

ANTI-AUTHORITY

DAILY REVOLT

RETURN FIRE

INDIVIDUAL WILL

DE-CIVILISATION

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(disaster management and managing this disastrous existence, via the Patagonian ocean)

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...and more!

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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.



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”^[1], 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

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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 southwestern 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 impassable 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*

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 fencelike 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



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

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. – *seat 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. – 'Minatéc', 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 Isère town hall leaving damaged offices, Minatéc staff transport being heckled by flaming barricade or researchers being blocked 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**

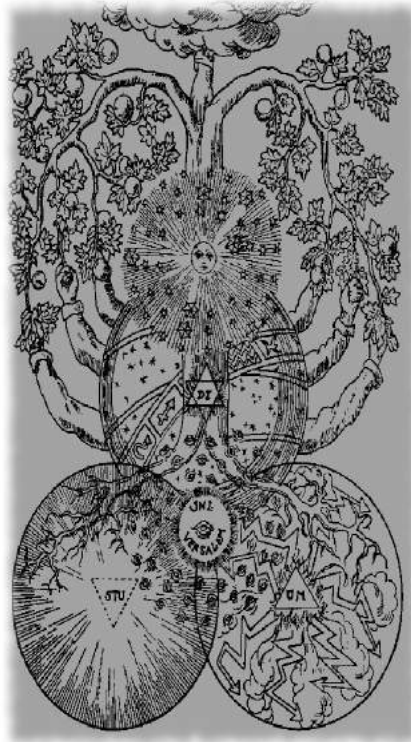
'THE STORIES WHICH CIVILISATION HOLDS AS SACRED'

[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 Page (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 descendants, 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 Girgashites, 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 anarchy-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 İzmir 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”.

sources if not already cited: (anonymous if unlisted)

English-language anarchist news & information exchange

Act For Freedom Now! (Greece
& global) actforfree.nostate.net

Anarchist Library (multi-lingual, open-
source catalogue of print-ready texts)
theanarchistlibrary.org

Anarchy, Secession, Subsistence
(rejoining rebellion with the land)
anarchysecessionsubsistence.blogspot.ca

Anarchy Radio (streaming and
downloadable hour of global news and
anti-civilisation analysis, every Tuesday)
johnzerzan.net/radio

Avalanche (web presence of
international correspondence publication
about and from sites of social tension;
each edition available multi-lingual)
avalanche.noblogs.org

Attaque (France, multi-lingual)
attaque.noblogs.org

Bordered by Silence (France)
borderedbysilence.noblogs.org

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chronik.blackblogs.org

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(Canada, bi-lingual)
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Non-Fides (France & global, multi-
lingual) non-fides.fr

Oplopanax Publishing (a cache of
handsome and engaging printable zines)
oplopanaxpublishing.wordpress.com

Resonance Audio Distro (various
readings as MP3s plus source files)
resonanceaudiodistro.wordpress.com

The Brilliant Podcast (deeply
thoughtful questioning on key topics for
radicals) thebrilliant.org

Uncivilized Animals (writings on
ecology, technology and society from an
anti-industrial perspective)
uncivilizedanimals.wordpress.com

Untorelli Press (an archive and
publisher of radical pamphlets against
capitalism, patriarchy, the state and
civilisation) untorellipress.noblogs.org



**'On the Catastrophe of the Salmon
Farms and Maritime Devastation'**
– by *Colectivo Critica y Accion*,
Calbuco

'Invasive'
– by Abe Cabrera

Articles referenced by title throughout this
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