ontario", with the Mi'kmaq who are fighting against fracked gas [ed. – see **Special Hydraulic Fracture**], with the Mohawks who threaten to block the Energy-East pipeline, with those who occupy Lax U'u'la (Lelu island) in blocking the construction of the Pacific Northwest LNG [ed. – *liquid natural gas*] terminal and with all the accomplices with wild and combative spirits.

In this very moment, deforestation of the company of the region has begun, as well as the establishment of access roads. There is still time to stop the construction and it isn't the State or any representative, even those with good will, who will help us. **What are we waiting for?**

WHEN NIGHT FALLS, THE BATS COME OUT TO DANCE

Last Tuesday, August 16, a widespread power failure plunged Hochelaga^[1] into darkness. *No more light in the streets, no more functioning cameras...* When we realized what was happening, we quickly exchanged knowing looks and smiled under the glow of candles. **We gathered our rain jackets and several tools, then left to play in the night.** The torrential rain had disrupted the stifling machine of the city and its system of surveillance. **The storm offered us a respite, a moment of chaos to not be missed. Completely drenched, with joyous hearts, we strolled in the streets, improvising our targets with excitement.** We took several precautions: planning an exit route for each location, and having lookouts. Darkness was our accomplice. We hurried to play until electricity returned, then headed to our homes without any problems.

We smashed the windows of three gentrifying stores: the restaurant Burrito Revolution and an e-cigarette store on Ontario, as well as the yuppie cafe *Le diner* on Ste-Catherine.

We slashed the tires of two luxury cars.

We covered several spots in graffiti. On the Arhoma bakery, which has already been targeted by a similar action in the past, we wrote: ***We're not gonna let you get away / Hochelag ≠ Plateau.*** On the Jean Coutu: ***You're also part of the problem / Fuck your empire.*** On the Dollorama: ***Fuck exploitation / Solidarity without borders.*** On the real-estate office Royal Lepage: ***We don't want your condos.*** We also redecorated all the cars in the car dealership on Ste-Catherine, where they plan to build 120 condos, using classics such as ***Not welcome*** or ***Eat it, yuppie,*** but also funky inspirations like Spaghetti.

The next time that such an opportunity presents itself, we hope to run into you in the street!

1. ed. – Part of Montréal undergoing gentrification, with frequent resistance and sabotage by anarchists.



Bolts removed from about 30 pylons during summer 2016 using ratchets with 15/16 and 1 1/8 sized parts, seriously compromising their stability, by 'Friends of the Night' against the line and "the world that needs such constructions, in all its forms"

TO LOVE THE INHUMAN

– a critique of John Zerzan’s “Animal Dreams”

“Faced with the meaninglessness of the world – the real[...] the individual most often quakes and turns away. The experience of the real is literally unbearable, and philosophy has traditionally come to the rescue to save humanity from meaninglessness, to create the illusion of a truth...”

– David F. Bell, introduction to *Joyful Cruelty* by Clément Rosset

Anarcho-Primitivist^[1] John Zerzan’s thinking exemplifies just such an attempt at rescue, one not only unnecessary, but in fact unwanted, for an anti-civilization critique lived as a joyful life. This essay examines John Zerzan’s recent “Animal Dreams”, first situating it in a typical anarchist critique motivated through the enshrinement of particular reifications, then exploring how such action leads to Manichaeic thinking [*ed. – i.e. that breaks everything down into good or evil, light or dark, or love and hate (named after an Iranian prophet Mani): essentially, dualistic thinking*], and finally challenging specific claims made within his essay. An alternative mode of relating to the nonhuman closes the piece.

Tenacious Spectres: Morality & Nature

Radicalization, that is, the development of one’s critical theory, can be understood largely in terms of dispossession by reification^[2]; as one’s critique grows sharper, one increasingly liberates one’s life from these enslaving concepts. All anarchists worth the name have dispelled themselves of State, most have excised Capitalism and God, and many have also banished such subtle ghosts as Family and Production – but some, as a result of their radicalization, not only fail to dispel, but actually enshrine all the more fiercely, Morality and Nature.

Moral socialization is an odd, dissonant thing in the dominant culture. Children are taught at an early age to share, to treat others as they would like to be treated (the Golden Rule), to believe everyone’s opinions are of value, and similar maxims according to the altruistic paradigm generally descended from Christian and Enlightenment [*ed. – see ‘A Profound Dis-ease’*] beliefs, even if those value tables are never explicitly cited during this socialization. Simultaneous to this inculcation is children’s experience of realities often at odds with the prescriptions they receive: they see not only the concerted exploitation of the majority by the few, but also commonplace avarice among the many; they see the



obvious destitution of some, often disproportionately along visually recognizable demographic lines; and they see women’s opinions more or less subtly devalued in quotidian conversation. This dissonance stirs feelings of moral distress that need some form of catharsis. For some, this release is a naturalization of perceived evils, perhaps via an unknowable divine plan, a misanthropic dismissal of humanity as essentially flawed, or a self-identification with Social Darwinism. Others, though, balk at the horrorshow, as their rationalization of the dissonance is that Morality’s normative purchase is genuine and reality is simply out of step with it; they demand either a sweeping change or annihilation of the status quo and the earthly manifestation of heaven. Pyotr Kropotkin^[3], an inspirational figure to many radicals, preaches with precisely this kind of moral indignation: “Our principles of morality say: “Love your neighbour as yourself”; but let a child follow this principle and take off his coat to give it to the shivering pauper, and his mother will tell him that he must never understand moral principles in their direct sense. If he lives according to them, he will go barefoot, without alleviating the misery around him! Morality is good on the lips, not in deeds.”

Thus, *the process of radicalization for many is the moral impugment of the*

world. Though I am unaware of any empirical study, it has been my own experience (and, I suspect, that of most readers) that the vast majority of radicals born into the dominant culture were at least initially radicalized in this manner, typically as especially indignant progressive liberals, and the majority of this set still occupy that analytical space, having only clarified their morality. Morality’s ontological status is never called into question; indeed, in its besiegement by either the openly immoral or the falsely moral – i.e., *greed is good* or *people need authority or we would have the war of all against all* – amidst an obviously bleak culture, it is all the more vindicated as the Real, the Good, and the True.

In the same vein is the burgeoning anti-civilization anarchist who sees, on the one hand, the culture in which they are forcibly immersed, with its multifarious horrors of dehumanization, objectification, wilted affect, wanton waste, variegated and abundant interhuman oppression, and denuding of the Biosphere; and then sees, seemingly diametrically opposed, the nonhuman world with its vivaciousness, intimacy, immediacy of experience, nutrient and energy cycles in which nothing is wasted or wanted but the energy that the Sun or hydrothermal vents replace, various niches through which all lifeways are valuable, and species interactions in which, even as one kills another, one seemingly never acts against Life itself. It is a small leap, then, to see the Culture as the Evil against Nature, the Good.

Which Side Are You On?

Being a radical thus comes to mean taking a position on the Manichaeic battlefield, fighting for and alongside Nature. Theoretically, it may mean embodying Nature or restoring an essential substance of wildness within oneself, as the battlefield may be not only material but also spiritual. Actionably, it may realize itself as protecting Nature via stopping particular non-human organisms from being killed, stopping industrial development in particular places perceived as wild or sacred, or attacking persons or infrastructure associated with Civilization; as well as aligning oneself personally with Nature via learning primitive [*sic*] skills, eating a particular diet, or adopting certain spiritual beliefs.

Again, these sentiments are eminently understandable and the actions may or may not be well placed, as what is beautiful in the organic, our habitat as human organisms, is being despoiled horribly by Civilization. The globalized, industrialized, spectacle-commodity culture is destroying kinds of beings at a rate one thousand times faster than they would normally go extinct, and huge portions of wildlife have been destroyed just in recent

decades as the process accelerates, reaching such a rate as to prompt the creation of a neologism, “defaunation”. Meanwhile, the always-present thinness of such efforts as conservation, sustainable agriculture, and green technology becomes an increasingly revolting joke, recently exemplified by the ridiculous efforts this past year of endangered species translocation^[4] and the attempted displacement of indigenous populations in Alvaro Obregon for the construction of a wind power farm^[5] [ed. – including the 3rd largest in Latin America, after a ‘wind-rush’ for industry; see *Return Fire vol.3 pg39*].

Considering all of this horror, it is not especially poetically adventurous to describe the culture as a death engine, essentially inimical to the organic. And emotionally intense or poetic writing can be a useful tool and a breath of relief amidst a general bleachedness, so long as it avoids obfuscation by being clear about how, when, and why it is doing so. As a perhaps unfortunate linguistic consequence, calling oneself anti-civilization might leave one feeling obligated to be for something else that is similarly grand in scope, something bigger than our immediate lives and relations. But while Civilization is a kind of useful shorthand that can be quite clearly defined^[6], the abundant references to Nature, animality, and wildness coloring anti-civilization/anti-industrial literature, speech, and thinking are misleading vagaries at best and phantoms at worst.

Civilization, itself a set of overlapping and mutually reinforcing reifications and their corresponding material infrastructure, is characterized and reproduced by exactly this kind of absolutist, dualistic, universalizing thought. Abstract and transcendental values are themselves intrinsically authoritarian and antithetical to embodied and vivacious life, even if they are posited for ostensibly liberatory purposes, as I have written of elsewhere^[7]. To reiterate briefly, to compartmentalize one’s raw, lived-and-felt, moment-to-moment experience in order to render it, to self-alienate it, into such categories as Nature or wildness is itself an act of separation. **Insofar as our loving gaze assigns to our lover fantasies of perfection, mutilating them into a quasi-divine being into which we can dissolve our inadequacies and disappointments, thus completing ourselves, we have betrayed anything worth the name of love and entered into the realm of religion.** Anarcho-Primitivism (AP, whether the nouns or the adjective) is thus,

ironically, the stuff of civilized thinking, a pattern of thought that mourns for an imagined reunion with a de-anthropomorphized, but nonetheless extant, divinity.

To elaborate this point, I will unpack “*Animal Dreams*”, a recent essay by John Zerzan that appeared in the first issue of the biannual green anarchist journal *Black Seed*, as I find the AP analysis to be one of the most interesting ones with which I disagree because of something like convergent evolution: I arrive at superficially similar conclusions to the APs, but with a fundamentally different analysis.

Green Manichaeism: Anarcho-Primitivism as Cosmic Battlefield

Before examining “*Animal Dreams*” in particular, some context is in order. I am not merely accusing: for Anarcho-Primitivists, the world is *avowedly* a Manichaean battlefield. Zerzan has emphasized more than once on his radio show *Anarchy Radio*, as well as in personal exchanges, that he is dismissive of any anarchist analysis that does not regard a Civilization/Nature dualism as metaphysically fundamental: Civilization with its slavery, death, or undeath versus Nature with its freedom, wildness, and life.

In “*Animal Dreams*”, Zerzan adds to the Good seemingly all non-human animals, who apparently not only occupy the proper side of Mani’s ranks but also serve as models for us to do the same. I will examine how Zerzan assigns to various animals (predominantly charismatic megafauna) humanistic and Christian virtues and how these characterizations are either misleading (because they reflect only one or a few examples among a great many) or simply wrong. Later, I will propose what I find to be a more appropriate relationship to the nonhuman.

Couple Like a Goose; Love Like a Wolf

In sharp contradistinction to much of Zerzan’s writing that is, even where I disagree, compelling and provocative, “*Animal Dreams*” reads largely like a set of platitudes, some disturbingly normative for the culture. I want nonetheless to briefly begin where it has merit.

From both the piece itself as well as personal conversations with its author, it is clear that part of Zerzan’s goal was to repudiate the dreadfully common and grotesquely speciesist [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg10*] diminution of the inner lives/*umwelts* [ed. – *environmental factors collectively capable of affecting the behaviour of an individual*] / phenomenonalities of nonhuman organisms. This goal is certainly worthwhile and

admirable, especially in light of Behaviorist/Cartesian [ed. – see ‘*A Profound Dis-ease*’] residues that linger in both popular and academic cultures^[8]. Zerzan aptly decries the allergy to so-called anthropomorphism, more accurately described in this particular case as qualitative inference to the presence of consciousness in nonhumans, an act of the very same kind of abduction that nearly every human commits with nearly every other human on an everyday basis^[9].

The common critique that humans can report their mental states while nonhumans cannot is laughable and evinces what a lack of understanding there is about communication: the whine of a distressed dog, the enticing change of color of a ripe fruit, the limb-waving and stridulation of a threatening tarantula, and the garish and warning colors of a toxic nudibranch [ed. – *a type of poisonous sea-going slug*] are all communication. Almost any pet owner, forager, or anyone else who has spent a good deal of time with nonhuman animals, including this author, would readily say that nonhuman animals reasonably seem to have an inner life that they are capable of communicating to a greater or lesser extent depending on the particular case. I agree completely with Zerzan that “*It is not ‘anthropomorphic’ to recognize that animals play^[10]*”; and that we also can only loosely speculate what these inner lives are like, as “*we do not know how to even comprehend consciousnesses different from our own.*”

Where Zerzan errs, heavily and repeatedly, is his flagrant and nonsensical moralizing that dominates the piece. **He seems to wish to tell us, implicitly, the following: that we should value animals because they exemplify our popularly held morals, as he lists a number of cases of animals seemingly championing them; but also that we should view animals as moral exemplars, models of behavior, as “we are lost, but animals point to the right road.”** Besides the odd circularity inherent in this bifurcated claim that undermines its entire thrust (animals are good because they follow moral X; moral X is good because animals follow it), it is easy to find a number of counterexamples for every moral example Zerzan deploys.

Though he acknowledges, seemingly anticipating a critique like mine, that “*All is not sweetness and light in the non-human realm,*” he softens this admittance by adding “*especially in this shaken and disturbed world*”, as though the human, somehow *causa sui*, were perhaps *really* to blame. He proceeds to make this caveat close to meaningless by using the bulk of his essay to enumerate cases of non-human organisms exhibiting behaviors in line with liberal humanism or Christian ethics.

Hierarchy & Domination in Non-Humans

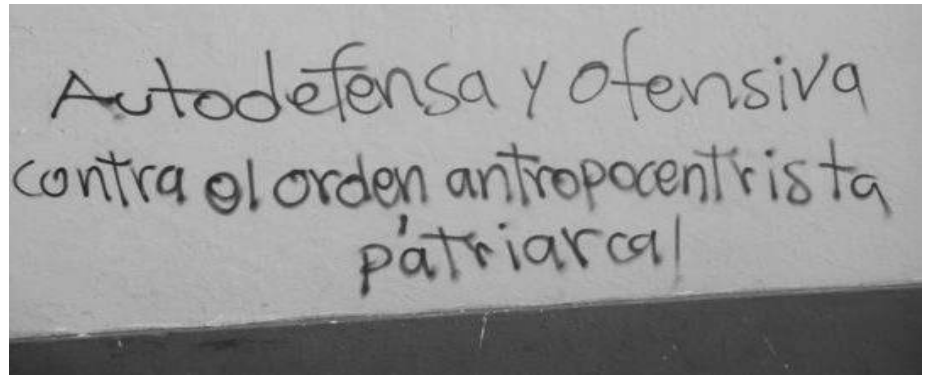
As an anarchist, Zerzan of course desires a world without formal hierarchy; he seeks to find animals, needlessly, to validate this desire – as though it were not sufficient for him to simply desire it, but that it instead needed to be written in the cosmos to be legitimate – and thus offers a repudiation of the commonly held idea of animal pecking order. It may indeed be the case that domestication induces hierarchy in some animals in whom it does not exist in the wild, such as has been recently observed with the behavior of wolves versus dogs. There are nonetheless numerous cases of dominating behavior in wild organisms.

Many parasitoids^[11] seize control of their hosts' bodies, ending their reproductive possibilities through death or debilitation: barnacles of the genus *Sacculina* castrate their crab hosts in order to hijack their bodies, including their sex organs, for reproduction; the Gordian Worm larva inhabits an arthropod host and, maturing, forces the host to drown itself so that the adult worm may erupt from its dead body to reach an aquatic habitat; and wasps of the genus *Ichneumonidae* inject their eggs and symbiotic viruses into other insect larvae, restricting their metamorphosis and creating abnormally large larvae that, like bloated cattle, are gradually devoured alive by the maturing *Ichneumon* larvae^[12]. Similar behavior exists in diverse organisms, the behavior having developed numerous times among creatures not closely related to one another: mollusks, nematodes, flatworms, and so on, including non-animals like fungi and viruses.

Besides the parasitic dimension, the social Hymenoptera (colonial bees, wasps, and ants) exhibit caste societies with a rigid division of labor and violent enforcement of hierarchy via physical mutilation, ritualized dominance/submission social interactions, infanticide, and other forms of what entomologists actually dub "policing". Again, similar eusocial, hierarchical behavior is exhibited by non-Hymenopteran insects like termites as well as non-insects like certain crustaceans – creatures that are not directly related evolutionarily – suggesting that, like parasitoidalism, domination is a tendency that life produces again and again, an eddy that the organic regularly recapitulates. There is thus nothing to be gained from looking at animals in some generalized way in order to legitimate our desires for anarchy.

Patriarchy, Sexuality, & Gender Relations in Non-Humans

Patriarchy is a repugnant aspect of the dominant culture that seems to lie at the core of Civilization, perhaps being among



The graffiti, in Oaxaca, Mexico, reads:
"Self-defence & offence against the anthropocentric patriarchal order"

the first forms of alienation and generative of the compulsory division of labor^[13] [ed. – also see *Return Fire vol.2 pg6*]. Any thoroughgoing anarchist analysis demands a critique of it, but Zerzan seems to think, again, that we need to look to nonhumans to rationalize this critique – this venture is a useless one, as gendered behavior among animals reveals itself to be a riotous smorgasbord of possibilities.

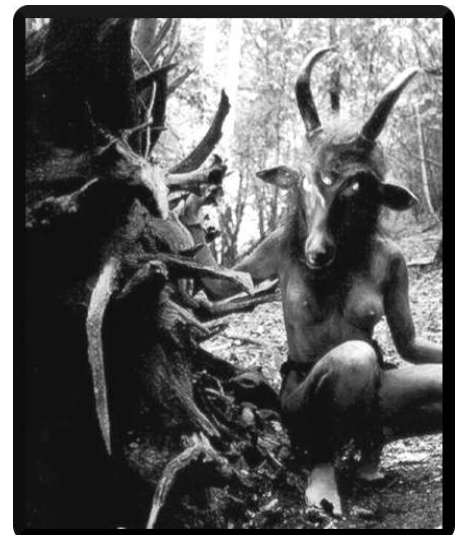
Among our closest relatives, despite Zerzan's highlighting of lioness hunting and elk patriarchy, the overwhelming majority of mammals are polygynous, often with harem-holding male dominance and sexual dimorphism that leaves the male considerably larger, stronger, and more aggressive. Perhaps the starkest example is that of the elephant seal, in which males violently compete for harems of females numbering up to the hundreds.

In a variety of invertebrates, again having evolved repeatedly in diverse phyla, mating takes place through *traumatic insemination*, in which a spined – literally weaponized – penis pierces the female's body to deliver sperm directly to her viscera. One theory for why this vicious method evolved is to bypass *mating plugs*, an adhesive substance secreted by penises to literally glue a female's reproductive tract closed after mating in order to block the sperm of competing males. I thus shudder at the brazenly general sentiment that "*animals[...] are the right road.*"

Moreover, even engaging in comparative gender relations among the incomprehensible diversity of nonhumans is a close to useless endeavor given the incommensurability of gender across species. In a great many animals, particularly many arthropods but also certain vertebrates like hyenas, females are physically larger and stronger, more socially and sexually dominant, and longer-lived, inverting the physical and social power relations characteristic of patriarchal humanity. And a good deal of genderfucking is present with the abundance of hermaphroditism and sex-changing among nonhuman animals – a huge diversity of animals are

capable of changing their sexual organs to make the best of their conditions. One is moved to wonder what could possibly be gained by making human value inferences from beings so different from ourselves, most of whom are indifferent to these human values.

Coupled with Zerzan's appeals to anti-patriarchy is a shockingly Christian sentimentalism for monogamy, as he cites geese and gibbons favorably for their long-term coupling. Why Zerzan is implicitly praising a human institution so closely associated with patriarchy, intimate abuse [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg46*], and commodity culture is bemusing *prima facie*; but his information is also simply wrong, as this proposition has been debunked along with so many others about nonhuman monogamy: studies since the late 70s have found that, for the goose, "*promiscuity is a part of the repertoire of yet another seemingly monogamous bird.*" An estimated 95-97% of mammals are similarly nonmonogamous. **In contrast, ruffs, wetland birds in the sandpiper family, mate in a manner resembling of a queer bacchanal that, I must say, were I ever to eschew my aversion to being prescriptive and morally reifying nonhumans, would be what I wish more of us would consider to be "the right road": among these highly promiscuous birds, there are three different male phenotypes, including a**



female-resembling male that the very masculine, domineering male phenotype will mate with, both topping and bottoming, seemingly because the homoeroticism attracts the attention of observing females and entices them to join the orgy.

Zerzan similarly cites examples of animal familiarity, devotion, and parental care – and, certainly, these exist, but only as some among a great many. With parenting and devotion, there is the octopus mother who starves herself, often fatally, vigilantly defending her young; all around her are the numerous and variegated marine organisms – cnidarians, mollusks, fish, crustaceans, etc. – engaging in the zero-parenting that is broadcast fertilization, in which eggs and sperm are both expelled into the water, the resultant zygotes carried away for a planktonic larval existence in which many are sure to perish. As far as familiarity, we see on the one hand the whipspider mother who watches over her eggs and then carries her young on her back while, strikingly among arthropods, she seems to affectionately caress them. On the other hand, we see the cannibalism among young sharks and strepsiptera (parasitic insects who superficially resemble flies), who devour their siblings before even leaving the egg or their mother's body, respectively; the incest among certain insects; and the parasitic parenting of cuckoos and certain insects, whose parents leave their offspring to be cared for by other species, as these host species mistake them for their own young through cloaking mechanisms.

There is thus among the animals no model for egalitarian gender relations and the ideal family. There is only an incredible variety of genders, gendered behavior, and familial relations that highlight how arbitrary human norms are at any particular time or place. If the world offers us no model, *why can we not choose our own* without recourse to it?

MERCY & INDIFFERENCE

Continuing with Christian sentimentalism, Zerzan attempts to declaw the wolf, and perhaps predators in general, by saying it may be the case that *"wolves only kill animals that are near their end anyway – the old, sick, injured"*. Though hedged as a supposition, it is difficult not to see Zerzan attempting to soften predation into a world of mercy and remorse. And, again, he cherry-picks his evidence to find the conclusions he wants, ignoring readily available counter-examples. A 2009 observation of *Canis Lupus*^[14] in a region in which they had a variety of potential prey found, based on sampling the wolves' scat, that 96.4% of the scat held remains of either roe deer or wild boar, thus indicating the wolves' primary prey. Of the prey, 74.1% of the roe deer and 84.2% of the

wild boar were juveniles, less than a year old. Over time, the wolves took turns targeting the roe deer and the wild boar, each during its birthing period, for the reasons one might expect: *"The positive selection of young roe deer and wild boar may be considered opportunist behaviour, because the individuals of this age class are easier to capture than adults due to their inexperience."* Indeed, *"Roe deer fawns are left alone by their mothers for long periods of time, making them even more vulnerable to wolf predation[...]"* Mercy, it ain't – baby-napping, rather. The authors had occasion to cite six previous studies, ranging from 1970 to 2004, that supported the conclusion that wolves target vulnerable juveniles preferentially. One might reasonably infer, as others have, that they might target the elderly and ill for the same reasons – simple ease and opportunism. Far from experiencing mercy or remorse, the manner in which wolf pups play at hunting to gradually increase their skills suggests to me that the wolf feels hunger, desire, joy, and exhilaration as it hunts and kills.

Of course, Zerzan is likely motivated by a desire to redeem the wolf from its popular demonization as infinitely murderous, killing without even the need to eat. To make such a case, I much prefer Farley Mowat, who, besides indicting human civilization as being the real mindless killer, writes at the conclusion of his loosely autobiographical novel *Never Cry Wolf*, *"Somewhere to the eastward a wolf howled[...]* for me, it was a voice which spoke of the lost world that was once ours, before we chose the alien role, a world which I had glimpsed and almost entered[...]" **Mowat here redeems the besmirched wolf not by apologizing for its killing, but rather by pointing at what seems a beautiful intimacy between the wolf and its world.** Similarly, in a theme exhibited throughout his work, Nietzsche [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg52*] saw in animality (including uncivilized humans) a kind of profound, child-like innocence; not a moral innocence of being gentle, humble, and meek, all of which he clearly despised, but an innocence of unmediated life in which one is in tune with their senses, makes no apologies for their instincts, and is unafraid to grasp immediate joy.

Gaianism^[15] & Misanthropy as Closeted Humanism & Anthropocentrism

At times, Zerzan exhibits nothing so much as his apparent biological ignorance. He writes, oddly misanthropically for someone who repudiates misanthropy, *"We are the*

top of the food chain, which makes us the only animal nobody needs." Besides the term *food chain* (Zerzan will later, inexplicably, use this same term in sneer quotes, as though he finds it unbelievable) being a bit of a misnomer – it is only one aspect of a food web, used to organize organisms into trophic levels, that is sometimes misleadingly employed to rank organisms in an Aristotelian Great Chain of Being-esque manner^[16] – one is moved by Zerzan's statement to ask whether he has ever heard of dust and face mites, roundworms, flukes, or tapeworms, to name only a few and those very broadly, or, if we extend beyond animals, any number of decomposers, human gut flora, mitochondria, and so on *ad nauseam*. Zerzan is most definitely aware of the evidence that North American Indians interacted with their forest ecosystems so as to create pockets of sub-climax forest succession zones that increased biodiversity in the forest as a whole^[17], so why is he playing these self-shaming rhetorical games?

What is such a misanthropy except another form of human exceptionalism, another way of making the human the one and only Other who stands apart from everything else? As the Invisible Committee notes, referencing the



anthropocentrism motivating the widespread move toward naming our era the Anthropocene, *"For the last time, [Man] assigns himself [sic] the main role, even if it's to accuse himself of having*

trashed everything – the seas and the skies, the ground and what's underground – even if it's to confess his guilt for the unprecedented extinction of plant and animal species."

Underlying all of the problems outlined so far, moreover, is the deeper question of anthropomorphism that Zerzan uses to frame the entire piece. **Zerzan quotes Henry Beston's apt statement, "For the animal shall not be measured by man", but he seems not to take it to heart.** Yes, of course it is a mistake to have such an intense allergy to anthropomorphism that one is averse to the abduction that nonhuman animals are conscious – such an attitude suggests massive alienation. But Zerzan has tumbled over the edge into an anthropocentrism that projects his own morality onto the nonhuman world. As I write elsewhere of his friend and frequent collaborator Kevin Tucker, Zerzan has committed the same error as the ancient Stoics: he rejects anthropocentrism, but, in doing so, he is in fact anthropocentric in a roundabout way.

Zerzan indicts others for projecting pecking order, Freudianism [ed. – for example, in *Animal Dreams*, that “the fallacy that the Freudian paradigm of murderous rivalry between fathers and sons represents the state of nature”], and hierarchy onto the nonhuman world, but he does the very same with his own values; once he has painted the nonhuman biosphere a color of his liking, obscuring and pretending not to notice its incredible variation, he swears his allegiance to it. He asks, posing as the *ingénue* after his obfuscation, “*Might it not be that nature is for the happiness of all species, not just one?*” I reply by asking **what is this “nature” that is somehow different than the gestalt “of all species” and the world’s abiotic elements they inhabit and cocreate; and what would it mean for this totality to be “for” anything, as though the gestalt of innumerable valuing beings could somehow emergently value something in and of itself or, even if it did, that we could somehow comprehend this evaluation?** Like Tucker, Zerzan has regularly distanced himself from the Left and has written apt criticisms of it^[19], yet he is still operating on the same Manichaeic logic that has characterized most forms of anarchism and leftism since their earliest days. Bakunin^[19] saw human beings, originating in the objective good of Nature, as essentially moral until they were corrupted by the unnaturalness of the State; Zerzan extends this line of thinking by exalting the as-yet-uncorrupted nonhuman animals as moral exemplars.

To Love the Inhuman

Since I was a very young child, for as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by nonhuman organisms. The stranger, the more inhuman a creature was, the more I loved it – it fascinated me to know, for example, that a creature like a schistosome (a blood fluke that parasitizes first snails, then mammals during its lifecycle, eventually inhabiting a blood capillary) has a life incomprehensibly different from my own: sensing mostly through smell, metamorphosing multiple times, living as though “a vein is a river”^[20], and mating perpetually as an adult. I am surrounded by aliens who are yet my kin, each enclosed in its own *umwelt*, such that the world is a high-infinite array of mutually mysterious yet mutually informing perceptual universes that are constantly spilling into one another. To call that vast and mysterious gestalt either good or bad, something to be either followed or rejected, is the greatest philosophical impropriety, as it entails tremendously overstepping what can be known or evaluated.

The only reaction that seems appropriate is something like Nietzsche’s Dionysian Pessimism, “a general approbation of the

real in all its chaotic and cruel presence^[21], because it is strange and lovely, awesome and ecstatic to be alive – one is moved to joy despite the purposelessness and lack of objective value one readily perceives. I relish that my body eats and shits, fucks and rots, pointlessly – that it dissolves other creatures into it, annihilating their consciousnesses even as a myriad of new bodies and minds erupt from my effluence and will erupt from my dead flesh. I recall once when I, having just fucked in the Hambacher Forest [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; Some Light on the Investigation Leading to the Imprisonment of the Comrade Arrested on April 13th**], watched as several flies descended to start feeding on my ejaculate within maybe ten seconds – that is Dionysian Pessimism. In short, to love the inhuman, do not preach to it or of it – simply accept it as such, and revel in that acceptance.

1. ed. – Despite finding quite a bit of common ground with some who describe themselves as “primitivists”, we have a strong dislike for the terminology itself. The notion that the lifeways of pre-industrial peoples were “primitive” is present-centric, reductionist, and (if we measure ‘complexity’ in terms not defined by the dominant techno-logic and recognise the depth of methods and rituals employed by such peoples) simply inaccurate. Primitivists also often display a tendency to cherry-pick the parts deemed ‘relevant’ (in a utilitarian sense) to an anarcho-primitivist ideology while ignoring or underplaying the many other parts which said cultures used to understand and navigate their world; an operation more befitting colonialism and its particular scientific gaze. Additionally, this framing runs into the immediate problem of surviving cultures which are not civilised: “The use of the term “primitive” – which means “first” or “early” – for societies that have existed into modern times without developing civilization carries some questionable assumptions. How can societies that exist now be “first” or “early”? Did they just now appear? In a living world that is in constant flux, have they somehow remained static and unchanging? Can human development only happen one way – as the development of civilization? Besides, which of these societies is the genuine “primitive” one? They are certainly not all alike, or even all that similar. Homogeneity is a trait of civilization, not of these other social realities” (Wolff Landstreicher).

2. Reification is a term that has been used in closely related, but nonetheless significantly different ways in the history of critical theory. A particularly well-developed definition is articulated by Jason McQuinn in his “Critical Self-Theory” essay in the third issue of *Modern Slavery*, too lengthy to cite in its entirety here. Going beyond the typical understanding of reification as the phenomenon in which an abstract idea is concretized, McQuinn notes that reification “includes two correlative moments[...]. On the one side an activity is reduced to a passive object, and on the other side the

activity that is removed from the then passively-constructed object is projected onto a symbolic agent.”

3. ed. – A renegade of Russian nobility born in the late 19th Century, this anarchist was also a prominent naturalist scientist of the day, author of the famous book ‘Mutual Aid’. “Under the spell of [Charles] Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*, Kropotkin has sought in vain across all Siberia for keen competition between creatures of the same species. In place of it, he has witnessed a thousand different manifestations of mutual support; perhaps the latter is a more decisive factor in survival than competition per se. The only exceptions he can think of are among his own people: bureaucracies that resist improvement, regimes that stifle their subjects, prisons that deform rather than reform” (Anarchists Traveling Through History, Part II: Kropotkin Escapes). This work he combined with his organising with secret councils of revolutionaries (who later assassinated the Tsar of Russia), for which he was imprisoned, before being broken out during a hospital stay and escaping to England, where he continued his naturalism publishing.

4. “Episode 61: Hail Satan; It’s a Beautiful World” and “Episode 66: Make Total Destroy, and Bring Us the Champagne”, Free Radical Radio, 11/07/2014 and 12/10/2014

5. “Alexander Dunlap on Alvaro Obregon”, Free Radical Radio, 06/07/2015

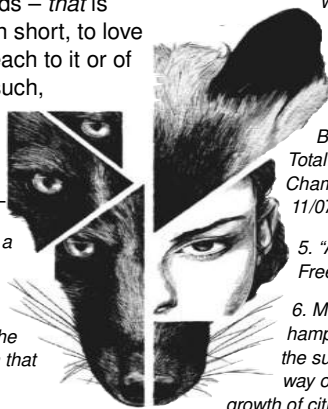
6. Many discussions of civilization are hampered by a lack of a clear definition of the subject. Briefly, by civilization, I mean a way of human life characterized by the growth of cities, areas of urban population sufficiently dense as to require the routine importation of food from corresponding rural surroundings characterized by agriculture. Civilized life generally includes all of the following, to varying degrees: collective activity tightly organized around a linear and numerical conception of time; a high level of ritual and symbolic culture; complex

and explicit social hierarchy; political representation; the formation of a State, which attempts to monopolize the use of physical violence and delegitimize non-State violence; bureaucracy; compulsory labor (work); and societal mores and ideology rationalizing racial or cultural supremacy, dominance of Nature, and social progress [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg11**]. Civilized persons are characterized by highly reified thought, as Civilization itself is largely a set of reifications intersubjectively constructed by persons acting in social roles that create and maintain corresponding infrastructure. To be anti-civilization, then, is to be anti-reification; it thus is at least prima facie suspect to be in some way for a different set of reifications.

7. “Corrosive Consciousness, Part I: How One Might Profane Green Platonism”, *Black Seed*, vol. 4, Spring 2015.

8. The mere need for an international assembly of scientists in 2012 to sign a document declaring that at least some nonhuman animals are in fact conscious (“The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness”) is a testament to this incredible alienation.

9. The ancient Problem of Other Minds – the fact that we ultimately have no way of knowing, of directly experiencing, the consciousness of other beings – is ultimately indissoluble. A difference of species does not change the problem fundamentally. Because we routinely assume other humans are subjects of a life, it is just as reasonable to do the same with at least some nonhumans.



“Out beyond ideas
of right-doing and wrong-doing
There is a Field
I’ll meet you there.”
– Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

10. All unreferenced quotes following this one are from Zerzan's "Animal Dreams" piece.

11. Parasitoids are organisms who, like parasites, spend a significant portion of their life upon or within a host organism that they use for some combination of food, shelter, and transportation. Unlike parasites, parasitoids necessarily kill, devour, or sterilize their hosts to complete their lifecycle. They are my favorite counterexample to the moralization of nonhumans, due to the fact that their behavior is often quite horrific from a Christian/humanist perspective - so much so, in fact, that no less a figure than Charles Darwin was moved to write of them to one of his colleagues: "I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of Caterpillars[...]" Here we see Darwin resisting a metaphysical flight from the real that David Bell describes in the epigraph.

12. Interestingly, Zerzan brings up the ichneumon, referring to it imprecisely as a fly [ichneumon are Hymenopterans, closely related to other wasps, bees, sawflies, and ants; they are not Dipterans, the true flies], in order to showcase its marvelous senses; he avoids bringing up its reproductive cycle that might turn moralistic stomachs.

13. The earliest known monument, Goebekli Tepe, depicts numerous erect penises prominently, seemingly as signs of masculine power. Zerzan himself has suggested that patriarchy may have generated the first division of labor in his "Patriarchy, Civilization, and the Origins of Gender".

14. Barja, Isabel. "Prey and prey-age preference by the Iberian wolf *Canis lupus signatus* in a multiple-prey ecosystem" *Wildlife Biology*, vol. 15

15. ed. - see **Invasive**.

16. ed. - Aristotle's hierarchical view of the universe was re-earthed by Christian theologians during the Middle Ages, and remained influential through to the birth of the modern era. God sits at the top of this pyramid, followed by angels, then men, then women, then 'primitives', then animals, then plants, then rocks, then sand, then soil etc. In the inherently body-hating tradition that Christian faith conveys, those at the top are perfect, while those at the bottom are imperfect (soil being all 'body' and no 'soul', whereas God is all soul and no body). We could say that in secular modernity, now abstract scientific law has replaced God at the top of this still-accepted pyramid, and that machines (who live forever and don't make 'human error') have replaced angels between God and 'men'...

17. Jacke, Dave and Toensmeier, Eric. *Edible Forest Gardens* [ed. - also, see **Invasive**].

18. Consider his "The Left? No Thanks!" as well as his excellent examinations of the historical role of unions in *Elements of Refusal*.

19. ed. - Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin, another influential 19th Century anarchist from Russia and bitter foe of its imperialism in east and central Europe (amongst that by other powers). Deported from France, apprehended in Dresden for participation in a Czech rebellion of 1848, and imprisoned in Russia before escaping to Japan, the U.S. and then Europe, where he joined insurrections such as that in Lyon, France, 1870.

20. The quote is taken from Zimmer, Carl. *Parasite Rex*.

21. Bell, David F. *Introduction to Joyful Cruelty* by Clément Rosset.

WHY BE SO ATTACHED TO YOUR PENIS? - a fellow creature that gives new meaning to the phrase, "going both ways"

[ed. - For once something humourously written (as well as fascinating), which also could be read as a parody of the type of ('radical-') moralising-via-the-'natural'-world described above; by anarcho-surrealist Ron Sakolsky, from *Fifth Estate* magazine #398.]

"I haven't seen anything like this before."
- Bernard Picton, Curator of Marine Invertebrates, National Museum of Northern Ireland

Could the surreal imagination of even Karel Capek in his most biting satirical novel, *War With The Newts*, ever have conceived of a game-changer the likes of *chromodoris reticulata*, a red and white sea slug that can actually shed its own penis after mating and then replenish said appendage the very next day.

This disappearing penis trick is not the angst-ridden male nightmare erected by King Missile in their 1992 single, "Detachable Penis," or the liberating sexual fantasy of temporary phallic disposability as a matter of choice which also pops up in that same song. Rather, it is a verifiable fact of nature recently discovered by Japanese researchers.

The astounding results of their study were published in the Royal Society's *Biology Letters* journal in February 2013.

The unassuming thumb-sized shell-less mollusk in question, which inhabits the same warm waters of South East Asia as those in which Capek's fictionalized newts were first discovered, has single-handedly turned "civilized" notions of phallic sexuality inside out.

Practicing a sex life that is quite unnerving to the border cops of sexual repression, it seems that this shape-shifting creature is a "simultaneous hermaphrodite" or, in plain language, it has male and female sexual organs which it can use at the same time when mating.

So much for antiquated notions like penis envy! This versatile switch-hitting sea slug, with its exuberant double-barreled sexuality, might just be the most highly evolved creature in the animal world. During copulation, since both of the randy slugs involved can freely give and receive sperm, there can be two distinct parallel penises and vaginas at play in any mating situation.

Fancy that!

After copulation, each sea slug simply drops, ejects or snaps off its thread-like organ as the grand finale. *Ouch*, you might

say! While geckos are willing to part with their tails, few animals would be willing to part with their penises.

No problem though, since each slug has two internally-coiled backup penises, each of which it can use about twenty-four hours after a sexual liaison. Then, to top it off, once all three penises have been spent, the creature is capable of eventually growing new ones.

At one level, such a unique sexuality is all about the none-too-liberating goal of continuously breeding more slugs. Yet, at another, the creature's transcendence of normative gender categories upsets the Adam and Eve appletart and questions the dualistic assumptions of Noah's Ark. **At this latter level, its sluggish defiance of conventional male/female biology is positively blasphemous.**

Maybe, as Canadian journalist Tabatha Southey has wittily opined, the discovery of the sex life of *chromodoris reticulata* is even the real reason for Pope Benedict XVI's unprecedented resignation. **If he believes, as did his papal predecessor, John Paul II, that animals have souls, then what's a pontiff to do?** Southey writes: "*Consider the moral issues a detachable penis raises: If one of God's creatures uses a different penis every time he has sex, is he a virgin each time? Would any sea slug drawn into the service of the Lord have to stop being a priest for the 24 hours she didn't have a penis?*"

"All of this would be enough to throw any pontiff into spiritual crisis, but, what's more, the sea slug penis in question appears to be covered with tiny spines that scrape out any competing sperm inside the vagina-like organ of his/her partner as he himself attempts fertilization.

"What Pope wouldn't feel overwhelmed?"

Perhaps then it is only appropriate to end this inspiringly unsettling story by hereby formally nominating the humble sea slug for surrealist "anti-sainthood." And, fortunately for these lively creatures, Luciferian logic does not require the nominee to be dead as Catholic church dogma does for sainthood.

As an anti-authoritarian bearer of light, *chromodoris reticulata* illuminates our wildest dreams like an impossible anarchic silhouette shining brightly against the dark landscape of religious fundamentalism.

THE FIRESTARTING

[ed. – An entry in 'Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology', from the second Bædan: a queer journal of heresy.]

And on the eighth day, we burned it.

Some time after his initiation, the initiate may become ready for the ritual of invocation. The anarchists having no laws to determine one's readiness nor elders to appoint the time, the initiates themselves must determine their willingness and make the necessary preparations. Though this can be done alone, it is usually the work of a few, for the invocation is not only a ritual of power but also one of bonding.

The initiates' motives for calling the fire are varied. They may do it to destroy, to cause trouble, to have fun, or to feel powerful, but none of these is the fire's allure. It is not a ritual of exercising one's own power but one of occupying a space through which power is transferred. There is little effort required for the initiates to acquire the materials and skills, and the power they invoke is far too great for them to call their own. **Though they may know it not, they summon the fire in order to be transformed: forged by its heat and fused to each other by its light.** Fire will break down and cast to the wind what it can, but what passes through it intact will grow in resistance to the forces that seek to break it. This is a quality much desired by the anarchist.

The fire started, the departure underway, the adept turns for a moment and stares at the shape of the power roaring as it tears through the world. She chokes on an attempt to give voice to the desire the fire's touch awakens: **that she would like to pause for a time, to absorb the heat and light of this towering blaze, to let herself be awed by the power she has summoned.** But she knows there is no time to linger, and tastes the bitter deprivation, even in her crime, of the desired encounter with chaos.



sources if not already cited: (anonymous if unlisted)



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“Geronimo walked alone down the back trail from where they had come. He disappeared in the shadows, pausing to listen, walking again.

The confinement of the hole and his days at San Carlos had deadened his trail senses. When running through the live oaks and piñon of the Dragoons, he had begun to feel them again faintly; the return of their life thoughts... their rhythms. Entering the shinoak grove, he had felt the return stronger, more intense.

Now, seating himself beneath a desert hackberry in full foliage, he watched a deer bird picking the yellow berries and dreamily relaxed the thinking of his conscious mind. Eyes closed, he shut out the senses of sight and sound.

Here, there were a community of plants, traveling together. A million years ago they had set out from the south, conditioning themselves as they came north, lengthening their roots to gather more drink; sparsing their foliage to release less of their moisture and their breath; heightening their perceptions for survival.

They had kept precariously between the Mother Mountain and the hot, dry plain to balance their needs. Their life rhythms were harmonious; they required order to survive. Their perception of danger was finely honed, not sluggish. They were alert.

Softly Geronimo chanted. Not words, but tones that matched the rhythm of their harmony. The tones were soothing and beautiful, rising and falling without break or abruptness. The rhythm became stronger. A haunting odor came to his nostrils from the leaves of creosote bushes. The burro bushes moved their branches in unison to the chant. Slowly Geronimo felt the rhythm tightening. Were the danger moving from them, the rhythm would have lengthened, growing more languid. Now, faintly, breaks of excitement came, staccato; and he knew the soldiers had not stopped. They were coming.

He rose, touching the trees and bushes lightly, and trotted back the way he had come.
His warriors waited.”



– **Watch for Me on the Mountain**

