Debate in the Earth First! Journal about 'The Parable of the Tribes'

1985—1987

Contents

1. Review of The Parable of the Tribes by Australopithecus

Review of *The Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution* by Andrew Bard Schmookler. University of California Press. 400pp., $19.95

Andrew Bard Schmookler's recent book, *The Parable of the Tribes,* is one of the more impressive and important books of this decade. In it, Schmookler looks back through history and pre-history to learn how we humans got ourselves and all life into such a dismal mess.

Schmookler's basic thesis is that after civilization began, violence between different peoples — and stemming from that, violence against Earth — became an inevitable part of the evolution of humanity. The "parable of the tribes" explains this inevitability roughly as follows: As long as neighboring tribes all act peacefully, peace reigns; but as soon as any one tribe becomes aggressive, all tribes must adopt the ways of violence. Consider a tribe's alternatives when faced by a hostile neighbor: The peaceful tribe can surrender, flee, or fight; any of which amounts to a victory for the ways of violence. Even as natural evolution selects for the strongest organisms and/or communities of organisms, social evolution selects for the most powerful societies. (Schmookler uses the word 'power' in the sense of power over; it would be worthwhile to see a critique of Schmookler's theories by someone, e.g. Joanna Macy, within the growing movement of persons who think that power in the sense of power over could be replaced by power in the sense of power with.) Societies attain power partly by developing technologies which exploit nature, hence nature too becomes a victim of the power struggles of social evolution.

Schmookler's parable offers a simple yet compelling theory on the downfall of humanity. For this and many other reasons, Schmookler's work is brilliant. One of the most pleasing aspects of the book for those of us with a primeval bent is his discussion of the harmonious ways of life of primal peoples. Primal peoples generally seem to have lived lives unfettered by the many restrictions that make modern life unpleasant; restrictions such as tedious labor, or contrived notions of good and evil (morality is a human construct arising after humanity's fall from the state of nature, Schmookler's work suggests).

Despite all its good points, Schmookler's book will often disappoint many readers. Political leftists will be aghast to read his discussion of the merits of US capitalism vs. Soviet communism, in which Schmookler says that the US system is basically decent whereas the Soviet system is basically bad. The latter claim is reasonable; the former is not. Feminists may resent the lack of attention Schmookler pays to the ways in which violence against Earth and humans has been historically tied to the male dominance of societies for the past 8000 years or so. Ernest Becker, the late highly acclaimed author of *The Denial of Death* would think that Schmookler overlooks the immense importance of fear of death in shaping human cultures. Biologists might question his strong stress on competition as the driving force in evolution, insofar as he underrates the importance of cooperation (symbiosis) in shaping evolution. We radical ecologists wish Schmookler had discussed in more detail how his parable ties in with violence against Earth. Furthermore, we may question whether Schmookler's is a biocentric perspective on life. Some of us grow apprehensive when we read "there is something special about the human animal." We are apt to agree more with his suggestion that human consciousness may prove to be merely an unsucessful evolutionary experiment.

Lastly, anyone wishing for an answer to the world's desperate plight will not find it. Schmookler explains how we entered our plight, but not how we can escape it. He hints that his theoretical

solution is forthcoming. This does not inspire confidence; if he is as thorough in this next project, it may not appear until after most of Earth is a wasteland.

2. Schmookler Replies to Australopithecus by Andrew Bard Schmookler

I was delighted that a review of my book, *The Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution,* appeared in *Earth First!.* For much of the passion that inspired the writing of my book is the same as the passion that is blazoned in your pages.

I was pleased also that your reviewer, Australopithecus, evidently from a species akin to my own, the mis-named *Homo sapiens,* thought as highly as he did of *The Parable of the Tribes.* However, there are a few statements in the review that would give your readers an inaccurate understanding of the views I present in my book. I'd like here to correct such misunderstandings.

The review says that I find capitalism basically decent. In fact, while I do find many of the usual left-wing criticisms of the market economy misguided, my purpose in the part of Chapter 7 entitled "The Market as a Power System" was to spell out the strongest legitimate critique possible of the workings of the capitalist economy. My conclusion with respect to the market exemplifies my thesis throughout the book: that the market, like other systems ruled by power, cannot be trusted to rule our destiny wisely or humanely. The market attends well only to certain values, while ignoring others — including most emphatically the panoply of values connected with the natural world. The most that can be said for the market is that, properly limited by political choices reflecting other values, it can be a useful tool.

Nor was I praising our species when I wrote that "there is something special about the human animal." By special I meant unique — as one might also say that the genocide committed by the Nazis was unique. Indeed, I introduce the book with the idea that this book is intended to help remove our remaining prideful illusions about ourselves as a species.

The reviewer suggests that biologists would take issue with my emphasis on competition as the driving force in evolution. He would be right if that were how I characterize biological evolution. But it is not. The whole purpose of Chapter 6, "Systems of Nature and of Civilization," is to delineate the various ways that the evolution of civilization represents a destructive departure from the evolutionary processes that characterized the previous, biological evolution of living systems. I stress that the competition evident in biological nature forms part of a fundamentally synergistic and harmonious order that protects the viability of all the components of the system. Whereas the struggle for power among civilized societies takes place outside the regulation of any life-serving order.

When creatures begin to invent their own way of life, it might appear that their societies would be free to develop in any way the creatures want. But what is freedom for a single society is anarchy in an interacting system of those societies. Anarchy, which Hobbes regarded as the state of nature, is indeed a state of unnature — for it had never before existed in the history of life. This is the circumstance from which arise the struggle for power and the inevitable spread of the ways of power that my book describes.

Finally, I'd like to respond to the reviewer's disappointment that I do not have more to say about how to escape our plight. Of the various critiques I have encountered since the book was published a year and a half ago, this has been the most frequent and the most distressing to me.

The Parable of the Tribes shows that the essence of our problem lies in the overarching anarchy within which human action' takes place. So long as that anarchy persists, the destructive rule of power will persist. The general nature of the solution is clear: we must create a life-serving order that both allows and requires us to act consistently with the needs of human beings and of other living things. If we are to survive for much longer, our present anarchy — a recent development of only some 10,000 years — must be made but a brief interval between two systems that embody wholeness: the pure order of nature from which we emerged, but to which we cannot return; and another framework of human devising to guide and limit human activity.

It is true that these general notions, even if accepted, do not offer detailed guidance on how to get there. Still less do they promise a quick solution to the destruction that plagues us. But that, unfortunately, is the human condition. We will not reach the promised land any time soon; and we are required to grope our way toward it without a map. This is frightening, demanding of us resources of courage and faith. What distresses me is the thought that those who fault a book that diagnoses 10,000 years of destructiveness for not offering a "solution," are shrinking from facing the true nature of our predicament and of what escaping from it demands of us.

I, for one, believe we can .make it. I believe that if the readers of *Earth. First!* were to see Earth 1000 years from now, they would weep with joy and relief at what they found.

Andrew Bard Schmookler is the author of ***Parable of the Tribes*** *and a commentator for* ***All Things Considered*** *on National Public Radio.*

REVIEWERS REPLY: Most of my doubts about Schmookler's book have now been dispelled. This is such an excellent response to my misguided review that I'm almost glad I did his book a disservice. However, some of us will be bothered by his negative use of the term "anarchy." Anarchism as advocated by such thinkers as Murray Bookchin seems a very positive and ecological goal toward which society should, perhaps, move. What do you think of Bookchin's advocacy of anarchism, Mr. Schmookler?

3. Schmookler on Anarchy by Andrew Bard Schmookler

Dear Australopithecus:

You are uneasy with my arguing, in *The Parable of the Tribes,* that at the core of the problems of civilization is anarchy, while some people that you respect argue, rather, that something akin to anarchy is the solution. I appreciate your inviting me to respond to the position of an anarchist like Murray Bookchin. You have also articulated the position to which you wish me to respond. Here, in a nutshell, is my understanding of it: Organic societies — including the original human societies and various other communities appearing in nature — tend to be "spontaneously formed, non-coercive and egalitarian." The world took a bad turn with the creation in human societies of hierarchies, including the state and male dominated institutions. The hierarchical state brought about the various evils of civilization. We would be better off, therefore, if we could return to "ecological, stateless, communal-based societies." [Ed. note: Australopithecus thinks we would benefit by returning to such primal societies; Bookchin appears to favor combining the positive qualities of primal societies with the latent positive qualities of modern society.]

I share that primitivist appreciation of the more synergistic structure of natural societies. Where I differ from the above summarized position is in how the origin of evil is to be understood

(e.g. the evils of war, tyranny, ecological destructiveness), and therefore in how these evils are best remedied.

The anarchist position suffers from a basic logical flaw: in trying to explain evil, it can't escape the problem of the Prime Mover. On the one hand, the State is the source of evil. On the other *hand, the State is itself evil. So* what is the source of the evil of the State? Anarchists, who live in societies where evils are accomplished through political systems, mistake the symptom — the state — for the cause, which is the failure to control power.

Anarchists want us to break up political powers, back to a multitude of small and self-governing communities. But the human species tried that experiment — up until 10,000 years ago. And the rest, as saying goes, is history. We had the situation the anarchists desire at the beginning, yet history unfolded into a nightmare nonetheless. What will have changed this time to prevent the groovy many from being brought under the dominion of the ruthless few?

Only if we understand what happened the first time — how the egalitarian anarchy of primitive hunting and gathering societies evolved/degenerated into the tyrannical and belligerent power structures that have bloodied our history — will we have a chance to truly overcome the problem of power. That is what *The Parable of the Tribes* attempts to do. [Ed. note: This excellent book is now available in paperback from Houghton Mifflin for $9.95.]

The first point that needs to be made is that anarchy is not what existed before the rise of civilization. True, there was no hierarchical power structure, but there was governing order. The patient process of natural selection molds an order that is governed closely and well. There is no ruler in this lawful order, for the law of nature is part of each separate creature. Each follows only its own law — pursuing its own ends — but this law and these ends are part of a harmonious natural order.

Anarchy, in the sense of action ungoverned by any lawful order, becomes possible only when a creature has the creativity to bring its cultural development across the threshold where it can begin to invent its own way of life. The sovereign actors of civilization are ungoverned in a way that nothing in the previous history of life has been. If we look at one single actor, it looks like freedom; but if we look at the system as a whole, what we find is anarchy. This unnatural condition of anarchy, far from being our salvation, has been at the root of the torment of civilization. Let us look at anarchy.

The special evil of anarchy is that it brings evil to the fore. Why do we send out the National Guard when a disaster disrupts society's order? It is not because we are all looters waiting for a chance to pounce. But it only takes an uncontrolled few to terrorize the many. We see this problem manifested in Lebanon — the Lebanese have lacked an effective force to hold the violent ones among them in check. When historical circumstance undermined the foundations of Lebanese political order, the ruthless few were loosed from the abyss of the ensuing anarchy to rise to the top. Warlords selected from a struggle for power could then come to rule the destiny of thousands.

Anarchists paint nice pictures of how everyone will behave when the evil state is abolished. But why believe these pictures? Many believed Marx's nice pictures that once capitalism was overthrown, the state would wither away; but the Gulag shows what happens when you mistake the symptom for the disease.

I am not saying that people are evil, but that it is vain to hope that all will be good. What the parable of the tribes says is that if you have anarchy, unless everyone is good the special evils of power and domination will spread through the system like a contaminant. Unless one is "so far

gone in Utopian speculation" (in Madison's fine phrase) as to believe that every community will be immune to unnice ambitions, before embracing anarchism one should ask: in the absence of any overarching governmental structure, what happens if an outlaw community arises?

"Imagine a group of tribes living within reach of each other. If all choose the way of peace, then all may live in peace. But what if all but one choose peace, and that one is ambitious for expansion and conquest? What can happen to the others when confronted with an ambitious and potent neighbor?" This is the question I ask in my book, and then I answer: there are four alternatives, none of them good. They are: destruction of the weaker society; its transformation and absorption; its withdrawal from the area; and its successful self-defense, which regrettably requires imitating the aggressor to get a comparable level of competitive power.

The state is but a symptom of the fundamental problem, which is anarchy. Power is necessary for social survival, and hierarchy has enhanced power — from the emergence of the chiefdom, through the rise of the kingship, to the far-reaching tentacles of the nation state. (Male domination is also a symptom of the inescapability of the struggle for power: When groups are beset by external threats, greater power and status inevitably go to the protectors. The evils of patriarchy are to be seen not as the evils of men, but as the evils of having to maximize social power.)

The straggle for power, and the selection for the ways of power, have condemned civilization also to that other evil: environmental destraction. A society cannot survive the long ran unless it survives the short ran. To survive the short ran, it must have *power enough* to resist potential aggressors. Much of power comes from harnessing nature, and the maximal immediate power seems to be yielded by practices that are destructive in the long term. A society, therefore, whose own exploitation of nature cannot be sustained over the long term, can render unviable *other* societies whose practices are *ecologically* sound (though less productive of competitive power). (What is happening today in the Amazon — the displacement of ecologically sound cultures by the powerful but ecologically unsound — is typical of the social evolutionary process of the past 10,000 years.) Civilization has thus been like a mad dog — sick to the death, but able to infect the healthy with its disease.

All this leads to the very unanarchistic conclusion that if we want to eliminate these evils from human practice, we had better create sufficient government to control the free play of power. This means that if we do decentralize civilization into smaller communities — which I think would be a good move in many ways — there should be at the same time a world order sufficient at least to keep would-be conquerors from entering that time-dishonored profession. And since the biosphere is a globally interdependent web, that world order should be able to constrain any of the actors from fouling the earth. This requires laws and means of enforcement.

At the minimum, a world order needs to protect communities from the unjust intrusion of others in the form of war and environmental degradation. Whether this order should go further — as in some kind of global bill of rights to protect individuals from injustice within their communities — is a question of a different sort. I believe in cultural diversity, but I am not sure I'm willing, in the name of that value, to make disasters like Jonestown a purely "domestic" matter.

The solution to our problems requires structures to govern the play of power. Admittedly, government is often simply an embodiment of the corrupt rule of power; government is often only warfare in static form, with the strong standing with a foot on the neck of the weak. But tyranny does not support a case against government. On the contrary, tyranny is the form of government to which the anarchic struggle for power gives rise. Only when the operation of

power is strictly governed can justice result. Only government can restrain power in the interests of other values.

Government is a paradox, but there is no escaping it. This is because power is a paradox: our emergence out of the natural order makes power an inevitable problem for human affairs, and only power can control power. [Ed. note: True; our fall was our "emergence out of the natural order."] It is fortunate for us that the framers of the US Constitution understood this paradoxical problem: that is why we in this society, for all its glaring imperfections, can freely discuss the evils that the play of power produces around us, and freely search for solutions.

If you want to know how terribly difficult it is to solve the problem of power through setting up good governmental structures, ask us Americans. But if you want to know how profoundly nightmarish the problem of *power* can be in the absence of a governing order, ask the Lebanese.

Sincerely,

Andrew Bard Schmookler

Andrew Bard Schmookler is one of the best ecological thinkers in the US, and we strongly recommend his book.

Ed. note: We encourage a discussion in our pages on anarchism, the state and its relation to environmental destruction, and visions of future ecological societies. We would especially appreciate receiving letters or essays from some of the deeply ecological writers, such as Dolores LaChapelle, Schmookler, Bookchin, Starhawk, Karen Warren, Ed Abbey, Bill Devall, Joanna Macy, Michael Cohen, Gary Snyder and George Sessions.

4. Ascent to Anarchy by Christoph Manes

People who believe as I do, that only something akin to anarchy harmonizes with a healthy planet and human freedom can righteously pound the table and cough up bread at the flaws in Schmookler's critique of anarchy in his *Parable of the Tribes.* What we cannot do is ignore the problem he articulates if this belief is to have any spiritual integrity. Schmookler seems to be right: when one community begins to centralize power, all others must do so or perish or flee. How, then, can anarchy be sustained (never mind attained) if the first step the power-hungry take toward empire stamps it out?

I know Schmookler would disagree with the way I've restated his terms. But his definition of anarchy is idiosyncratic and confusing, and it produces a contradictory conclusion. If anarchy is "uncontrolled power" which leads to violence between two parties (however centralized they may be), then their subordination to a higher administration, a "world order," would theoretically lead to world pacification, according to Schmookler. But there is not only a quantitive but a qualitative difference between violence in a decentralized community and a centralized state, between revenge killing in Iron Age Sweden and the nuclear arms race. The violence of societies where power has not congealed into a state cannot disrupt the cycles of nature or transform the land into war material. State violence (even when it is "benevolent," even when it is used, as Schmookler wishes, to prevent violence) is predicated on just such a disruption, on mobilizing people and resources into a network of use. The existence of government—however kindly or ecologically aware — requires the concentration and projection of power. Which means to a greater or lesser extent the transmutation of Earth into exploitable material, the creation of means

of production, roads, armaments, and the ideologies which support these. And the fact is, such ideologies are never kind or ecological.

Centralization is structurally, globally, violent. And it creates a universe of discourse which blames all its inadequacies on lack of control, on anarchy. When Schmookler uses Lebanon as an argument against anarchy, he fails to break out of this universe of discourse (that is, his thinking is no longer *critical).* The violence in Lebanon is only possible within the context of arms manufacturing and the worldwide network — of mining, smelting, chemical techniques, transportation, currency, education, etc. — which this requires; of the concentration of diverse cultures within artificial political boundaries; of the hierarchical ideologies of Islam and Christianity. Lebanon is the ugly anatomy of the modern state stripped of its short-term prosperity. It is its destiny.

Now, humanists might deplore pre-Columbian tribes going on the warpath, or Vikings sacking Lindisfarne. From an ecological perspective, however, these conflicts are neutral. I think there will always be physical violence among people, which they will have to deal with as it affects them. Other anarchists disagree. But one thing is clear: violence that doesn't stem from an organized government which mobilizes resources is no threat to Earth, and therefore has the same status as the "wars" between bees and wasps.

Of course, there is a historical relation between disorganized and organized violence. But is it invariably genetic, as Schmookler argues, or is this view merely part of the universe of discourse industrial societies use to propagate themselves? It's true that up to now history has seen greater and greater centralization. It's also true, however, that this centralization is so disruptive of natural cycles that it is as impermanent as the exotic elements brewed in cyclotrons. Anarchy is ineluctable. And so the question again is, how do we sustain it?

Imagine a community based on kinship ties, perhaps tribal-communal, perhaps made up of small landholders. They have laws, but no executive power. Those whose rights are violated must deal with the situation as they see fit. It isn't paradise, but then paradise is for dead people, not men and women, and they believe the stories of what life was like before — the remains of their ancestors' ugly world are still evident. They have what government can never give and only wilderness can: freedom.

Now imagine a neighboring community begins to centralize its power, to take the first skulking steps that will bring the world back to that ugliness. Wouldn't the first community, *knowing what it knows,* do everything possible to stop them? And wouldn't similar communities feel obliged to help? And wouldn't they all do so without imitating their enemy — whatever the risk — because they know to do so amounts to suicide? Isn't it possible they could succeed in cutting out the cancer (and let's face it, that means bloodshed)?

People in the past have won temporary victories over centralized power. The Vikings of Iceland, without a king or general or standing army, held off feudal Europe for five centuries. The American Indians did the same against capitalist Europe. The Vikings lost because their metaphysics went bad — they accepted Christianity and eventually gave up the struggle. The Indians never gave up, but faced an enemy too militarily developed to be stopped. Our anarchistic tribe would face neither of these problems. It would only be at a slight disadvantage organizationally, and metaphysically it would have full knowledge of the alternative to its way of life. Schmookler has universalized a historical pattern, but once that pattern is articulated, isn't it possible to make it part of our present reality as something we act upon and *overcome?*

I suppose what I'm talking about here is wisdom/which one can never guarantee. We are passing through the nightmare of urban civilization $_{\text{r}}$ and we can bequeath to our children the

knowledge that this path led to physical and spiritual impoverishment. We can tell them stories of the Old Earth, its crystalline beauty, and how we shattered it until only brilliant splinters remained to be pieced back together. We can tell them only a commitment to the Land can keep them free. No guarantees. Just hope.

> "… and the rest
> is prayer, observation, discipline,
> thought and action."
> (TS. Eliot, *Four Quartets)*

Christoph Manes has returned to Iceland as a Fulbright scholar after a brief stay with us at the Rendezvous.

5. Schmookler Replies to the Anarchists by Andrew Bard Schmookler

Dear Australopithecus

Thank you for sending me the thoughtful responses to my letter. I thank the writers of these letters.

I do not expect that we will achieve, through this correspondence, a complete meeting of minds. But my correspondents and I do share some fundamental values, and a deep outrage at the destructiveness of our civilization. So, it does seem worthwhile to continue the dialogue to see if greater mutual understanding can be gained.

The basic question at issue is: what is the source of violence and oppression which have plagued humankind, and what is required for eliminating (or greatly reducing) the role of those evils in human affairs? How one diagnoses the ills is, of course, closely related to how one prescribes for their cure.

My correspondents, most of whom describe themselves as anarchists, are understandably offended at my attributing our problems to anarchy. Likewise, since they evidently regard centralized, governing powers as the chief agents of evil, and since they interpret my call for a "world order" as implying a global centralized power, they are outraged by my proposed cure, regarding it as simply the ultimate apotheosis of the disease. But, as several of them indicate, some of the disagreement can be alleviated by clarifying our definitions.

Anarchy and Violence: Definitions and Substance

Let us take, first, the concept of "anarchy." One theme in several of the letters is that it is unfair of me to use anarchy as a synonym for chaos. Mr. Abbey bids us remember that anarchy means not "no rule" but "no rulers." Another correspondent says that "anarchy means lack of hierarchy." The picture of the anarchic society that emerges from these letters is one that is somewhat loosely and informally organized (dare I say governed?) through direct democratic cooperative mechanisms. (Local communities might set up "organs" that could "coordinate" but not "govern," as one correspondent puts it.)

How does this portrait relate to my definition of anarchy? According to my definition, a system is anarchic *to the extent that the system as a whole lacks the means substantially to control*

or prevent reasonably anticipatable unjust violence or other forms of coercive domination by one part of the system against another. (I recognize that by this definition anarchy characterizes not only an ungoverned situation like that in Lebanon but also a tyrannical government like that of Nazi Germany or Pol Pot's Cambodia. The "anarchists" and I thus share a common concern: for eliminating the condition where *the use of power is not adequately goverened.* This condition probably applies — to some degree — to all civilized societies.)

One of the correspondents claims that anarchy is not the Hobbesian war of all against all. But the question remains whether, if society were set up as he would like, that Hobbesian condition would develop.

A system must be able to deal with "reasonably anticipatable" attempts of some to abuse others. One divergence in our analyses seems to be about the nature of the threat with which the system must be prepared to deal. When my correspondents face this threat at all, it is generally in terms of the aberrant criminal *individual.* Manes says that those whose rights are violated must deal with the situation as best they can; while Abbey speaks of "vigilante justice," which he'd prefer to call "democratic justice."

But the anarchic community must be able to deal with more than just the neighborhood bully. Organized gangs will arise — not because human nature is evil, but simply because what can happen generally does. (One correspondent suggests that the world he envisions — having "abolished material deprivation" — will be immune to the evils of power-seeking. This reflects a simplistic view of why our history has been so plagued by the rule of power-maximizing individuals and systems.) This is where *The Parable of the Tribes* becomes relevant, because it shows how a system that cannot defend itself against the worst will develop in directions dictated by the worst. My correspondent underestimate the dangers from uncontrolled power against which a civilized system must guard. This contributes to their overly sanguine view of a world of loosely knit autonomous communities.

An Evolutionary Perspective

Understanding the way our systems evolve is essential to grasping the problem of power. This is what is lacking in Manes' analysis. In several places, Manes draws a chasm of a distinction between violence among centralized states and that among less centralized entities, such as "pre-Columbian tribes going on the warpath, or Vikings sacking Lindisfarne." But even if the difference were as great as he suggests — which I question — the important point is that violence (or, -the operation of power) at one level leads toward the escalation of violence to a new evolutionary level.

This pattern of escalation has been repeated through history and across the world. (Among the works I cite on this subject in *The Parable of the Tribes,* that of the anthropologist Robert Carneiro is most pertinent.) Two correspondents fault me for condemning anarchy on the basis of history's course: just because a fragmented (or, as they would prefer, decentralized) system evolved in destructive ways *once,* they argue, there's no reason to assume an *inherent tendency* for it to do so. But it did not happen only once. Civilization developed more or less independently a half dozen times. The uncontrolled interactions among tribes led to their consolidations into chiefdoms, and the struggle among chiefdoms led to the first imperial systems, and so the initially fragmented communities were ultimately unified under the domination of oppressive centralized

states. This basic pattern was repeated in Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, India, Mesoamerica and coastal Peru.

An evolutionary understanding of the struggle for power tells us whatever way we design our civilization, it must be able to contain the contaminant of power.

Controlling Power

My correspondents are justifiably apprehensive about a single global power, a Hobbesian kind of solution. "A world government equipped with supreme power," writes Abbey, "suggests a planetary tyranny." ("What," writes another, "will protect us against a global state headed by some closet Nazi like , former UN head Kurt Waldheim?") Several correspondents seem to assume that my call for a "world order" entailed establishing such a supreme power. But I, too, would prefer a less centralized solution. (As my correspondents disliked my equating anarchy with the war of all against all, so I disliked their equating "world order". with global tyranny.)

Manes proposes what, in the study of international affairs, is called "collective security." If one community "begins to centralize its power" — which in Maneff demonography stands for the whole panoply of social evils—wouldn't a threatened community "do everything possible to stop them? And wouldn't similar communities feel obliged to help?

Collective security is an appealing solution, allowing each "ally" to remain autonomous. But this approach to security has the fault of its virtues, namely that action that is voluntary may prove unreliable. Machiavelli described this problem, writing in a fragmented Italy which, to his distress, was being picked apart by external powers. The ancient Romans, he wrote, demonstrated that while the "potent prince" is making war upon one, the "other powers that are more distant and have no immediate intercourse with him will look upon this as a matter too remote for them to be concerned about, and will continue in this error until the conflagration' spreads to their door, when they will have no means for extinguishing it except their own forces, which will no longer suffice when the fire has once gained the upper hand." In our century, when Mussolini — the leader of an Italy at last unified — invaded Abyssinia, other nations did nothing, in disregard of their obligations under the collective security agreement of the League of Nations.

Nonetheless, at the global level — given the dangers of creating a single inescapable tyranny — I think that a collective security system, in conjunction with a small international peacekeeping force, might be the best solution. This could only work if the most potent conceivable actors had very limited military power in comparison with the power of the collective response that would check aggression, unlike the situation today where there are powers with virtual veto power over the survival of the globe.

To keep the peace among the smaller communities my correspondents envision, however, I think collective security would be a poor choice. In a network of such small and scattered entities, less formal and more voluntary security systems would be much less effective. Furthermore, the dangers of tyranny at the sub-global level would be less catastrophic. Here I think constituting (or retaining) some kind of limited central power would be necessary.

The Demonization of Central Government

Just as I find my correspondents insufficiently concerned about the dangers of fragmentation (decentralization) of power in civilization, so do they seem to me too sweeping in their condemnation of centralized power.

But there is much in their view of centralized power and its corruption with which I agree. One says, "The state is both a source of and a product of social injustice." This statement — if the "is" were changed to "has usually been" — I would accept as as good a one sentence summary as I could find of a section in *The Parable of the Tribes,* entitled "Men Are Not Ants: The Problem of Power in the Body Politic." That section reinforces the theme in these letters that it is often the worst among us who have risen to, positions of power in civilized systems."

I also agree that the best protection against having power abused is to distribute it equally. In general I also favor participatory, direct democracy wherever it is feasible. Power to the people!

Equating Centralization With Tyranny

However, I think two different meanings of "centralization" need to be recognized: 1) centralization meaning gross inequalities of power between members of a given polity, and 2) centralization meaning the constitution by the people, who retain ultimate power, of a central agency to perform functions on behalf of the whole. My correspondents treat the second as if it were simply and automatically a version of the first, It is not.

Any division of labor, any hierarchical organization, any differentiation of a governing apparatus from the body politic carries real and serious dangers. But . however difficult may be the task of creating a specialized apparatus system of governance without destroying the essentially democratic distribution of power, the task is not futile.

Moreover it is necessary. Not only for solving the problem of "anarchy" as I define it„ but for other purposes as well. I cannot see, for example, how we will protect Earth from those who would despoil it for their own gain without a global system of law, monitoring and enforcement. And that requires a formal apparatus.

Also there are the general problems of making a society work well. My correspondents seem sanguine about the ability of loosely organized, directly participatory systems of governance to create the fair world they envision. A couple mention small-scale or short-lived examples. But what it takes to govern a little collective is as different from what it takes to govern a large, complex social system as are the differences between ventilating a little cottage and ventilating a large building. The cottage ventilates naturally through the cracks; try that in a large building and the air will be dead. Some might like to throw out everything in our society that makes it complex, but I'm not sure that is a realistic or desirable course. And when we do have complexity, the people need to delegate some of their collective governing tasks.

I spend several hours a day on keeping informed, but there's too much I don't know about. Even fulfilling one's responsibility in a representative democracy, let alone a direct one, is very difficult. Our elected national representatives — who generally work harder and are ethically no worse than most people — are overwhelmed with the many issues on which they must decide. They too lean on colleagues, not to mention their innumerable legislative and committee staff people, for expertise in various areas. Making a civilized society work — even for one who makes it a full time job and has the noblest of intentions — is a job of staggering complexity.

A jury, spending weeks weighing testimony, can generally deliver a reasonably just verdict. But the members of the jury focus on a single decision. We can't all serve on all the juries at once to make all the decisions that need to be made.

If the achievement of important social goals *does* require the existence of some formal governmental apparatus, then the question arises whether the costs of having such institutions are worth paying. My correspondents, writing about our representative democracy as if it were essentially equivalent to an oligarchical tyranny, regard the costs as catastrophic. This seems to me a view, like in a carnival fun-mirror, that takes the actual elements but so changes their proportions as to produce a fundamentally distorted picture.

"Representative democracy," I recognize, is rife with dangers of corruption. The "representatives" can become powers in their own right, and the democracy eroded. They can, moreover, be servants of other powerful interests. But though the state is always at least partially "a source and product of social injustice," it is not always equally so. My correspondents condemn "the American Experiment" as a failure, citing the undeniable injustices of power in the US. I concur in many of their critiques. I know that, as one correspondent points out, the framers of the Constitution I praised were seeking a framework to serve their interests, and that subsequently power in the US has been used to help the most powerful few maintain and extend their domination over the many. But those who created the Constitution were not *only* serving themselves, they were also genuinely interested in constructing a just democracy. Consequently, power in the system they created is not *only* in the hands of the few, nor is it *only* used unjustly.

Abbey writes that "government serves the caprice of any person — philosopher or madman — who succeeds in seizing the level's of control." But government can have safety features built into it to prevent such seizure. Indeed, constitutional government in the US has for 200 years protected us — pretty well — from being subject to the caprice of madmen and criminals.

The workings of the American system are deeply flawed, but the differences between this system and the systems that are unadulterated manifestations of social injustice are as important as the differences between what we have and the ideal we can envision.

The Dangers of Revolutionary Utopianism

This leads to a fundamental difference: how we are to use our visions of an ideal world. On this crucial issue, both the right and the left make typical mistakes.

The error of the right is to regard the world as is as the best of all possible worlds. The right is so wedded to its "realism" that it entertains no image of an ideal world.

To the extent that conservative thought is truly based on principle, and not just dedicated to protecting those interests that are best served by the status quo, it understands but exaggerates the evils that must be contained by order. Exaggerating those evils, the right-wing ideologue is often unconcerned with the evils of the existing system.

Several of my correspondents see me as one of these. A few of them describe my thinking as being itself a manifestation of the evil power-systems. (Manes, for example, says I fail to break out of the universe of discourse created by "centralization.") I agree that our power systems do make us think of human life in ways that interfere with our ability to change the world. But lumping me with the apologists of power is a bum rap.

The Parable, of the Tribes is a truly radical critique of civilization. And my work continues to be devoted to providing a deep critique of what makes us destructive and to seeking a path to a

more humane civilization. My coming, during the formulation of *The Parable of the Tribes,* to see our dilemma in terms more tragic than those of the utopian revolutionary was not a cop out; it was working toward a balanced understanding.

If to my correspondents I seem to commit the error of the right, to me they seem to commit the error of the left. The error of the left has two related parts. The first is to condemn utterly whatever falls short of the ideal: whatever is tainted with evil is regarded as wholly evil. The second is to believe that if they can sweep away the world as it is, it will be replaced by the world as they see it in their ideal. The left often underestimates the multiplicity of factors that keep the world from realizing their ideal.

This error, as the history of revolutionary politics shows, is dangerous. A vision that damns indiscriminately all that is imperfect helps create hell on Earth. A policy that collapses the good but deeply flawed into the same file with the fundamentally evil helps create the conditions where evil thrives. If we recklessly sweep aside our flawed political structures, what fills: the vacuum will not be the utopia for which we yearn bitt a still more tyrannical structure.

Wisdom requires a synthesis of the valid understandings of both left and right. We need the left's acute sensitivity to the injustices of the status quo, and the left's ceaseless struggle to set things right. But we also need the right's sense of caution. We need the understanding that some evils are necessary, and that rectifying even those evils that are unnecessary must be done carefully, lest we plunge from bad to worse.

Andrew Bard Schmookler is nearing completion of his sequel to **The Parable of the Tribes**. This second book, which will undoubtedly be important and controversial, will discuss the origins of war.

6. An Anarchist Replies to Schmookler's Reply to the Anarchists by Christoph Manes

Schmookler's response to the various arguments put forward by anarchists against his critique of anarchy is both reasonable and eloquent. It also misses the point. Basically, Schmookler is arguing that anarchy cannot insure "social justice." For the moment let's concede the point (which isn't hard to do since no human condition can insure anything) and assume that his system of representative democracy is a better way to keep outlaws and outlaw communities from abusing others. The problem with this line of thinking is that anarchy, at least as I conceive it, is not so much concerned with social justice as it is with preventing the despoliation of Earth which inevitably follows the establishment of any centralized power, representative or otherwise. The difference in perspectives here is enormous. Schmookler assumes that by creating a system that protects people's rights, the environment will be protected as a *consequence.* I would argue, conversely, that by protecting the environment (and this can only mean returning to a state of pervasive wilderness free from centralized power) humans will have the maximum amount of freedom and "rights" possible in this contingent world of ours. Moreover. I think it can be shown that any system dedicated to social justice through political power not only does not guarantee the protection of the environment; it absolutely depends on its degradation (how else can Schmookler explain the fact that the US, his paradigm for responsible polity, is also the worst threat to natural diversity in the history of nation-states?).

The essential flaw in Schmookler's position is his inadequate critique of power, Schmookler concerns himself mainly with the power relations among people and communities. Yet there is a more basic dimension to power: the power relation between humans and nature. The power to control the lives of others, even for "beneficial" ends as Schmookler desires, derives ultimately from the exploitation of nature. To sustain the kind of society Schmookler envisions would require the continuation of some form of technological domination, which brought on the environmental crisis.

This is an important point: Schmookler's vision relies entirely on the optics of mass, technological society. That's why I can claim — without giving him a "bum rap" as he says — that his thinking remains within the universe of discourse technological culture uses to propagate itself. He argues that since citizens can't be informed about everything, we need specialists to run things. He's right — we do need specialists to keep our nuclear arsenal intact, to keep our factories producing. But Schmookler fails to ask the more fundamental question which anarchists posit: do we really want to keep things running? The question is not, as he claims, how to "control" polluters and despoilers of nature, but rather how to disintegrate the power relations which make this exploitation possible — namely, a centralized state. Despite Schmookler's claim that I am being ahistorical, pre-Columbian Indians and Germanic tribesmen didn't have to regulate chemical dumping and auto emissions. They may have been anxious about revenge-killing, marauding enemies, many human problems, but not about their world being poisoned. Why? They had no central power to make possible the wholesale destruction of the environment.

To return to my original criticism of his position: what are the concrete implications of having a "world order" or any central form of government? It means communication technologies, roads, weapons, factories to produce these "necessities" of government, institutions to train and regulate people, a hierarchy of responsibility and power. In short, it means something like an industrial society.

Schmookler cannot escape this conclusion, yet he did not address this aspect of my article (which was its main point). If his position is to have intellectual integrity he must confront this problem *specifically.* From his writings, one gets the impression that he would be satisfied with a "rational" exploitation of resources, a "rational" abatement of pollution, a "rational" system of production. I hope this is a false impression, because it is exactly the insane rationality of technology, based on humanity's desire for power, which has despoiled our world and enslaved mankind to a way of thinking which is alien to our animal nature.

Of course, Schmookler is right when he says anarchy can't guarantee freedom and justice. Nothing can. But *any* government guarantees we will *not* have freedom and justice, because it is based on the destruction of the wilderness which is our home. Schmookler's, insistence on the essential benevolence of US polity is naive. What does "freedom" mean within the context of a society where inconceivable amounts of power (in the form of capital) are concentrated in a few institutions and corporations. It means, to borrow Samuel Johnson's phrase, we are "free" to work for these institutions in one form or another or starve, to have our lives determined by their projects, which generally involve the devastation of ecosystems. In a technological culture, the terms "freedom" and "justice" have been corrupted to propagate a particular set of power relations. It is surprising Schmookler is so taken in by the pretense of liberty industrial society promotes.

One could write a book about the way technological culture uses "freedom" to enslave its members (Marcuse already has). It is not useful to vindicate our form of power relations, as

Schmookler does, on the grounds that life is better in the US than in the USSR or some other totalitarian state. This is like condoning slavery by showing that slavery in Iron Age Scandinavia was better than slavery in Biblical Egypt. The choice is odious and must be rejected. Anarchy offers the *possibility* of freedom, nothing more. We have the responsibility to seize that possibility because it is the only course consistent with nature and human nature.

Schmookler is also right when he calls our solution utopian. But what does utopian mean within, the context of a technological society? It means that anarchists' thinking is truly critical that it opposes technological culture m its totality, not just its particulars. It means that we have broken out of the universe of discourse it has established to propagate itself and its mad assault upon Earth.

Can Schmookler truly say this of his

own thinking? And if he cannot, in what way does his cure differ from the disease?

Christoph, scholar of deep ecology and Norse literature, plans to compile occasional philosophical deep ecology supplements, entitled Nerthus, *for future issues of* EF!.

7. Schmookler Replies to Anarchist's Replies to Schmookler's Reply to the Anarchists by Andrew Bard Schmookler

As fun as this is, we just can't keep meeting like this. But Christoph Manes has taken our discussion into new terrain, and I can't resist trekking there with him briefly.

Manes leaves behind the war and peace issue and heads for the wilderness. The war and peace issue was at the heart of my essentially Hobbsean critique of anarchy — anarchy seen as inevitably degenerating into Hobbes' "war of all against all"—but Manes now says he is willing to concede me that point momentarily, to focus on what is evidently his chief concern: preservation of wilderness.

Manes now addresses the question: how should human affairs be organized in order to protect the environment? He proceeds to argue that centralization of power is at the heart of the environmental problem, and that anarchy is the only solution.

I share Manes' passion to find a way to change the human system so that the destruction of nature will stop. Many years ago, I had fantasies of what would happen on this planet if all humans suddenly disappeared. If our species was wiped out in some manner that left all else intact, Earth would immediately begin to heal itself. Rivers would grow clear. Overgrazed grasslands would recover their lushness. The primeval forest would break up the concrete. Once again, Earth would be whole. And, without *Homo* so-called *sapiens,* Earth would be safe — at least until, millions of years hence, other creatures (maybe descendents of today's Raccoons) became cultural animals and crossed the fateful threshold into some kind of civilization.

So, I share Manes' concerns about the disease; but we differ on the subject of possible cures. Manes wants power to devolve: we must dismantle the power structures of our civilization and return to wilderness. I want our structures to evolve further: only by creating a better order, more imitative of the intricate order of nature, can we create a benign and viable civilization.

Let me underscore again the point that the further evolution of civilization I advocate is NOT the "all-powerful" world government Robert Goodrich and others have attributed to me in this exchange. My solution to the Hobbsean war of all against all is not the one proposed by Hobbes: that we surrender all our liberties to enthrone an absolute ruler to protect us from one another.

Rather, I am more of Lockean: let's give up only those liberties we must in order to prevent the reign of destruction, and let's create all possible safeguards to protect ourselves from our "protectors."

Whether or not it is possible to *move forward* into a new kind of civilization, we should consider whether it is possible to *return* to the Garden of Eden — to a stateless and environmentally harmonious way of life — as Manes proposes. The problem with Manes' vision of a viable future is that it is based on a past that never was. Like Ronald Reagan's nostalgia for the good old days when everyone was white, self-reliant, and kind to their neighbors (like an ad for Country-time Lemonade), Manes' politics seem premised on illusions about how destructive power has been wielded in the past. Though I admit the comparison is not nice, it is not altogether invidious: both Manes and Reagan want to get government off our backs, as if government were just a disease and not also a cure to other ills that run rampant in its absence.

Manes says that it is the "power relations" of a "centralized state" that make possible the despoiling of nature. Pre-Columbian Indians and Germanic tribesmen, he says, "may have been anxious about revenge killing, marauding enemies, and any number of human problems, but not about their world being poisoned." Why? Because, he answers, there was "no central power to make possible the wholesale destruction of the environment."

I have spent my adult life studying the course of social evolution, and the record does not support Manes' portrait of a pre-state Eden. In our previous exchange, I questioned the historical validity of another of Manes' dichotomies. There, Manes declared a chasm of difference between the violence committed by centralized entities and that by less centralized groups like the Vikings. Manes' eagerness to find the source of all evil in the centralization of power now leads him into a similar distortion with respect to the evil of human despoliation of nature.

It is, of course, true that the Germanic tribes "didn't have to regulate dumping and auto emissions." But it is not true that the human destruction of the environment has historically been — or is now — dependent upon or the consequence of centralized polities.

Arguably the worse ecological damage our species has done to this planet has been through overgrazing. In areas like the Middle East, this process has been ongoing for millennia: herds of domesticated animals, laying bare the topsoil by their over-concentrated and over-protected consumption of plants, have spread desert across mountains and valleys that once were verdant. (The process was slow enough in terms of a human lifetime that no one saw reason to "worry" while contributing to this environmental catastrophe.) Far from being the effect of centralized states, this form of environmental degradation has been the specialty of pastoral peoples who — because of the same qualities of terrain that make herding animals the most suitable means of livelihood — have been the most autonomous from the domination by large power systems.

Another major form of degradation of the biosphere has been deforestation. Those pre-state Germanic tribes of whom Manes seems so appreciative were great practitioners of this art. The stripping of Europe's virgin forests to make room for the simpler systems of human agriculture went on for millennia under the aegis of various Aryan and other peoples before, with the rise of Rome, a Julius Caesar ever ventured forth to subdue the Gauls or Visigoths.

The evidence that refutes Manes' linkage between environmental destruction and powerful central authorities remains visible today. I had the mixed fortune of living for years in beautiful Prescott, Arizona, an area where human carelessness with nature is all too evident. My article on Prescott's Dells that appeared in these pages a few months ago spoke of the libertarian belief of the people in the region in the absolute rights of private property: it was as individuals that

the miners and ranchers began the process of despoliation a century ago, and it is because of resistance to the notion that political power should be used to regulate the pursuit of private ends that the process proceeds relatively unchecked. It is not state power, but the ingrained individualist resistance to state power that facilitates the degradation of Prescott's natural beauty.

Only through the exercise of state power can environmental destruction reliably be stopped. When US Steel fights the EPA over government regulations compelling the company to reduce emissions, is it state power that is the environmental villain?

I'm sure that Manes would be uncomfortable with the people I'm lumping into his side of the argument. His anarchist vision is certainly not intended to make the world safer for the US Steels of the world. But our argument is not directly about technology but about political structures or the lack of them. The problem the anarchist must confront is: *How will you stop those who would use technology to serve their own ends at the costs of destroying nature?*

This is analogous to our previous exchange about violence and injustice. There the issue was not the greedy man who destroys land to mine gold, but the warlord who tramples others to increase his power. The anarchists are not trying to leave the world prey to either US Steel or Ghenghis Kahn. But without state power arrayed against them, what will stop the unfettered expansion of their power at the expense of the well-being of both humans and the biosphere?

Some anarchist analysis may suggest that the lusts for power and wealth that drive the despoilers of the world arise because of our "fallen" condition in a world of centralized politics. It might be presumed that in a world ordered by anarchist principles, these lusts would disappear and there would therefore be no need to erect barriers to contain their free expression. But, with respect to the gangster or the industrial robber baron, such analysis would be unconvincing.

Again, the heart of the present disputation is not, as one might infer from Manes' latest letter, about technology per se but about the question of anarchy against an empowered central government. Manes has brought in technology on the premise that its destructiveness is a function of the emergence of centralized Powers. He says we must go back to decentralization to save nature; I say we must go forward, to develop more fully the political order that is required to protect humanity and nature from destructive human action.

Look at the Third World for another demonstration that it is not devolution but further evolution that we need.

Many environmentalists now say that it is in the nations of the Third World, more than in the more developed industrial nations, that the biosphere is in greatest jeopardy. Why is this? Certainly, poverty and the population explosion are part of it: desperate people, like those denuding the last vestiges of vegetation in the Sahel to provide their meager fuel supplies, do what they must or they perish. But another crucial element is the undeveloped nature of their political systems. The state is often still rudimentary, and such politcal power as there is remains corrupt and unaccountable — as power tends, to be in newly emergent systems — and often is simply an extension of private interests. Thus, greedy entrepreneurs face no obstacles to stripping tropical forests to make luxury furniture. And Corporations that have been compelled to reduce certain practices in the more developed polities of the North (e.g. the use of hazardous chemicals in the work? place) can use them with impunity in the Third World.

We cannot go back. Our species has discovered the means to exercise power — over each other and over nature — and this power can be controlled only by checks against it, that is, by other power. The problem is not that all humans are devils, it is that not all humans'? are saints — whatever the nature of 'their political order or disorder. Some will pursue power-and–possessing

it, will abuse it. The way power operates in a fragmented system, unless it is checked enables those with the advantage of power to dictate the course of the evolution of human systems.

Manes challenges me, saying that my position can have "intellectual integrity" only if I confront the problem of technology. Unlike my position, he says, that of the anarchists is truly *critical* because it "opposes technological culture in its totality." In turn, I challenge the anarchists, saying that their prescription for our ills can be truly therapeutic only if they meet the challenge of containing the contaminant of power. The anarchists' arguments still have not dealt with *The Parable of the Tribes.*

The "condition of our freedom," Manes says, is "being in a state of nature." If he's right, we're in trouble. We've already been in the state of nature, and the rest, to make literal use of a figure of speech, is history. If we could go back, we'd just recapitulate the ugly course we've already taken.

Manes' option is a fond illusion. There is no way to put the djinni of our power back into the bottle. But there is the possibility that we can learn to tame that djinni. This way entails moving forward toward a more whole order, a Lockean land of order that keeps as much power dispersed in the parts as is consistent with preventing injustice and that hedges whatever power must be invested in the center with checks and balances.

Clearly, Manes will have nothing of this "taming" of the djinni. To him, this djinni is the Evil One, and those who try to learn to live with the devil seal a damned fate for themselves. Manes decries efforts to use the weight of law to bend the use of technology into a viable form. "One could easily get the impression," he writes, that I "would be satisfied with a 'rational' exploitation of resources, a 'rational' abatement, of pollution …"

Indeed I would. *What* is rational for *our species is* to conduct *ourselves in a way that can perpetuate the viability of the Earth's living system, on which our survival also depends.* Since the beginnings of civilization, and acceleratedly as human powers have grown, our species has wielded its technology in a way that undermines the foundations of the biosphere? But no creator, as Gregory Bateson says, can win against its environment for long. The pursuit of "victories" of this sort is not rational.

Ten thousand years of civilization acting like a cancer in the biosphere does not mean that no other kind of civilization is possible. To understand how we might tame our hitherto destructive powers, we have to see this human experiment in a larger evolutionary perspective.

To us as mortal creatures, 10,000 years seems like a long time, but in the perspective of the history of life, it is but an instant. The evolutionary process that knit such harmony in the biosphere is laboring also through us to bring this sudden, new offshoot called civilization into harmony with the whole. And one of the channels through which it is working is that same rational faculty by which we came to possess these dangerous powers: the capacity to understand how the world works, and to adjust our actions in it accordingly in order to protect our survival. Increasingly, reasonable people are becoming aware that a truly rational strategy for species surviving must take into account far more than our own immediate needs.

Epochal changes are occurring: slow from the perspective of our day-to-day experience, but rapid in historical terms. The very fact that, unlike the Germanic deforesters, we do worry about the future of our planet is itself one of the hopeful new signs. Even in the course of my own lifetime, the forces of wholeness have made progress in restraining our abuse of nature. In the most developed countries, the means of restraint (virtually nil not long ago) have grown more rapidly than — and thus have gained upon — the momentum of destruction. This is not to say that

the destructive process has yet been arrested, let alone reversed. But I would wager that within the lifetime of a baby born today the degradation of the environment in North America (above the Rio Grande) and perhaps in Europe will be brought to a halt.

"Technological culture" — and that's what "civilization" is does not have to be the strip-mining, smoke-belching sort. Already, the movement of technology — with silicon Chips and electromagnetic communications — suggests that technological development need not be synonymous with ever-increasing intrusion upon nature. I do not presume to know what the technology of a viable civilization would look like, but we need not assume that only in a "state of nature" can human beings live in harmony with nature. Manes denigrates my call tor some sort bf global order as requiring technology (roads, communication, etc.) and thus mandating the continuation of civilization's destructiveness. But the global coordination and regulation that is required to contain the problem of power does not condemn us to perpetuating the blight upon the Earth that our civilization has historically been.

Bringing this viable civilization into being is not impossible, but its birth pangs may be severe. We are in an , evolutionary crisis. Negotiating it successfully will take all the courage and intelligence and caring we can muster.

My anarchist interlocutors and I share fundamental values pertinent to this crisis. Goodrich is right that we are essentially allies. (I've not dealt with Goodrich's critique of me because I'd simply have repeated what I wrote here in the previous exchange.)

Our differences can be important too. The reshaping of our power systems is the only means to save Earth. We meet in the pages of *Earth First!* because we are committed to protecting those sacred "interests" that our systems so shamefully neglect. It would be a shame if people who share those values, led astray by the anarchists' wholesale rejection of our systems, contented themselves with outrage at the abuse of powers and scorned to enter the arena of power where our destiny will be decided.

We cannot afford for some of the most passionate lovers of Earth to sit out what is, for humankind, the only game in town.

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Debate in the Earth First! Journal about 'The Parable of the Tribes'
1985—1987

1. Review of *The Parable of the Tribes* by Australopithecus, *Earth First!* Journal, vol. 5, no. 8 (22 September 1985): page 24.
2. Schmookler Replies to Australopithecus by Andrew Bard Schmookler, *Earth First!* Journal, vol. 6, no. 2 (21 December 1985): page 25.
3. Schmookler on Anarchy by Andrew Bard Schmookler, *Earth First!* Journal, vol. 6, no. 5 (1 May 1986): page 22.
4. Ascent to Anarchy by Christoph Manes, *Earth First!* Journal, vol. 6, no. 6, 1 August 1986, page 21.
5. Schmookler Replies to the Anarchists by Andrew Bard Schmookler, *Earth First!* Journal, vol. 7, no. 2 (21 December 1986): pages 24–5.
6. An Anarchist Replies to Schmookler's Reply to the Anarchists by Christoph Manes, *Earth First!* Journal, vol. 7, no. 8 (23 September 1987): page 23.
7. Schmookler Replies to Anarchist's Replies to Schmookler's Reply to the Anarchists by Andrew Bard Schmookler, *Earth First!* Journal, vol. 7, no. 8 (23 September 1987): pages 26–7.

A friendly debate is started when Earth First! editor John Davis (writing under his favorite pseudonym) reviewed an important book which contradicts the anarchistic tendencies of both the libertarian "rednecks for wilderness" and the more communitarian green anarchists. This sets off the first (and last) extended debate on social philosophy in the pages of Earth First! Formanistas from Davis, Manes, Abbey, and others, defend anarchism, while Schmookler more than holds his own.

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