

# **An Iconoclastic Monstrosity**

**Disability Against Civilization**

Various Authors

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In the vast ocean of social war, some rebels - damaged, frail, or terminally ill - refuse to surrender to the victimization of disability. The world-builders attempt to subdue them with peace-offerings of technospheric assimilation and consumerist comforts. But these rebels – these *monsters* – refuse anything less than a hostile, insubordinate revolt against the domesticating machine...

This zine compiles the voices of some of these rebels. Together in this zine, and individually in their daily lives, they conspire to challenge the victimizing and civilizing narrative of disability discourse, while also taking aim at civilization itself.

*The standardization of mass society necessarily defines an increasing number of people as “disabled” if they do not fit a narrowly prescribed form. The “normal range” of human variation is being shrunk and those outside of this range are stigmatized, pathologized, medicated, and manipulated. The civilized solution to living with people of different abilities is to treat large segments of people like broken clocks in need of new parts or regular servicing. This approach is in accordance with the standard operating procedure of civilization to understand every human problem as a technical problem; it allows us to discharge our responsibility to care for those around us by developing new products, offering new services, and building new infrastructure. The need for relationships is erased. In this way, civilization allows us not to care for others who may need assistance, which is to say, it allows others not to care for us when we need assistance.*

- From the zine “CIVILIZATION WILL STUNT YOUR GROWTH: Defending Primitivism from Accusations of Ableism” by Ian E. Smith

## **“On Anti-psychiatry and Emotional Crisis” by Anonymous**

I don't want to adapt.

Therapists are professionals who earn money to make us accept the constraints of society.

The psychologist “diagnosed” me and “gave me” medicine to cure my “mental illness”. In fact, he put me a mental label to give himself the power to manage my inadequacy, gave me medication for chemical control of my emotions, and when he felt that I was not réinsérable or might disturb public order, he kept me locked in the hp by being humiliated and tortured.

The psychologist told me he just wanted to “be there”, and “help me by the word”. In fact, I had the right to his compassion feint by professional obligation and his well-being of left bourgeois.

The Analyst offered to help me “to make my unconscious desire come out”, as if my desire had chances to emerge without making too many waves in the current world. In fact, it does not basically question the structures such as patriarchy or money. Getting to his level of resignation “good enough”, this is the highest idea of freedom it is.

This society has been crushing me since the birth of the weight of all its standards. How do you want these therapists, who all seek their way to make me accept the world as it is, can be of any help? By making me believe that the only solution to my discomfort is in a certain degree of submission to Trying to kill yourself sometimes simply means that we don't want to lead the life we lead anymore. It takes a huge dose of courage and strength to try to end your own life. We can use this strength to end it with everything that will hurt us, starting with school, family, work, false-pretend, fears, shame, and all commitment to the values of society!

”Crazy” by breaking everything at home, insulting police, where by making up imaginary worlds, sometimes simply means that you can’t stand the unbearable anymore. How do we convince therapists to convince us that these reactions are pathological?! If we enter ”crisis” with this world, it is not to go to a psy we would need (even if many have no other choices ) but to find the real help of partners who understand our evil and share our desires, and then act directly against everything that oppresses us.

Our paths are multiple, sometimes extreme, never pathological! Let’s not leave the therapists the power to give meaning to our ”crisis”; who knows if each of them is not an opportunity to release? Let us not be alone in the face of their power that isolated: let us share all the experiences, from the most modest to the most daring, that allowed us to do without hassle or escape from their prisons. Let’s find other ways to cross our extreme states without falling against walls. Let’s determine ourselves when, by whom and how we want to be helped and help others. Let’s create our own means of helping and fight, and attack without

delay what we are...

Solidarity with all the oppressed in struggle!

## **“Disabled, Black, Trans and a Primitivist? Why I dislike the ProCivilization Narrative” by BLACK LUDDITE**

I believe that civilization and its byproducts are inherently limiting. As someone whose labeled disabled in the modern world, I despise civilization and what it has done for people like me. The left would call me a fascist, that I am promoting eugenics, transphobia, and social conservatism when this is the farthest from what I believe. The anti-left, anti-tech, anti-civ primitivist movement is liberation for those who are just seen as the prefilled metaphysical boxes as: the trash of society, the sinners, the lucifers of the world! These accusations are based on the oversocialization of left spaces which is followed by extreme uncritical morality. Ted Kaczinsky coined the term oversocialization; he describes its manifestation as, “[The] person cannot even experience, without guilt, thoughts or feelings that are contrary to the accepted morality; he cannot think ‘unclean’ thoughts”<sup>1</sup> . In this case, the leftist thinks that by trying to defend minority groups (trans people, disabled people, people of color) they are on the untouchable high horse. However, this high horse is not infallible.

The beginnings of civilization begin with the advancement of agriculture from hunter-gather based food collection to the Neolithic Revolution in Mesopotamia roughly 10,000 BCE<sup>2</sup>. This shift is where the core of what I believe to be the issues of human start.

Christopher Ryan, author of *Civilized to Death* , wrote “We tend to confuse progress with adaptation, for example. Adaptation—and, by extension, evolution—doesn’t presuppose that a species is getting “better” as it evolves, merely that it is growing more suited to its environment...” and in this shift is where progress fails humanity.<sup>3</sup> Gender becomes a dominant factor because social life became centered around sedentary agriculture meanwhile in pre-civilized society, they tended to be more egalitarian. Women were considered “lesser” because their duties weren’t as

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<sup>1</sup> John Kaczinsky, *Industrial Society and Its Future* , 24.

<sup>2</sup> “Neolithic Revolution,” *History*, <https://www.history.com/topics/prehistory/neolithic-revolution> , (August 23, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Ryan, *Civilized to Death: The Price of Progress* (New York: Avid Reader Press) 10.

physically laborious as men<sup>4</sup>; they had been downgraded from a more egalitarian free society to being confined and seen as sexual beings to bring heirs to metaphysical concepts such as land and monetary inheritance. Additionally, this era marks the beginning of systemic oppression(s). Social classes begin to form due to specialization of labor and accumulation of major resources (food & water). You can notice that there is already incredible amounts of stress that are caused by adapting to the new stressful environment.

There have been 'positives' that have occurred as a result of civilization. There have been helpful medical advances in helping those with once incurable illnesses or technological advancements so we can travel/communicate more at ease, but at what cost? Millions of brown and black people all over the world who are treated like shit by white corporations? Or how about the thousands of black people used in the south as medical experiments without their consent? That vaccine you put in your arm isn't without bloodshed of my ancestors.

Many leftists refuse to acknowledge that they come from places of privilege and aren't looking at the whole picture; what had to happen in order for these luxuries. They can exclaim their emphasis for equal rights but will often forget the ones they so call are advocate for are being exploited. This doesn't even begin to cover the environment. Does the leftist think their 'fully automated luxury communism' just magically appears by overthrowing capitalism? No, it's idealist. The only way that that pipe dream could work is if there is total ecological destruction. Destroying the planet just to go to space?

My background gives me an interesting critical lens on civilization and the events that have happened as a product of it. I could say the enslavement of 10 million Afrikans by christian white supremacists; the idea of stratification on who is 'superior' by something superficial as skin color is very much a result of civilization. I can talk about the ableist idea that certain mental health differences are a disease or disorder needed to be fixed so I can function with how the outside wants you to be. My traumatic experiences may not be the same for everyone but, is it not concerning how it is so common with minority groups that are considered second class citizens? Why is 'second class citizen' even a thing to begin with?

The ideas of even being a superior citizen because of [insert reason here] is ludacris and seen almost only in civilization.

I have experienced psychosis for over a decade, I'm black, and transgender. I will remain critical of civilization and its bane it's had and will continue to have on my existence.

The constant anxieties of living as myself and the likelihood of being abused or assaulted plague my mind. I am tired of feeling like I need to live in such a confined box that capitalistic christian cishet whites want me to be. My psychosis is not simply just a medical deviation from 'normality'; I embrace this title and refuse to be medicated by a medical system that has no interest, besides monetary, in my being. My anti-psychiatry position comes the lense that humans shouldn't just be medicated to fix their issues when the issues run deeper than this. My trauma facilitated my psychosis, but I believe that the things that have happened to me are a result of living in a world of stress, overcrowding, systemic oppression, etc. All of these are distinctly a result from civilization and it would be impossible for these to appear in precivilized life. My gender identity and just the concept of gender wouldn't have played such a huge role due to the structure of hunter-gatherer societies. Christianity, through colonization and domination, forced

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<sup>4</sup> Casper Worm Hansen et al., *Gender Roles and Agricultural History: The Neolithic Inheritance* (Odense: University of Southern Denmark) 2.

millions of people who didn't have strict binary male and female categories to adhere to their ideas of gender and sexuality. And being black? I have the world against me for something that was a simple chance of genetics.

To the communist who sees that civilization and progress is beneficial, I ask: what makes you think that socialism will be any different? There might be a switch in economics but that doesn't change that the structure of civilization and what it can bring. I am against it all because I know that the stress of my unchangeable characteristics would be minimal if I didn't live in such a setting. My ancestors were able to live relatively peaceful lives, free from the fascistic hellscape that is the world at the moment. I will always see civilization as a setback or ironically regressive compared to the lives once lived by early Homo sapiens.

Death to progress! Long live the unwanted minorities of this world; we embrace anarchy and take control of our lives! established order, these professionals only increase my despair. And not only do they not help me, but in addition, they draw money, prestige, good conscience and power from their active and insidious participation in the control of the whole population.

## **“My Fractured Mind and Body: A Critique of Civilization and Modern Medicine” by Artxmis Graham Thoreau**

Living with my disabilities is difficult, to say the least. Not because I can't function in our toxic, standardized world, but because I am expected to. My 'issues' go under the radar to the unknowing. It's almost always contained within. Within my fractured mind and body. I have Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI) and DID — that means I have Brittle Bone Disease and Dissociative Identity Disorder.

No, don't bring up M. Night Shyamalan's *Split* or *Glass*.

Osteogenesis Imperfecta has weakened my teeth, ruined my joints and laid waste to my muscles. I am gifted to have never broken a bone as I am in my 20's. Some are killed as infants by this disability, and some go their whole lives without any idea they have it.

Dissociative Identity Disorder manifests itself early on in those who deal with it. It is the presence of two or more distinct personality states, paired with amnesia between the two states. For example, if I [Artxmis] am in control of the body [fronting], another identity may not be aware of what I did, felt, or thought during that time. This goes both ways. I have times where I have seconds of memory missing, or months. I don't remember most of my Junior year of high school.

All of this together makes for a nearly invisible suffering. I can struggle to climb stairs and keep stable relationships.

But I still reject civilization, technology, and domestication.

I still exalt Wildness, call for re-wilding, and hate modern medicine.

I do this, not because I am self-hating or abelieft, but on the contrary. I hope those who struggle with mental and physical illnesses can find solace in Wildness and dance on the ashes of Civilization. *On a note: I don't think a hike cures depression.*

Civilization is a standardizing force. It takes individuals and attempts to organize, categorize, and dominate them. It also presents a narrow array of 'ideal' members. For those who do not fit into this category, they are given two options: assimilate or be cast out. This is often the role of Modern Medicine. It handles many of Civilization's pariahs. It is best seen as a filtering system.

(By Modern Medicine, I am referring in most cases, to Westernized/Colonial Medicine. However, one can argue that Medicine, generally speaking, with the rise of any Civilization, can be attacked in the following way.)

As Civilization grows, it requires a larger worker-force. This is the larger impact of many rights movements. Women's rights, while giving other legal and social ability to women, gave them a wider access to the workforce of Civilization. Medicine, in its modern form, also acts in a similar way. If one cannot fit into Civilization [Techno-Capitalism, Industrial Society, Socialist experiments, etc..], you must adapt.

Taking the prior notion, we can begin to understand Modern Science isn't about helping or enabling people, it is about the assimilation of any and all into becoming beneficial to mainstream society. Many may call to attention genetic diseases or issues such as cancer. *The Evolution Institute* among others claim that there is a contradiction to our evolutionary traits and our contemporary environment. Lack of exposure to bacteria and diseases as children wrecks havoc on our immune system. Agriculture plays hell with our teeth and digestive systems. Domestication of plants and animals has created new diseases, unknown to our species prior.

Even Birthing culture has an effect on breast cancer! *The Evolution Institute* claims, "Modern reproductive patterns also contribute to breast cancer risk. In hunter-gatherer populations women typically start having children around age 18, have 5 children and wean them around age 3. This is very different from modern populations where women typically start having children at age 26, have an average of 1.86 children and typically wean them before 6 months of age. Our ancestors probably had reproductive patterns similar to modern-day hunter gatherers and therefore had far fewer menstrual cycles than we modern humans have. Modern reproductive patterns like these are associated with higher risk of hormone positive breast cancers."

In addition to how one feels the effects of Civilization during their lifetime, they may even have predisposition to illnesses *before they are born*. Epigenetics is defined as "Epigenetics is the study of heritable changes in gene expression (active versus inactive genes) that do not involve changes to the underlying DNA sequence — a change in phenotype without a change in genotype — which in turn affects how cells read the genes," by *What Is Epigenetics*.

For example, those living in dense urban areas, especially around certain pollutants like air and water pollution, are at a higher disposition to cardiovascular disease and cancers. This is especially true for African American communities, according to a 2017 research paper titled 'Epigenetics and Health Disparities'.

A 2009 paper, 'Epigenetic mechanisms in schizophrenia' stated urban settings played a role in psychotic disorders. The paper had this to say: "Reports indicate that psychoses seem to aggregate in urban environments and in lower socioeconomic groups. For example, Afro-Caribbean immigrants to the United Kingdom and especially their offspring have an approximate 10-fold increased risk of schizophrenia, and ethnic minorities in Britain have at least a 3-fold increase in the incidence of schizophrenia. These observations have led some to propose that schizophrenia might be a disease of epidemiological transition, or in other words, a disease that rises in incidence during the development of a society."

Modern Medicine is also a centralized practice. It attempts to constrain itself into one realm of society — 'actual medicinal use.' By this I mean, medicinal use understood within the modern consciousness. Vaccines, advanced surgeries, or other medical procedures. It also is held within a diverse hierarchy-structured culture — Doctors of varying specialties, nurses, nurse assistants, etc.

Contrast this to Medicine in pre-civilized cultures. This form crossed between the realms of social cohesion, such as religious practices and peace-making; ethnobotany and other bioregional knowledge; as well as ‘actual medicinal use.’ Medicinal practices varied among cultures, of course. It may lie in the hands of Medicine-Men, Witch-Doctors, Shamans, and other spiritual leaders, or may be practiced by the larger community. Some cultures may put more emphasis on ceremonies and magic, seeing illnesses as spirit-related. Others may have used less religious plant and herbalist practices.

Psychiatry, in spite of many apparent benefits, is focused on ‘fixing’ people to be able to work. Psychiatrists are like mechanics and technicians who fix machines, so that the factory keeps moving. Some even argue it is not a form of medicine in a true sense, but a social institution that hides under the guise of Modern Medicine, using its glorification for its own ends.

Personally, I was and still am an energetic person. I was diagnosed with ADHD in the first grade and given medication. While I was too young to recall the details now, I was really hurt by this diagnosis, and it still has lasting effects on me. Many have similar stories and experiences.

To cite a certain anti-technology thinker, “The concept of ‘mental health’ in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress.”

As others have argued, and as I have above, Civilized Medicine, and perhaps all of Science, is but a trend towards adjusting individuals to the needs of Civilization itself. Where does it end? Inventions like CRISPR introduces itself as the solution to genetic disposition to illness, but we cannot honestly admit it will only be used for that, and not for racist or fascistic purposes. It is not hard to imagine what leaders like Hitler would do with such an advancement.

In fact, I urge supporters of psychiatry and psychology to investigate its use under the National Socialist Party in Germany in the 30’s and 40’s. The program was called “The Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases.” It targeted those with, or children of those with diagnosed mental retardation, schizophrenia, and even alcoholism. The Action T4 was the systematic mass murder via eugenics of those in psychiatric hospitals. Between 270,000 and 300,000 died. Methods such as gas chambers were used, laying the foundation for the Holocaust.

Similar practices existed outside Nazi Germany, such as in the United States in the early 1900’s. Henry G. Goddard, American psychologist and eugenicist was one of the many to discuss how to deal with the “unfit” or “feeble-minded.” For him, he saw segregation was the main political move to avoid mixing of “bad” genes. Others in his field advocated for immigration bans, even exterminations. Often, women in poverty were seen as being at the highest disposition to being “unfit.”

I am not going to lie and pretend some pre-civilized cultures didn’t abuse, cast out, or otherwise neglect sick and/or disabled people. My point is to bring to light that Modern Medicine is one of the many attempts to solve the numerous amount of Modern Society’s contradictions, often those that are contradictions between our evolution and our current environment. I also do not advocate some idealist return to Paleolithic life. It is entirely possible future medicine may resemble a synthesis of past and present.

I also cannot deny certain benefits of medicine and science in our age, but anarchists would not accept the American police force on the basis that they also do good, such as catching rapists. They attack the police force because it enforces the system at large first, and subsequent or even corresponding “good” is a secondary concern. Modern Medicine is a similar institution.



## **“Dismembering Abstraction” by naavo**

There has never been a point in my life where I’ve felt that I “fit” in this world - words confuse me, sounds are difficult to process; even as I write this, I struggle to find the right words to convey what I feel, what I think, and what I have experienced on a daily basis for as long as I can remember. The scar that “learning disabled” has left on my life and my body is an ugly one. One that has come with severe consequences and punishment because it means that I’m “slow,” “stupid,” and “unworthy” while still being treated as a project for people to “fix” out of either pity or spite. The insidious arm of civilization known as language had captured and strangled me long before I ever had a chance at asserting myself and my autonomy, and it’s an arm that I aim to sever once and for all.

Language, a tool of mediation between the individual and direct experience, is necessarily schismatic. This schism extends to interpersonal relationships, i.e. through the sorting of bodies and minds into abstract categories such as “able-bodied,” “disabled,” “able-minded,” etc. Abstraction is the root of civilization, and thus the root of our current crisis. These abstractions do not actually exist in any real, tangible sense but have very real consequences and inflict violence upon people’s lives. These abstractions are described and reified through language; language is used to separate the individual from their direct experiences and perceptions and instead put symbolic mediation in place of those experiences and perceptions. It creates a situation of domination by the nonexistent. The purpose of this domination by the nonexistent is to name and categorize the world and its occupants in order to place them into the service of maintaining civilization. Here, we can begin to articulate why people are defined through abstractions such as “disabled,” “able-bodied,” and so on: for the purpose of control, to define those who are “useful” and “useless” for the world-eating Leviathan that holds us hostage, to define those who are to be ushered into the fields, factories, and workshops, and those who are to be marginalized, pushed away, removed, and done away with.

As civilization’s primary mode of communication, language delegitimizes alinguistic and non-symbolic forms of communication because these are not forms that can be interpreted by civilization. Therefore, those that cannot aptly express themselves via the symbolic are isolated, pushed into the margins, and are subsequently labelled as populations that are to be removed, either through “fixing” or “curing” them, or through outright extermination. One example of this is special education - children are systematically categorized, separated and subsequently isolated from their peers with varying degrees of harm inflicted on them in an attempt to mold them into “productive members of society.”

Nonverbal children and children with language disorders are forced to fit into a standard of communication with the hopes that one day they, too, can uphold the lifeways that civilization forces upon us. If they cannot fit these standards, adults with disabilities are separated and placed into special homes into the hands of a “professional caretaker,” relegated away from larger society, out of sight and out of mind typically against their will. The “inability” to reproduce this mode of communication makes people undeserving of agency according to the civilized – if you cannot speak their language, if you cannot read or write, then you are to live a life on someone else’s terms or outright discarded.

In my own life, special education was one of the first spheres of intense isolation that I experienced. I remember feeling like I was drowning in all the expectations placed on me that I could not meet, choking on words, concepts, and ideas that I could not see or feel and therefore could

not even begin to process. It took me a long time to recognize the abuse I suffered for what it was and that it was not a true reflection of myself and the unique ways in which I understand the world. This realization is also true for the abuse I've suffered outside of the classroom – in daily life, at work, etc. – and has been a strong thread leading me to an anticiv perspective.

However, this has not been so for many, especially those who don't necessarily have to consider the consequences of abstraction. It is not enough to take an anticiv perspective without considering the ways in which language, symbolic thought, and abstraction restrain us. We can't realistically strive towards freedom, whatever that may mean to you, without critically analyzing the role these play in our individual and collective oppression. It is not enough to recognize the ways that technology mediates our lives and experiences without recognizing the role language plays in it.

It is easy to say that we could just not use our phones and computers anymore and engage in face-to-face communication, and while living in face-to-face communities surrounded by the people we love is an important step in alleviating the pressures of symbolic thought, it won't rid us of the violence that language inflicts in even the subtlest of ways.

## **“a call for mad escape” by queer cannibal collective**

### **we cannot work for the machine; the machine will never work for us**

the domestication of the human-animal<sup>5</sup> is a central & foundational process of civilization, acting as the primary force of its continuation. without continuously domesticating humans, civilization (including its ongoing domestication of the rest of the world) could not maintain itself.

for those who seek the destruction of civilization, the undoing of this domestication is a necessity. to find movement towards this undoing / destruction, we look to where a challenge arises, unbidden, from within the civilized. here we see innumerable holes in the hegemony of domestication: the madness of its subjects.

as domestication contorts the human-animal into the human-person, there are those unable or unwilling to conform to its demands. these inabilities and refusals became taxonomized first as a sickness of the spirit, and now of the mind. in either paradigm, a fault is located within particular animals<sup>6</sup>. we are seen in silhouette; unmet needs and dislocated desire are only visible as aberrations in shape. the terrain of medicine thus serves to collapse innumerable experiences into a handful of diagnoses. the ways we have survived so far in this world, however well or poorly they work for us, are cast as failures to “live properly”.

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<sup>5</sup> that is, the separation of the human-animal from the world. human domestication is brought about through the abstraction of real experience, including the division of that experience into the inner world of the self and the outer world of the senses, the taxonomizing of being and action into calcified and regimented forms (such as the endless iterations of identity formations that dictate acceptable/unacceptable ways of relating – the division of human-animals or their actions into morally permissible and morally impermissible, the countless methods developed for determining personhood, etc etc).

<sup>6</sup> though recent psychiatric opinion admits that certain specific divergences – depression, anxiety disorders, etc. – can be created by the contexts of one's life, the responsibility to “fix” oneself still rests neatly on the individual. the goal of treatment remains the same: to become a productive member of civilization. we are not satisfied with a liberal “acceptance” of divergence that never questions the systems that traumatize us. psychiatry makes claims to lessening the pain, but it cannot stop the bleeding.

we deny this assertion. a failure to happily engage with the mechanisms of civilization is not a failure to live. we do not fail at learning when we cannot be schooled; we do not fail at sustaining ourselves when we cannot be employed. we are not isolated when we cannot engage with the symbolic. on the contrary! it is the proper functioning of these mechanisms that rids our lives of living, our beings of being, and leaves us adrift in a manufactured world of abstraction, disconnected from our desires. our inability to take part in them demands we seek something else. how does a faulty gear find life in a machine made to rid us of ours?

**we seek our own way out**

a clarity arises when 'cannot' coincides with 'will not.' when full recognition comes of the impossibility of living in this world, the turbulence of the socio-political resolves into an understanding of our status and our enemies.

it becomes clear that in relation to this society we are a type of enemy. more precisely we are the counter-example to the successful production of a human-person. we are the unrepentant waste product; we are somewhat fearsome but emphatically disgusting. we are the not-quite.

according to the institutions that attack us, there is a cure. they tell us there are ways into the wonderful realm – representation, acceptance, inclusion, a community. but there is no “health” in domesticated ways of living, and we are confident that their words are lies: no wonderful realm exists, productive workers want to kill themselves too, and nowhere in this wasteland is there any community.

despite institutional attempts at assimilation and their rhetoric of inclusivity, there will always be some reject product of domestication. if we are not it, if the mold is recast to indulge us, there will be other Others. for civilization's internality to be legible there *must* be an Outside,<sup>7</sup> and the mad hold a specific and peculiar positioning as part of it. we are the Outside that opens up within – we are holes in the Inside, unpredictable tears in its fabric. when the illusion of reality is stretched too thin and breaks, we are those spaces.

our position within makes it clear that their division of the Outside from the Inside is a fabrication, a construct necessary for civilization's purposes. the division is only reflected in lived experience insofar as it is forced to through social violence. still, they cannot force it to exist in *entirety*: their narrative maintains hegemony but cannot fully obscure the living mass that flows and fluctuates beneath it.

there is a world beyond the World of abstractions that lies over us like a shroud, trying desperately to hide the pullulating and pustulous life of which we are and have always been a part. human-persons work tirelessly to wall that life off (to lock themselves Inside), but in madness, we glimpse the world past the shroud whether we wish to or not. in our ability to resist the abstracting of the world, to blind ourselves to representation & the symbolic, to be as staunchly useless to the machine as possible, we are seeking exit from the cage.

our experience of living in this world as what we are is undeniable. it is perhaps the only thing that we cannot deny. we have an opportunity here; in this way the mad have a particular sort of blessing. by our inadherence to the cushioning and guiding effect of the normative social reality, we feel this world in a way that those completely inside the reality cannot.

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<sup>7</sup> by Outside we mean the space that civilization seeks to conquer. the Outside is nature as the word is typically used; it encompasses both the material resources that are necessary to continue production as well as the symbolic space that must exist in order to define the Inside. the Outside is the darkness that is infinitely black for those who sit at the fire. the Outside is what agents of order (military, police, doctors, and all the rest) protect decent citizens against.

our knowledge is painful. but for us, would it be any less painful to ignore it? we believe it is in our best interest to use our experience to make whatever kind of escape we can. if our madness is a hole in domestication, we must resist the forces pushing us to seal up, to stitch ourselves shut; we must instead tear ourselves open, rip at the fabric of the Inside as best we can.

there is no life for us in here, not as the creatures we are. to live we must embrace madness, and help each other to get out.

## **“Wild Medicine” by Ria Del Montana**

Thirty years ago an autoimmune disease showed up in my blood. I researched the noxious artificial drugs and ripped up the scripts. Rheumatologists, the specialists who cause the highest rate of death by prescription pad, treated me like an outlaw for refusing their expertise. Then they treated me like a bizarre curiosity when I told them how ethnobotanical remedies soothe what ails me. They felt disempowered asking me to spell the names of plants to document in my file.

Even if modern healthcare were safe and effective, civilization and medicine collaborate in doling out enough ‘goodies’ to maintain order, keeping separate their stratified ‘haves’ and ‘have nots.’ The disparity of institutional healthcare serves as civilization’s warning to march in-between the lines, or you too will languish in famine and pestilence. But, like schools and jobs, medicine is a ruse propelling civilization’s ecocide rooted in belief of progress. That belief is just too scary to see as false, we’re just so steeped in the progress trap, feels like there’s no option, progress has become the only world humans know.

What is the price of progress? Medicine participates in modernity’s haughty carnage of ‘have not’ Earth and animals – torturing and killing test lab animals, polluting waterways with toxic drugs spawning fish and amphibian mutations, trashing land with heaps of synthetic waste products. Feeding cardiac inpatients health-harming slayed animal bodies, to later require more drugs and surgeries – like a well-oiled machine.

It’s not that I automatically decline modern medicine, but I intuitively pick & choose. Broken bone – ok, I’ll take a cast. I feel entitled to exploit modernity’s techno-topia as I choose. It has stolen humans’ wild knowledge and wild home where wild foods and medicines live. It causes a calamity of human and nonhuman ailments and deaths, earning as much trust and respect as a pathological serial killer. From technology’s pollution to car crashes, to house fires, to depression suicides to climate change disasters, the list is endless. While the pre-civ wildscape carried a different set of perilous risks, early human ailments and deaths may pale in comparison.

Neanderthal healthcare for both acute and chronic severe needs treated with simple, effective remedies was widespread. There were individuals with injuries and illnesses requiring extensive levels of daily care over months and even years. Feldhofer Neanderthal (~40,000 y.a.) recovered from a severe arm fracture requiring immobilizing his limb and with provided food, water and protection, and received long term care for a chronic disease. Shanidar I (~45,000 y.a.) received care to survive for at least a decade with a withered arm, damaged leg, probable blindness in one eye and probable hearing loss. La Chapelle aux Saints (~60,000 y.a.) was cared for with severe osteoarthritis and a systemic disease. Just caring companions and primitive means, no need for committing carnage.

Early humans also cared for their own medical needs. For example, anthropologists found an ailing Neanderthal from El Sidrón cave with an abscessed tooth and an intestinal parasite

causing diarrhea. DNA evidence analyzing food in his dental calculus found he ate a steady diet of *Populus*, which contains the natural painkiller salicylic acid, the active ingredient in aspirin, as well as plants covered in *Penicillium* mold, the antibiotic penicillin. Earlier humans, like all animals, found their medicines and healing strategies through deeply caring relationships, instincts and sharp primal senses waning under civilization.

Science doubts and mocks primitive wisdom. Reawakening healthcare animality shifts the locus of control back to ecology, reengaging belonging and symbiosis. While advanced medical technologies outperform healthcare of earlier times, especially for children, how many injuries and illnesses are caused by technology? And is it worth the cost of techno-ecocide for all? I sense most animals, including me, prefer wild healthcare and our stolen land & lives returned. Progress retorts: Do I want a child to die of an easy to treat infection? No more than I want a child to get struck by a bullet, or eat grandma's pills, or commit suicide over what humans are doing to the world.

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## **"The Conditioned Dysthymia of Civilization" by Baba Yaga**

At nine years old, my world went gray.

That is the only way I have ever been able to describe it.

Colors flattened, scents blurred, sounds faded. The intensity and enthusiasm I had for life was stolen away, and I scarcely knew it.

At eleven years old, I began to hurt myself to try to retrieve the colors. I was alive and desperate and I thought I could drag the rainbow kicking and screaming back into my life. I remembered what it was to see in vibrancy, and I was prepared to die to bring it back.

At fourteen years old, I began to forget what color looked like. I began to give up hope that I could see it again. Not on my own, anyway. It was then that I started therapy, and it was then that I started to wonder if chemicals could help me see again.

At eighteen, after being denied them for years, I was granted the pills I had begged for, pushed for, fought for.

Once a month, they asked me, "How do you feel?" and I had no answer. "Different," I might tell them.

"Better?" they might press.

"No. Just different."

So they would raise the dosage or change the chemical, over and over and over, but I remained the same. Different, but not better.

I wondered if I would recognize the rainbow if I saw it again.

I wondered if seeing the rainbow would be worth the side effects.

Anorgasmia, headaches, agitation, nausea, sweating, and brain zaps.

I accepted the idea that I would never enjoy sex the same way again. I accepted that I could never share a bed with anyone who wouldn't be understanding of the fact that I would soak the mattress with sweat every night. I accepted that I would be plagued with the random sensation of an electrical shock through my brain. I accepted that the mood swings I experienced would be much more intense and irrational and that I would sometimes burst into tears without apparent reason. I accepted that I would struggle to complete my thoughts or understand concepts that once came easily to me.

I accepted all these things to scratch an itch that had embedded deep within my bones.

And it never did.

I was never cured. I felt more and more failed by each chemical I tossed into the emptiness I felt.

With no small amount of despair, I began to accept that there might not be a chemical fix for my problems. But I accepted the idea that despite this, the sober, unmedicated me must be insufferable to those around me. I could hardly stand myself- how could anyone else?

One day, in between sobs, I asked my partner if they would still love me if I went off of the pills. They wrapped me in a hug and reassured me that of course they would. I felt unconvinced, but if I was no better for the pills, would I really be any worse without them?

On my own, without the guidance of the doctor I had relied on for every turn previously, I began to slowly wean myself off. My brain felt like it was not my own. The lightning that jolted through my head came even more frequently – sometimes so many times in a row that I had to sit down and wait for it to pass. Simple thoughts seemed to come as though fish swimming through wet concrete – thick and slow and difficult.

Eventually, long after my tapering was complete, these symptoms slowed too, though sometimes I feel as though they have altered me permanently. And eventually, I came to believe that the problem had never been with my brain – at least, not in the way I had been taught. Without the pills, I was not 'chemically imbalanced'. I was traumatized, yes – both on a personal level and on a societal level – but I was not broken, sick, or damaged.

Maybe my rainbow had gone the way of my childhood – tethered down to a tiny desk and scheduled into oblivion. Maybe my rainbow had gone the way of my innocence – manipulated and violated and forced into submission. Maybe my rainbow could not be painted back into existence with serotonin and dopamine, but rather uncovered from under the dirt of trauma and the muck of societal expectations.

I see flashes of color sometimes now, years after all the drugs have faded from my system – littered among the stolen goods in a shopping cart; flitting between the bodies at a riot; sparkling in the wreckage of a fallen cop car; blinking in the gaps between freight train cars; falling from the lips of my loved ones – only a glimpse, never for long, and always out of the corner of my eye, but more than a drug ever showed me.

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