

Notebook 1

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Contents

“Saving the World” as the Highest Form of Domestication	3
Halputta	5
What do we mean when we say, “nature”?	6

“Saving the World” as the Highest Form of Domestication

“Each Apache decides for himself whether or not he fights. We are a free people. We do not force men to fight as the Mexicans do. Forced military service produces slaves, not warriors.” – “Grandfather,” quoted in, *In the Days of Victorio: Recollections of a Warm Springs Apache*, by Eve Ball and James Kaywaykla

The context of this quote is of interest as it is uttered in a meeting of Apache leaders concerning whether or not they should continue resistance against the invading white man or succumb to the powerful invading force. With hindsight, one could state that such a stance is foolish: had the Apache stood as a “united front” instead of the diverse bands that they had always been, they could have had a shot at victory, or so the reasoning goes. Instead, their inability to adapt their social organization to new conditions led directly to their downfall. In the face of a society of interchangeable citizens constituting a massive unified Leviathan, the Apache continued to be the untame, indomitable people of before. And they paid the ultimate price for it: defeat, humiliation, exile, and in many cases, premature death,

But perhaps, even then, the ends do not justify the means. Or rather, the “ends” are really the “means” projected and amplified into a monstrous and logical conclusion. Even if the Apache chiefs had conscripted every warrior and forced them to fight, even if some of the warriors hadn’t run off and become scouts hunting their own people for the white army, even if they could have held off the U.S. Army for a few more years, they would not have done so as Apaches, or as the people that they always were. Here it would be something akin to, “in order to save the city, we had to destroy it.” Or better, in order to prevent the city from being planted in the land of the Apache, they had to become the city in civilized reasoning. And they knew what that meant: slavery in one form or another. They accepted the consequences of their refusal, even if they had second thoughts about it.

We can apply the lessons here to our own situation. Many “green anarchist” or “green post-leftist” groups like Deep Green Resistance and the like very much have a “militaristic” or “militant” attitude toward “dismantling” or “destroying” civilization. There are even “pro-Unabomber” groups in existence that dream of a “revolution” against “techno-industrial society.” But what if, as Grandfather says above, in their efforts to fight slavery, they are just making more slaves? Is this not the essence of the leftist / revolutionary project: one last “slavery,” one last “martyrdom” that will end all slaveries and martyrdoms? Just one more great big push and we will establish the place where there is neither sorrow, nor sighing, nor anymore pain. Leviathan has dreamed this dream before, a myriad of times now, and people have thrown themselves against the wheels of Progress in order to make it a reality. They are still dead, and we are nowhere closer to freedom.

Still, there are others, such as John Zerzan, who think that to “give up” defending the world that civilization has wrought is akin to nihilism and despair. “Hope,” so the reasoning goes, would be finding a way to “let everyone off easy,” of avoiding all the negative consequences of the end of a way of life that has been nothing but negative consequences for those who have opposed it (such as our Apaches here). The Requiem sung for a world built on the massive graveyard of other dead worlds must be a pastoral and peaceful one, so we are told, lest we succumb to revenge and hatred, lest we sin against the “Enlightenment” values that somehow escaped being fully domesticated, even when everything else is (*mirabile visu!*)

But what if this urge to save the world, this urge to “overthrow tyranny” no matter what the cost, this itch to “fight for a better world” is just another hamster wheel, another yoke to be put on us, to solve problems that we didn’t create, and to sacrifice ourselves for a better world which we will never see (funny how that works)? What if the genius of domesticated civilization has been to harness our hostility into making it better, commodifying our radicalism, and perpetuating civilized values in self-proclaimed enemies like a virus in an unsuspecting host? Why not just keep our principles, like the defeated Apache did, and let the chips fall where they may? What if we just realize that, as animals, we don’t know what the future will bring, the only resistance that we have is resistance in the now, and the cares of tomorrow will take care of themselves? Indeed, we simply have no power over tomorrow, just as we have no power to resurrect the past. If we did, we wouldn’t be animals, and the revolutionist / leftist / technocrat would be right.

Mexican ecoextremists are embodying these ideas as in the following passage, which I have translated from a recent work of theirs:

“We fully realize that we are civilized human beings. We have found ourselves within this system and we use the means that it provides us to express a tendency opposed to it, with all of its contradictions, knowing full well that we have long been contaminated by civilization. But even as the domesticated animals that we are, we still remember our instincts. We have lived more time as a species in caves than in cities. We are not totally alienated, which is why we attack. The distinguishing feature of RS in this conversation is that we say that there is no better tomorrow. There is no changing the world into a more just one. That can never exist within the bounds of the technological system that has encompassed the entire planet. All that we can expect is a decadent tomorrow, gray and turbulent. All that exists is the now, the present. That’s why we are not betting on the “revolution” so hoped for in leftist circles. Even if that seems exaggerated, that’s just how it is. Resistance against the technological system must be extremist in the here and now, not waiting for any changes in objective conditions. It should have no “long term goals.” It should be carried out right now by individuals who take on the role of warriors under their own direction, accepting their own inconsistencies and contradictions. It should be suicidal. We don’t aim to overthrow the system. We don’t want followers. What we want is individualist war waged by various factions against the system that domesticates and subjugates us. Our cry to Wild Nature will always be the same until our own violent extermination: “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come... and the time when thou shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.” (Revelation 11:18)

Perhaps the only truly free response, the only one that escapes the cycle of domestication, is one that states firmly that this world is not worth saving, that its days are numbered, and the sooner the evil falls, the better. Sometimes damnation in Christian eschatology is not merely a punishment, but is what is best for the soul saturated in iniquity. The world must fall, and nothing will likely replace it, nothing we can foresee anyway. The only real praxis, then, is one of rejection and not one of rebuilding: one of the heroic animal facing off against the civilized juggernaut of slavery and fear. By Chahta-Ima

Halputta

The alligator is a nocturnal hunter. Most of the day, it can be seen with its head barely above water, resting. But when the sun goes down, it begins to hunt. It hunts indiscriminately, almost like “a machine” as some would foolishly say. This is a mistake: its powerful jaws that can easily snap off a limb or two, a tail that moves it swiftly through the water towards its prey, its powerful claws that move it about on land, all of these are the power of Nature. If it sees something moving close to shore, it stalks it, attacks it, bites it, and takes it down into the water to drown it. Finally, it eats. This is done little realizing what its prey is, and maybe subsequently it realizes that it’s not that tasty, so it abandons it. But attack is a certainty. It bites first and then asks whether it wants to consume the prey. The alligator is merely being what it is, it cannot be otherwise. All of the reasoning in the world could not change that.

The ancient peoples who lived along the waters of the alligator knew them well. They revered them, they were the lords of the water. The hyper-civilized, in their pride and ignorance, pretend that Nature will always bend to their will. They are thus often careless, they feel safe, but Nature then attacks once again.

The most recent example of this occurred in the “Magic Kingdom,” in what is now known as the state of Florida in the United States. A family from Nebraska, a landlocked state, decided to let their child of two years play on the shore of a lagoon near the hotel at around 9 o’clock in the evening. Of course, the alligators were hunting at the time, and this time it was the toddler’s turn to be the prey. The father saw the alligator grab the child and fought the alligator, but in the end he could do nothing. The alligator took the boy and didn’t even eat him. He left him in the water, drowned and dead, a tragedy for the family from the Midwest that was on vacation at Disney World with their child. The civilized authorities, out of vengeance disguised as “security,” killed one alligator after another searching for the guilty party, the criminal, the lawless animal that dared to follow its own uncivilized nature, come what may. They still don’t know if they caught the culprit.

Every savage of that land knew that one should not be near the shore at that hour of the night. They respected the hour of the alligator, the puma, the bear, the snake, and the other animals that were the manifestation of the force and splendor of Nature, Life and Death, the Wild. This “innocent” family, however, didn’t. The “innocent” family thought that it was as if their son was in their bathtub at home, playing with his toys. It was a time of enjoyment and relaxation that turned into the hour of vengeance for Nature’s slavery. Thus, they paid the highest price a parent can pay:

“And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon...”

The eco-extremist is also a manifestation of Nature, but not as perfect as the alligator, for sure. He is a rejected being, a poorly made dud of techno-industrial society. That’s why he doesn’t respect the laws of society, its schedule, its order. He attacks like the alligator and afterwards hides in the dark corners of the disgusting cities like the alligator hides in the waters of the swamp, always stalking. Above all, he is indiscriminate. When it’s the prey’s turn, that’s it, nothing can be done. It’s not that he doesn’t have “free will,” which is frankly a joke. Civilization offers no

choice: it's something that you have to accept completely under penalty of being classified as a delinquent, a criminal, or a pervert. Well, eco-extremism rejects the false choice offered by the techno-industrial system. The only choice eco-extremism offers to civilization is attack, arson, and death, even of "innocents".

May the hyper-civilized, even the most "progressive", even the most "anti-authoritarian", tremble; may they die of disgust when they think upon the indiscriminate acts of the eco-extremists. Like the alligator, ecoextremists can't change. It is a question of hunt or be hunted: sometimes one ends up being one, sometimes the other.

Take heart, it's always been this way.

Happy hunting.

by Bowlegs

What do we mean when we say, "nature"?

One of the red herrings that has come up of late among critics of eco-extremism is the idea that we worship a false idea of "Nature". In their eyes, we are positing something vague, perhaps using wishful thinking, and trying to fit the round peg of reality into the square hole of our concepts. I am not here to give THE definition of what every eco-extremist means by "nature" or "Wild Nature". I will only give my own idea of it. Again, anyone else is free to speak up, as I acknowledge that this is a difficult topic to address. At least if someone is stuck trying to define what they know to be the deepest being of themselves and the world, perhaps they can refer to this and find something useful. With that in mind:

A "natural" object in modern parlance usually indicates a thing that exists solely for itself. It is, simply put, and does not need any further purpose added onto it. If an archaeologist, for example, is hiking through a forest, he may see hundreds of trees and thousands of plants, but none of these interest him. If he sees a large stone with engravings on it, however, he will definitely pause and study it. While the forest may actually be the remnants of a forest garden or the product of thousands of years of cultivation or slash and burn horticulture, the archaeologist has no means of knowing this. But he like even the amateur knows what is "natural" and what isn't, what is directly made by the hand of man and what is not.

Similarly, in our own lives, if we see a remote control in a room that we have never been in before, we ask what machine it might control: what is it for? If we see a potted plant, no such question arises. If we are in our backyard and we spot a deer or raccoon, we don't ask, "But what is it for?" We can, but being undomesticated, it's not as if they will reform their purpose according to the ideas that we have of them. Nature, the wild, wilderness, the animal etc. is for itself.

Thus, when we meet a person, we will usually ask the question, "So, what do you do?" Being domesticated, we are like cattle in that our own existence is predicated on what we do for others and not for ourselves. I am not an accountant for myself; it's not inherently part of my nature. Crunching numbers or reading up on tax code does me no direct benefit, it's not something I would naturally do with little prompting and meager effort. The same is the case of a building: many people (if not most) can perhaps get a sense of awe from looking at an impressive building, and they may even mistake it for a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. However, the reason why many like to stare at a forest or be surrounded by greenery is perhaps because they want to be

reminded that there are things that exist for themselves and not for others. The same is true with children, as children, at least while very young, are not “useful”.

Then there is the idea of “play”. Children are defined by their love of play: activity that has no benefit other than the joy of doing it. Some say hunter-gatherers’ activity deeply resembles play, in that the division of labor is only a matter of degree. Grown men hunt, and small boys imitate hunting, then they catch smaller game. And of course girls imitate and participate in gathering and other activities of manufacture. All the same, the benefits of any activity are usually immediate and obvious.

Of course, there are those who are frustrated by both children and nature, but this is mainly because they will not abide by the designs that people have preconceived for things in their heads. I can only say that, for me, being in nature is transformative since I get to be with things that need no other purpose than themselves. They just are.

Some would say that all human experience is mediated through human cognition and agency, but in saying this in the context of modern people, they are missing a crucial distinction. “Wilderness” as an untouched and untouchable space of greenery is perhaps a recent concept. Even “primitive” hunter-gatherers manipulated and “harvested” from their environments in very complex ways. They would have walked through a forest or other landscape and would not have seen merely a scene of admiration or meditation, like a painting, but a lively “factory” that made the means by which they lived, with their “help”, though they may have not perceived it that way. On the other hand, it is not accurate to state that modern people do the exact same thing when they clear-cut a forest, blow up a mountain looking for coal, or dump industrial waste in a river.

Here I will diverge from the received ideas of “anti-civilization” or anarcho-primitivist discourse and state that this is not a matter of living “in harmony” with or being subject to wildness, whatever that means. It is not an innate software program that we either follow to the letter or don’t, to our own peril. The issue, as I have stated previously, is one of scale and capability. If “primitive” peoples could have created plastic or bulldozers or chainsaws, they may have done so, though the results may not have been the same as the ones we see today. Our modern world is not a teleological inevitability. It may cater to certain desires of that elusive thing called, “human nature”, but people lived tens of thousands of years, perhaps longer, without any of our gadgets or systems of governance. Comparatively speaking, domestication, agriculture, urban life, etc. are a sort of “black swan” that has been wildly successful (pun intended) at conquering all that is alien to them, but that doesn’t mean that it could not have been otherwise. In most places and circumstances with homo sapiens, it hasn’t. Civilization has the pretense of having mastered time in the abstract, but in the concrete, it has only existed for a minuscule amount of time, and that time may be running out.

Thus, nature. We think that because we manipulate nature, we “create” and “define” it. That presumes that we can wrap our head around it and do with it as we will. Those who oppose a hard line between nature and human cognition of matter often don’t oppose it when it comes to the line between the human mind and the objects that it contemplates and seeks to alter. In that, human cognition / consciousness is sovereign, masculine, special, and near godly. The human mind is thus “of another order”, and thus the strict line between nature and mind is maintained. Indeed, when the mind looks at nature, all it is really doing is looking at itself looking at... something. It knows not what, nor can it ever. All things are for it, even the things that it can’t control, even the things it cannot possibly perceive (?)

So in my own idea of nature, I have found that I am making a smaller leap of faith to posit that, yes indeed, there is something out there, beyond me, beyond my perception or cognition. I am not a closed system or a self-sustaining one: I am not the origin of existence. Otherwise, what would be the result of positing the potential omniscience of human thought; the absolute mediation of human cognition in everything; the idea that all things are for us, and we are ultimately all things? For me, that smacks too much of a God complex, as in the monotheistic sky god carried on by other means, whether we call it science, or philosophy, or solipsism, or the Future, or whatever. These all perform the same function.

Nature exists because the human mind is weak and limited. It is mortal, it is made of flesh, and ultimately this is its limit, even if we can't see it. It's playing a game with the rest of existence, and it will lose. The existence of nature is the limit of thought. It is the fact that all things are not for us, our thoughts do not make things: the things are there for the taking, and would be there without our intervention. In other words, we are not gods, we are not spirits, precisely because those things don't exist as we have come to understand them. Our thought does not and cannot comprehend everything, which is why it is so miserably unreliable.

There are things that exist purely for themselves. A child knows this. A simpleton may even know it. It takes the "wise" of the "World" (a Biblical term) to deny it. There are things in this world that we will never dominate. We may be able to land our technological garbage on the moon, yet we cannot feed every child who is hungry, or prevent our shuddering before the shadow of death. This is why humanity will be supplanted, and nature will abide.

Eco-extremism is, in my opinion, the trust in the order that nature itself has wrought, along with the "weak" human societies that have been formed by it. To "trust" in nature is not a leap of faith, on the contrary. Civilization is a cult that demands faith, it demands one's obedience to the idea that the "common good" is the highest good of all. It is an act of faith to believe that sacrificing yourself and the wild nature of today will somehow have benefits for all tomorrow. We prefer the good right in front of us, in the trees, the rivers, the oceans, the blue sky, the mountains, and our own undomesticated desires; and not a concocted "good" of civilization that seeks the slavery and destruction of all things for itself. We detest that, we attack it, and we give it no quarter. When we mention, "Wild Nature," we are not being vague: we are referring to something right in front of your nose. That you do not see it is your problem, not ours.

by Chahta-Ima

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