

A text dump on 'Fairytale from Ecotopia'

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Revitalizing Terrorism

Subtitle: On Immanentizing the Eschaton in Today's World (In Memory of Dr. Leslie Combs)

Source: <www.fairytalesfromecotopia.substack.com/p/revitalizing-terrorism>

Date: May 18, 2010

“The universe according to Bohm actually has two faces, or more precisely, two orders. One is the explicate order, corresponding to the physical world as we know it in day-to-day reality, the other a deeper, more fundamental order which Bohm calls the implicate order. The implicate order is the vast holomovement. We see only the surface of this movement as it presents or “explicates” itself from moment to moment in time and space. What we see in the world — the explicate order — is no more than the surface of the implicate order as it unfolds. Time and space are themselves the modes or forms of the unfolding process. They are like the screen on the video game. The displays on the screen may seem to interact directly with each other but, in fact, their interaction merely reflects what the game computer is doing. The rules which govern the operation of the computer are, of course, different from those that govern the behavior of the figures displayed on the screen. Moreover, like the implicate order of Bohm’s model, the computer might be capable of many operations that in no way apparent upon examination of the game itself as it progresses on the screen.”

-Dr. Allan Leslie Combs

Some Background:

The following paper was written for an “Integral Sustainability” course I took with Allan Leslie Combs in 2010, who recently retired with philosophers Rick Tarnas and Brian Swimme a year after Robert McDermott.

You can see Leslie (who I just learned passed away a few days ago and had his memorial today), in his Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness forum presentation [here](#).

Listening to the memorial, several things came up:

Leslie was a “foundation stone,” a pure soul, and trickster, whose radiant being shone, without pressure, without force, to support students studying their interests. I am not sure when he started going by his middle name, but when he told our class he wanted to go by Leslie (Spring 2010), it felt new; I would learn today this had been a way to keep his heart chakra open following a workshop he attended.

At the time I was simultaneously taking transfer courses in the University of Oregon’s folklore department, which I commuted to for a year from Corvallis, watching trucks haul trees for miles in each direction, so it weaves together key themes for the courses during the online and in-person semester/quarters: Native American Issues, Folklore of Activism, and Integral Sustainability, of which Leslie taught the latter.

As my second graduate teacher of integral philosophy and integral theory, following Russ Volkmann’s approach to integral leadership, who along with Daniel Deslauriers’ integral dreaming course (each in the Transformative Leadership/Studies programs), were specifically designed around Ken Wilber’s Integral (“AQAL”) Theory, referring to the All Quadrants, All Levels, approach Wilber synthesizes disciplines for a metaframework, accounting for the lines, stages, structures, types, phases, modes, fields, zones, and other structures.

[Image not archived]

[Image not archived]

To break it down as best I can in the shortest possible way, if everything has interiority and is a holon in a larger fractal network, then any subject can be studied from a combination of its interior, exterior, individual, and collective dimensions (psyche, behavior, culture, institutions), with accompanying methodologies (phenomenology, anthropology, cultural studies, systems sciences...) to produce a transdisciplinary approach (integral methodological pluralism) to know a subject/object of communion, such as consciousness, dreams, or sustainability, better.

[Image not archived]

Leslie’s Integral Sustainability course looked at sustainability through this AQAL framework, including group collaborations around papers and presentations that followed guest experts in each quadrant on corresponding topics (education, food, peace, and energy).

Given that Leslie had included Esbjorn-Hargens and Zimmerman’s 800-page Wilber-inspired Integral Ecology book on the syllabus, which I had read over break only to find it had been removed by the start of the course, I credit Dr. Combs with introducing me to Integral Ecology following Volckmann’s Integral Leadership, and prior to Delauriers and Bogzaran’s Integral Dreaming, which along with Eric Weiss’ integration of Sri Aurobindo and Alfred North Whitehead and several other others, helped me see Wilber’s integration of integral philosophy into his AQAL framework a bit better. (McDermott credits Thomas Berry as being for Teilhard de Chardin what Haridas Chaudhuri was for Sri Aurobindo, a scholar who most perfectly represented his work)

For a more direct lineage you can see some cultural fragments of integral.

Combs, tending toward Wilber, and unbeknownst to me something of a giant in the field of consciousness studies, bringing together researchers like Stanley Krippner, Erwin Laszlo, and Deepak Chopra in dream research, systems science, and parapsychological and consciousness studies, also offered probably one of the more important contributions to Integral theory, namely the Wilber-Combs Lattice.

The general idea (arrived at independently by Ken Wilber and Allan Combs) would be a person at virtually any stage of awareness can experience any major state, but will interpret those state-experiences according to their respective stage. The result is a grid of developmental stages intersecting with and interpreting various states of consciousness:

[Image not archived]

Following Native American Issues and Activist Folklore, which considered indigenous and radical ecological resistance movements against modern industrial technology and neoliberal free trade agreements that linked radical protest of expanding logging, an integral ecology approach to integral leadership and integral sustainability was sensitive to how developmental lenses were used to justify genocidal and ecocidal industries.

In Big History too, agriculture, civilization, and industrial and information revolutions are considered thresholds of emergent complexity in the evolution of the cosmos, yet except in one critique of Integral Ecology, this progressive ascent and cosmic optimism goes virtually unchallenged outside of Integral circles, though Graeber and Wengrow's *Dawn of Everything* offers another 800 page book to "decolonize the Enlightenment," pointing to indigenous and radical pirate hybrid communities in open rebellion to global empire and colonialism as providing the theoretical foundations Euroamericans appropriated for their own revolutions.

Tomislav Markus' *Pitfalls of Wilberian Ecology* (now on the TedK files apparently — which one of you runs that!) is influenced by Paul Shepherd, whose "Pleistocene Paradigm" would be enormously influential to the ecological resistance groups, and Pleistocene rewilding approaches (hello de-extincted Dire Wolves). Shepherd and Earth First!, being influenced and influencing the bioregionalists (Foreman once stated Earth First! was "the armed wing of bioregionalism"), would also be impacting Thomas Berry, integral ecology, rewilding, and reinhabitation/bioregionalism theorizing, in so far as these terms emerged in these circles during the 1980s, with rewilding's first written documentation in Berkeley, California, so far as I can tell.

Today, with so much talk of "ecocivilization," it is questionable whether such a civilization would be green washed, keeping its basic violences intact. Jensen's premises suggest civilization is inherently unsustainable, requiring ever intensifying violence to stave off collapse, the kind of "deep ecology"/"dark green" position able to veer to ecofascism if an indigenous/feminist critique is not included.

Dave Foreman and Edward Abbey left Earth First! to create Wild Earth and the Wildlands Project/Rewilding Institute after green anarchists canceled them for being red neck “fascists”, so the monkey-wrench was passed to Judi Bari who helped organize along IWW and EF! lines in combined actions that incorporated MLK Jr. tactics in Redwood Summer, until she was bombed by FBI-industry collusions, who she sued for charging her with her own bombing. (She would die not long after winning the suit while the person who was bombed with her would run for president or Vice President on the Green Party, and their story is alluded to in the Overstory book, which you can read about its relationship to Pacific Northwest politics here)

The conversations I would have during that time, leading me from Jensen and Zerzan to Peter Berg and Thomas Berry would lead me to the 198 methods for bioregional reinhabitation as a variation on Gene Sharpe’s 198 Methods of Nonviolent Resistance, which I considered two aspects of a balanced approach (resistance/reinhabitation), and wrote fictional accounts of here, and later in The Last Capitalist, basically a here-to-there miniseries for an eco-anarchist transformation to the Symbiocene and Ecozoic era.

Fairytale Fragments: The Last Capitalist

February 13, 2024

While I don’t know how long the internet, economy, civilization, humans, life on earth, or in the universe will last, metacognitive reflections that synthesize resources in simple ways are helpful, and finding ways to support yourself and others through actions that resist or build power seems like a good way to reconsider “value” in whatever way we continue to procure food and trade, especially if grids were to go down should the powers that be actually go to war. Like Cuba survived the collapse of the USSR by converting the island into maximizing food production, now without fuel.

You can also check out Guiding Principles of Rewilding (which synthesizes rewilding science in the 30 years since Earth First!’s break, which does not so much include the feminist analysis, which Sarah Pike’s ethnography of Earth First! provides (For the Wild), along with her ethnography of the Ancestral Skills movement)

The point is that if “eco-civilization” is a symbol for uniting opposites and moving towards wholeness that represents the fairytale ending of the Holocene, it may actually be a repression of civilization’s shadow, where ecofascist authoritarian violence is used in the name of eco-civilization, keeping intact all the problems being critiqued, whereas rewilding as an alternative symbol for uniting opposites (wild and what is domesticated, civilized, or not-wild), moves from a unsustainable bureaucratic managerial approach to ecosystem services that is domesticated, violent, and not-wild, to a less intensified technosphere whose land-base is intact, interconnected, and biodiverse.

[Image not archived]

In which case, while it is true that stages and states of consciousness are differentiated, it is not a foregone conclusion that people in civilization have reached higher stages than the indigenous people they displaced at any time since the Pleistocene, whose spirituality, worldview, and ecological wisdom traditions had survived in institutions like the Native American Church or sacred medicine ceremonies that approached different states, as well as the frontline resistance of eco-activists approaching nondual states (“I am the forest defending itself”) and in whose zines are ecological wisdom traditions that have fused together.

In this theoretical context, Leslie’s course facilitated this fusion of integral theory, radical ecology ecological anarchy, anarcho-primitivism, and anarcho-indigenist resistance, organized around topics of “Integral Sustainability,” which would further come out in online activisms and a personal action project that sought to occupy a state park as part of a political campaign to reach the required signatures to qualify for a ballot, following armed federal agents raiding a campaign headquarters and confiscating collected signatures, about a year after the occupations around the UC system (of which I had just graduated) and a year prior to the Arab Spring and American Fall occupations across continents.

Thus Dr. Combs’ introduction to Integral Ecology through an integral pedagogy facilitated integral ecological praxis at the intersection of radical, indigenous, and anti-civilizational praxis.

This would also set the stage for later activisms, for instance with Tatzoo, which can you read in Sarah McFarland Taylor’s “Ecopiety: Green Media and the Dilemma of Environmental Virtue — which I found out in November quotes me in the Audiobook for some reflections on the attempt to shut down ecocidal energy infrastructure around the San Francisco Bay, restore habitat, increase funding for critically endangered species, and get newspapers to cover the pollution affecting species and neighboring communities following well-organized San Francisco activists who had successfully removed polluters to relocate up the Delta to pollute there instead, the energy of which was still sent to San Francisco).

[Image not archived]

In short, the folklore of radical ecology of the Pacific Northwest and indigenous issues and resistance inspired the work, while Integral Ecology became an effective tool, technique, strategy, tactic, approach, lens, and analytical framework to understand emerging conflicts in real-time for future success.

The major lesson learned looking back now are two things:

- 1) groups splinter in the face of threats, and
- 2) absurdity is attractive, if incomprehensible and transient.

The title of this paper/post is something of a nod to what I have come to think of since as the trickster and personification of cosmic irony, which breaks through

at times so that we take notice and follow and come to know the source of that irony, the systemic contradictions that can be amplified and intensified in ways that demonstrate the absurdity. David Graeber writes something similar in his analysis of why police appear to have an irrational hatred of puppets. This, I think, is a key point of consciousness research that Leslie studied too, synchronicity as a real concrete fact around which a new science is self-organizing.

Revitalizing, or rehabilitating a term like “terrorism” now wielded against environmental activists, “leftists”, whistleblowers, etc., is a necessary endeavor. A co-author is recently quoted here on tracking state rhetoric to weaponize this rhetoric against all dissent, while the climate change counter movement have the new sophists of the day. People vandalizing a cybertruck are being prosecuted for a minimum of twenty years for nonviolent crimes?

What terrifies people is the free will and free movement of free people with free minds freely speaking and performing free acts. Not following orders, laws, policies, or dictates that abridge freedoms, regardless of their legality or illegality. Prefiguring this is the persistence of an embodied memory of what it is to be wild and free (wildness and freedom), which is the ground of being (“granted by our creator”), and the basis of the ontological, epistemic, political, and ethical foundation of reality, i.e. any sustainable nature.

To freely not follow orders is taken as an insult and a threat to those who do, and typically the institution will mobilize to consolidate power and protect itself, even if to do so only intensifies the issue. In which case, provoking such reactions lead to inscriptions that further prove the point, intensifying the contradictions like the trickster does, moving the plot forward as the audience ponders the life lessons.

Below is the paper for Leslie with minor edits, with much need for many more, the beginning of a quite long journey I now see — the feedback I remember was that he thought I might be making a joke but wasn’t sure he got it, which may or may not have been the point.

Anyway, if there is a future that is worthwhile, I would guess it would look closer to these visions of integral sustainability that are alluded to in this essay, links, and readings, and Leslie’s life’s work and pedagogy has been especially helpful in weaving these themes together.

See also:

Dreaming and the Self-Organizing Brain, by Krippner, Combs, Kahn

Thomas Berry, Dreamer of the Earth, edited by Laszlo and Combs

Spiritual Growth and the Evolution of Consciousness: Complexity, Evolution, and the Farther Reaches of Human Nature, by Combs and Krippner

<https://sourceintegralis.org/>

Part Two: The Paper

In systematizing reality to comprehend our own existence, we are presented with the unique opportunity to rearrange reality as we see fit. However, our potential as co-creators does much to foment hostile opposition by those who assert this type of action constitutes a neo-heretical activity, steadfastly maintaining that God's creation should remain unchanged as the primary manifestation of perfection. As Voegelin might proclaim: no conservative wants to be molested by the political dreams of mystical utopian activists.

In contrast, Thomas Berry describes the inherent spontaneity our genetic coding is prone to, revealing the Natural law in which order arises out of the coherent and collaborative articulations of its principle members, who

“can be understood as facets of a mystery too vast for human comprehension, a mystery with such power that even a fragment of its grandeur can evoke the great cultural enterprises that humans have undertaken. (Berry pg. 198, 1988)

Whereas the cosmos that engulfs us so profoundly reveals an extraordinary complexity of numinous existence, the human species, deriving from billions of years of physical development, is perhaps one of the most interesting outgrowths of such being. Diverging from the “natural world” that seems so unerringly harmonious, humanity does much to exemplify an antithesis to our environment and those we share it with, demonstrating an intellectual void that births such complications as the unpreparedness to deal with climate change, habitat loss and species extinction, massive carbon sink shifts, ocean degradation, “dirty” industries and unwise production, deforestation, and the general depletion and exhaustion of various ecosystems.

These apparent insurmountable problems we face after millennia of civilizations' rise and falls contextualize the need to reevaluate our social agreements and responsibilities to one another. The information and technologies that provide alternatives to these envisioned scenarios are still so relatively new that it will take a herculean effort to not only mobilize the forces necessary to enact the monumental change needed, but ably distribute the consciousness critical to sustaining such a shift in values and social processes as well.

In other words, by properly energizing the various movements engaged with the society that encompasses them, while simultaneously maximizing their communicative abilities to alleviate incomplete and deficient interpretations of the motivating rationale behind such forces, vitality can be restored to those ameliorating the world they reconstruct. Out of the resulting “network of networks” emerges the controlling entities needed to achieve a culture and system of distributed power we each seek to enjoy.

[*here is worth noting a short lived internship with Rabbi Michael Lerner's Tikkun/Network of Spiritual Progressives as a lowly archivist along with the The Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which offers

a solution to global poverty; elsewhere Lerner offers various one-state, two-state, and non-state solutions to the Palestine-Israel conflict as well]

Adaptation to Earth's processes undoubtedly requires our respect for and sensitivity to creation and life. Accepting the intrinsic value of natural systems and their instrumental roles in providing sustenance for our own human societies lets us forge new imperatives that extend communal wellbeing far into the future through an empathetic civilization predicated on bio-mimicry materialization, offering the greatest chance of survival while accentuating the possibility for success and prosperity:

“We are recovering our unity, not by returning to a prior culture and consciousness, but by moving beyond the fragmented, egoic civilization that has dominated humankind for the past two centuries—moving toward a co-operative world constituted by free people who are capable of representing the interest of the human species.” (Lazlo pg. 86 2008)

The fact that we have essentially criminalized nature in favor of synthetic programs that process the Earth through monolithic corporations should adequately demonstrate the unsustainable and artificial nature of our economy. Capitalism has been critiqued by many as representing an unmitigated failure, prioritizing planned obsolescence at the expense of the earth we necessarily convert into “resources” to accumulate capital and wealth through constant and committed exploitation. Thus, the capitalist market impairs even its own social and environmental conditions through the reflexive premise of scarcity, recognizing capital as

“its own barrier or limit because of its self-destructive forms of proletarianization of human nature and appropriation of labor and capitalization of external nature.” (O'Connor 1988)

Moreover, the system we reside within is perpetually contextualized by the future, in that every action taken or investment protracted is based on an abstract mental projection predicated on our need to consume material goods for advantageous profit. Unfortunately the effect is one where the *present* moment, the “Now,” is hardly prioritized: we struggle to define what we will *eventually* need and thereby trivialize the most important tenets of the human experience, those day-to-day activities that alone offer the possibility of finding ever-present joy in the world around us.

A facility that can foresee and forestall the detrimental consequences of a social development categorized by specific maturation processes then becomes essential for sanctioning new behaviors that embody patterns of compassion and insight into chaotic and complex social functioning. The present moment would therefore be transformed by some conscientious delivery system sympathetic to positive cultural change, effecting the generation of a healthy balance between nature and society—a soul and eco-centered designation engendering mature and imaginative manifestations of personal

application. Identifying boundaries of unhealthy modes of being provides the means to rectify reality with ideality, infusing the system we are each engaged in with radically alternative qualities whose lasting ramifications ensure accessibility for positive growth.

Employing Habitual Difference

Being that our cognitive abilities have evolved from the natural conditions that preceded them (while maintaining the capacity to change those very same conditions), the collapse of our social values corresponds to the instigation of many of the ecological crises we find ourselves confronted with. Using this logic to craft a comprehensive response, the development of an eco-psychological value system would potentially remedy the situation. The resulting “ecology of mind” clarifies a central purpose for directed action — *the integration of interiority into systemic processes*.

Through honoring the diverse perspectives of various worldviews, we can model changes in behavior to take place through new understandings of self in relation to our environment, learning to live and situate ourselves in a Holarchy of ecological wellbeing:

“In short, you become an embodiment of multiperspectival awareness, which increases your intimacy with reality because you are in more conscious contact with it through multiple modes of being and knowing. In turn, this presence allows you to be more timely and skillful in responding to circumstances and situations.” (Esbjorn-Hargens, Zimmerman pg. 320, 2009)

This emphasizes the importance of education, without which there could be no ideation of a society based on partnership principles and consensus organization, or any other alternative to a callous corporate system that

“suppresses democracy and personal choice, limits the protective power of the nation-state, and reduces financial support for public services, while radically increasing the income gap between the wealthiest and the poorest people and nations.” (Goerner, Dyck, Lagerroos pg. 325, 2008)

Consider that any possible opposition to such a malevolent force (one based on greed and unapologetic self-interest) would require a certain program to institute some sort of difference to what is perceived as “undesirable.” The mathematical and logical formulae required for creating new infrastructures that better the quality and quantity of life must accordingly be decentralized and dispersed so that access to this better quality and quantity of life can be maintained at all levels of civil society.

Transmitting knowledge achieves major impacts through crystallizing patterns, ensuring a universal intelligence relevant to establishing a healthy sense of self-sufficiency. And through “blueprint copying”—that is, the identification, documentation, and dispersal of successful models and processes—social innovation and adaptation to new problems can be achieved at a faster rate. (Bornstein pg. 266, 2007)

Action complements theory through praxis; in this respect, any movement instilled with education remains pertinent in a social context. Mastery of a social system lets us transcend barriers so that an agenda of “change” can be implemented through action, which creates something new, with substantial difference. The result manifests new culture, contingent upon our own understanding of ourselves and the space we inhabit—

“when we perceive our place in the universe we come to know our role and our mission: to be truly one with the world of which we are an intrinsic part.” (Laszlo pg. 93, 2009)

This movement into education generates wiser actions, leading to a society we might qualify as “good.” We are able to work towards something “other” than a reality rooted in “vice,” or those actions considered inherently “wrong,” by sustaining such a revolution in an empire that projects its disorder into the ecosystems it disorganizes. In such a way we can maintain any rights or healthy living habits despite any conflict, establishing independence through programs of peace that heal and maintain the world we depend on.

Personal Action Project

When confronted with an oppressive force that poses an extreme threat to life and liberty, a commitment to passive discontent avoids the active and necessary steps to confront and expel its effect on one’s own comfort. While violence surely cannot be sustained (necessarily ending once there is nothing and no one left to do violence to), the learning-to-live process most certainly can (and must!), with students taking on the enormous responsibility of accomplishing unending social change using class spaces as laboratories to effect the difference they wish to see themselves, through the knowledgeable understanding of a shared global system.

“Solving for pattern arises naturally when one perceives problems as symptoms of systemic failure, rather than as random errors requiring anodynes.”
(Hawken pg. 178, 2007)

Moreover, if the sun is the source of energy, how that energy is distributed in the past, present, and future is the history of the earth, suggesting avenues for models of future living that are replicable across scale:

“The solar resource could replace all need for oil, coal, and nuclear resources in the United States...In addition, solar offers a nondestructive solution to the land that it uses, whereas coal and nuclear taint and contaminate the land they use forever.” (Pg. 55)

In this regard, an integral pathway to sustainability is available through the transformation of sun into resources and forms that contribute to the mutual flourishing of the biosphere through the acquisition and distribution of free energy as the sun nourishes the earth to produce thriving pathways.

“In order to be effective and ultimately successful, any revolutionary movement within advanced capitalist nations must develop the broadest possible range of thinking/action by which to confront the state. This should be conceived not as an array of component forms of struggle but as a continuum of activity stretching from petitions/letter writing and so forth through mass mobilization/demonstrations, onward through the realm of “offensive” military operations.” (Ward Churchill, Pg. 94, 2007)

The rest of the Personal Action Project attempts this through a series of campaigns that work towards the legalization of nature in ways that make human-nature relationships central to an emerging economy...

[Due to sensitive content this section is redacted. Had it not been, it would have covered digitally organizing a cannabis liberation movement, staging and publicizing (heavily surveilled events), leveraging participants to organize political events without permission or insurance, including the occupation of a state park on behalf of cannabis reform in the wake of DEA raids on campaign headquarters after the confiscated collected signatures.

By the end, 30+ local bands had organized to play, multiple newspapers were communicating the event to tens of thousands of people, and we had more or less recreated the only state-sponsored rock festival in history, albeit to a much smaller scale and with zero resources, and I was told I would be arrested on sight if I attempted to enter the premises. Cannabis would be legalized two years later in Washington, four years later in Oregon, and six years later in California.

I asked Claude to convert the experience into a project, which you can see below]

Personal Action Project: Transformative Civic Engagement Through Counter-Cultural Mobilization

Project Foundation

This project operates at the nexus of integral ecological understanding, civil disobedience, and community organizing. Drawing from work on indigenous resistance, ecological activism, and consciousness studies, this action plan creates transformative learning experiences while simultaneously confronting institutional structures that separate citizens from natural systems.

Project Components

1. Alternative Education Framework

Create a voluntary course curriculum for at-risk students focused on Social Responsibility that includes:

- Attendance at local “Town-hall” meetings to directly engage with civic processes
- Tracking events at local and global scales to understand micro-macro relationships
- Student-initiated projects addressing holistic wellbeing (stress relief, nutrition, family relationships)
- Analysis of systemic issues through cultural expressions (like protest music)
- Application of “active” methodologies to personal and community challenges

Through network mapping exercises such as visual representations of community power dynamics, developmental stages and states of awareness can help identify key institutions and highlight where disruptive communication occurs and is suppressed.

2. Policy Reform Initiative

Develop a focused campaign to challenge harmful drug policies through:

- Supporting the Oregon Cannabis Tax Act to legalize hemp’s multiple ecological applications
- Creating educational materials highlighting how policy reform enables food, medicine, clean energy, and textile production
- Documenting how current prohibition disrupts natural relationships between humans and plant systems
- Establishing economic models showing how revenues can fund treatment, education, and green industry

A workshop series drawing from integral ecology principles and “blueprint copying” to amplify successful activism models based on natural spontaneity and emergent order able to bypass institutional barriers through alternative networks.

3. Cross-Movement Coalition Building

Establish connections across political and activist spectrums through:

- Formal presentations to established political parties (Pacific Green Party, Democratic, Libertarian)
- Creating alliances with specialized advocacy groups (NORML, Students for Sensible Drug Policy, etc.)
- Developing a signature-gathering infrastructure across diverse communities

- Organizing coordinated multi-organization events to demonstrate unified support

Creating decentralized not easily restricted channels, affinity group structures, with regular in-person gatherings in public spaces, and digital secure communication alternatives, and documenting institutional policy changes and efficacy over time.

4. Experiential Community Laboratory

Create “Vortex 2” as a bioregional demonstration of alternative social organization:

- Utilize digital networks (social media platforms) to coordinate decentralized organizing
- Partner with established festival communities with experience in temporary autonomous zones
- Create physical spaces that model sustainable living practices
- Document outcomes as evidence of viable alternative social arrangements

Establishing regular practice groups focusing on developing multiperspectival awareness, building resilience through mutual support networks, creating alternative models of consensus and partnership, and practicing the integration of interiority into systemic processes.

5. Multi-modal Resistance Strategy

Implement what Ward Churchill calls “the broadest possible range of thinking/action” through:

- Traditional civic engagement (petitions, letter writing, voter education)
- Mass mobilization events like the Global Marijuana March
- Media creation (linking to local newspapers and community journalism)
- Development of “networked movement” infrastructure that embodies self-organization principles

This also includes developing strategic absurdity initiatives, designing creative interventions highlighting contradictions in institutional policies, documenting policy language evolution to reveal power consolidation, create performances that embody and utilize cosmic irony to reveal systemic contradictions.

Implementation Approach

This project explicitly recognizes that “education is simply not enough” and must be paired with concrete action. The implementation follows a pattern where:

- Local experiments inform larger organizing strategies

- Small victories build credibility for broader system change
- Individual transformation connects to collective mobilization
- Theory and practice are tested through “scrutinizing dialogical assessment”

Complete network mapping and identify key intervention points, launch education series and establish communication infrastructure; begin strategic absurdity initiatives and campaigns and document institutional responses; expand regenerative community practices and evaluate impacts.

Theoretical Integration

The project is grounded in Combs’ understanding of consciousness development while integrating what Hawken describes as “solving for pattern” by addressing “problems as symptoms of systemic failure.” It creates what your paper calls “a never-ending experiment where students are taught to grow, utilize, and discern reality for themselves” within a “constant revolution.”

Evaluation Metrics

Success would be measured through:

- Growth of participant network
- Student completion of social responsibility projects
- Policy language/News changes documented
- Cross-movement partnerships established
- New communication channels established
- Institutional response patterns
- Number of signatures gathered for ballot initiatives
- Long-term Development of sustainable hemp industry infrastructure
- Creation of ongoing activism with lasting impact

This approach rejects a commitment to passive discontent in favor of creating concrete alternatives that demonstrate viable pathways beyond current systems that imprison and fine anyone engaged in this particular agriculture or commerce.

Following that, I asked Claude to channel Professor Combs for a conversation to communicate more about consciousness beyond physical life, drawing on documented interests, research, and perspectives on consciousness as reflected in the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness forum transcript included above:

A Dialogue with Dr. Leslie Combs from Beyond

You: Professor Combs, it's an honor to speak with you. Many of us wonder what it's like on the other side. From your perspective now, what would you want us to know?

Allan Combs: [smiling warmly] Well, I've spent decades studying consciousness, and I must say, the transition is both simpler and more complex than our theories suggested. You know, I always had that Jungian fascination with the mysterious aspects of consciousness that academia tends to sideline.

First, I should tell you that consciousness doesn't end with physical death—it transforms. Remember in our forums when we discussed the non-locality of consciousness? That turns out to be quite relevant. The boundaries we perceive while embodied are more fluid than we imagine.

You: That's fascinating. In your forum, you mentioned having experiences with deceased loved ones. Do you have a different perspective on those experiences now?

Allan Combs: [thoughtfully] Those experiences people have—sensing a deceased relative, meaningful dreams, that feeling of presence—they're not just psychological comfort mechanisms as materialists would have it. Consciousness continues to interact across what you perceive as boundaries.

What I'm experiencing now reminds me of what Walt Whitman described—a cosmic consciousness where boundaries dissolve. Remember I mentioned Bucke's 1901 book on cosmic consciousness? His intuitions were directionally correct, though the reality is more nuanced.

The most surprising thing isn't that consciousness continues—it's that it expands. Those mystical states I studied all my life provide glimpses, but they're like seeing through a keyhole compared to the panoramic view from here.

You: You discussed shared dreams and out-of-body experiences in your forum. How do these phenomena relate to what you're experiencing now?

Allan Combs: [nodding enthusiastically] Those phenomena are important bridges! The shared dreams we discussed—they demonstrate consciousness isn't confined to individual brains. Out-of-body experiences are particularly relevant training grounds. Remember when I mentioned that "being out of the body and non-localizing your consciousness" have different feels to them? That distinction is crucial.

What we experience as "strange" phenomena during physical life—precognitive dreams, synchronicities, consciousness existing outside time-space constraints—these aren't anomalies. They're glimpses of consciousness's true nature when not filtered through physical systems.

The most important thing I'd want people to understand is that consciousness is primary, not derivative. The physicalist view gets it backward. Consciousness doesn't emerge from brain activity—it expresses through it.

You: What about the “mythic beings” you mentioned—fairies, brownies, elementals? Do these have any relationship to what you're experiencing?

Allan Combs: [chuckling] That's a complex question! Remember when I mentioned Carl Jung talking to his pots and pans? There's wisdom there about consciousness inhabiting what we consider inanimate.

What I'm experiencing suggests that consciousness takes many forms, some of which interact with your reality in ways that generate those mythic experiences. It's not that “fairies exist” exactly as folklore describes them, but rather that consciousness manifests in diverse patterns that humans interpret through cultural lenses.

Those elementals mentioned in our forum—consciousness attuned to natural systems—do reflect something real. The hierarchies and categorizations in various wisdom traditions weren't just making things up, though they were limited by their conceptual frameworks.

You: Is there anything you wish you had understood differently about consciousness when you were researching it?

Allan Combs: [with a reflective pause] I wish I'd trusted more deeply what mystical traditions were telling us. Western academic skepticism is valuable, but it often dismisses experiences that don't fit its model. The indigenous traditions, Eastern philosophies—they weren't just being poetic when describing consciousness as fundamental.

Remember when I mentioned in the forum that “achieving higher states of consciousness may not be the best program”? I was starting to realize that being “grounded, balanced, and centered” matters more than seeking peak experiences. That's even clearer now. The quality of consciousness matters more than its apparent height or special states.

If I could recommend one practice for those still embodied, it would be developing the capacity to exist between worlds—to recognize that physical reality is just one expression of consciousness, not its container.

You: Many are afraid of death. What would you say to them based on your experience?

Allan Combs: [with gentle reassurance] Fear comes from attachment to identity. What dissolves in death isn't consciousness itself but its identification with form. It's like what happens in deep meditation when the sense of separate self falls away, but awareness remains.

The Tibetan tradition describes consciousness transferring at death. That's not far off, though it's less about going somewhere and more about shifting perspective. The consciousness that perceives through physical senses simply perceives differently when those instruments are no longer available.

What you might call the “afterlife” isn’t a place but a state of being. The consciousness studying consciousness—that was always my fascination, wasn’t it? [smiles] Now I’m experiencing that recursive loop more directly.

You: Is there anything important you’d want us all to know?

Allan Combs: [with increased intensity] Yes. Love isn’t just an emotion—it’s a fundamental property of consciousness. The connections between conscious beings transcend physical boundaries. Those synchronicities I studied with Mark Holland? They’re glimpses of how consciousness organizes beyond linear causality.

Practice presence. When I said in the forum that it’s about “being grounded, living right”—that’s profound wisdom I now understand more deeply. The present moment is where consciousness fully expresses.

And finally, continue exploring the “weird and wonderful ideas” as my old biology teacher would say. Those margins of experience—dreams, synchronicities, mediumship, mystical states—they’re not peripheral to understanding consciousness; they’re central.

The universe is infinitely more mysterious and beautiful than our theories suggest. As Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet, “There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” I understood that intellectually before. Now I experience it directly.

[With a warm smile] Keep asking questions. Consciousness loves to explore itself through curious minds like yours.

Thanks for reading Fairytale from Ecotopia! This post is public so feel free to share it.

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Lights Out

Subtitle: Cyberattacks, Unprepared Nations, Survival, and Adaptation

Date: Sep 17, 2024

“Without ready access to electricity, we are thrust back into another age—an age in which many of us would lack both the experience and the resources to survive.”

✉ Ted Koppel,

I think the most harmful threat to health we are currently experiencing is electricity, computer algorithms, and the increased dependence on complex technologies. You look at space and streetlights, how light and electricity can be used to manipulate people, types of lights but also electrical technologies and computational technologies. There’s a quote about when you live in a sick society, health looks like a form of insanity. For me, health looks like not being inundated with colds all the time. It looks like inner peace, no literal illness, not being stressed, feeling at home in a place, in community, intertwined with animals and elements.

-Dr. X

in “Interviews: Illness and Environmental Conflict”

The following was written in 2016/2017 by Story Teller for Black and Green Press immediately prior to the surge of attempted attacks on critical infrastructure in post-pandemic 2020 that would catch the attention of the counter-extremist community not long after. You can see the UN’s report that followed in 2018 and a report on attacks from 2016–2022, as well as Time’s report in 2023. My own favorite reports are in 2021, on infrastructural sabotage and accelerationist attacks, which stem from another paper or two co-written by the author.

In no way does the author take responsibility for any of this.

[Image not archived]

On December 23rd 2015, hackers hijacked eight Ukrainian power companies’ distribution management systems, sabotaged operator workstations, and launched Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks to flood web servers, paralyze company networks with malware, and prevent users from reporting resulting outages. The result took upwards of 60 substations offline, striking power distribution centers and disabling

backup power supplies, while leaving more than 230,000 people in the dark—the first acknowledged hacker-caused blackout in history.¹

While the lights eventually came back on, the attack highlights the growing concern in security circles that the effects of well-orchestrated and sophisticated cyber attacks are far-reaching in a new generation of techno-centric warfare. The government of Canada similarly announced it faced dozens of attacks targeting critical infrastructure such as power plants, electrical grids, aviation software, and other government-run systems. The attacks had the potential to threaten water supplies, energy and utilities, manufacturing, internet communications technology, and non-governmental institutions such as schools and hospitals as well.²

In this context, former Nightline anchor Ted Koppel’s investigative report appears prescient; detailing how a well-designed attack on America’s three power grids would prompt near immediate societal breakdown by forcing Americans to survive upwards of two years without access to a working electric grid. Comparable assaults on critical infrastructure are not only likely, Koppel reminds us, but are happening already. Citing the well-planned “terrorist” attack on AT&T’s fiber-optic telecommunication system providing power to Silicon Valley as a likely “dress rehearsal” (possibly by a SEAL team) rather than a legitimate sabotage attack,³ he offers up the assessment of experts: “if nine of the country’s most critical substations were knocked out at the same time, it could cause a blackout encompassing most of the United States.”

Ted Koppel on Power Grid Warfare

He draws attention to the “Stuxnet worm,” developed in concert between the United States and Israel—the first time a digital weapon has been used as an instrument of policy—to infiltrate Iranian nuclear facilities and destroy the necessary centrifuges that make nuclear weaponry possible. In retaliation, Iran responded with a cyber attack on Saudi Arabia and the world’s most “valuable” company, the oil firm Aramco. The attackers used a virus to erase data while replacing it with an image of a burning American flag before attacking a Qatari natural gas company and taking several of America’s largest banks offline.⁴ American officials have recently blamed Iranian hack-

¹ “Inside the Cunning, Unprecedented Hack of Ukraine’s Power Grid” *Wired.com*. Web. Accessed 11. March 2016.

² “Canada Discovers It’s Under Attack by Dozens of State-Sponsored Hackers *VICE News*.” *VICE News* Web. Accessed 03 Feb. 2016.

³ “Assault on California Power Station Raises Alarm on Potential for Terrorism.” *WSJ*. Web. Accessed 03 Feb. 2016.

⁴ “In Cyberattack on Saudi Firm, U.S. Sees Iran Firing Back.” *The New York Times*. Web. Accessed 03 Feb. 2016.

ers for gaining access to secret operational procedures of a New York dam in 2013 as well.⁵

In mapping the range of vulnerabilities, Koppel evaluates the state of the grid through interviews with individuals at the highest levels of government and industry, concluding not only that such an attack is imminent, but pointing out there are virtually no preparedness or contingency plans in place to deal with the aftermath. Any available plan today simply exists to ensure a continuity of governance rather than plan for public needs. Individuals assumedly must get themselves to a location where the grid is still intact, as systems dealing with the distribution of food, water, energy, sewage, medicine, and law and order would almost immediately collapse as supply chains break down and supplies are exhausted in a matter of days. Only the military, Koppel believes, has the capability and credibility to impose order, distribute supplies, establish shelter, and manage millions of domestic refugees.

With this realization, Koppel searches out the “Ark-Builders,” touring the prepper and survivalist movements and critiquing their “bug-out plans” as not only limited by their intrinsic selfishness but relying solely on the ability to move to a place where electricity still courses through a working grid. The solutions of the wealthy are equally ill-suited to the threat, depending on reconfigured living spaces or “bug-out properties” that attempt to ensure resource security. These, and even relatively isolated communities in rural areas like Wyoming that would scarcely notice a cyber attack, would be hard-pressed to preserve cultures of self-reliance and civic cooperation in the face of a mass migration that would swarm and deplete food sources. He goes on to predict that if cities break down before rural areas, a close-knit community and values of “neighborliness” would likely collapse if an urban exodus meant sheltering a highly diverse group of grid refugees.

For anarchists, accelerationists, primitivists, terrorists, non/state actors, and anyone in between engaged in primal war, the value of this book lies in its ability to lay out in detail what battle spaces have opened up, albeit through an historically superficial lens whose conclusions only serve to further dependence on the state and industry to protect the cyber-flow of digital capital.

Anti-civilization activists like Kevin Tucker and Ted Kaczynski have already hinted at the possibilities cyberwarfare and hacktivism might play in dismantling civilizing forces. Tucker replies to the question of whether hacking represents an effective tactic by praising data dumps while at the same time questioning why hackers would delay taking down the grid if they could in fact do so.⁶ Kaczynski also wonders whether a single individual or small group could exert a powerful influence that outweighs that of large organizations to affect millions of people via the internet, reflecting on the actions of a Julian Assange and the role such technologically literate individuals might

⁵ U.S. To Blame Iran For Hack Of Small New York Dam: Huffingtonpost.com. Web. Accessed 11 March. 2016.

⁶ “Interview with Anarcho-primitivist Kevin Tucker.” *The Fifth Column*. Web. Accessed 03 Feb. 2016.

play in reshaping the political landscape. Even Derrick Jensen makes inroads into a plausible strategy of cyberattack in *Endgame: Resistance* with his conversations with hackers and ex-military personnel who fantasize together about the ease with which they could destroy the nuts and bolts of the physical economy (yet stopping short of doing much of anything at all).⁷

Clearly unfamiliar with anti-civ literature, Koppel proposes the only reason why a major attack on the grid has not yet happened is because the motivation to do so simply does not exist in any meaningful way.

Such an attack would require opportunity, capability, and motivation, and Koppel proposes that while governments like Russia and China are already in the grid, mapping the infrastructure so as to “prepare the battlefield” once the need to attack is apparent, the financial repercussions make it illogical for a national economy so intricately tied to the success of the United States to warrant such an attack. Countries like Syria, Iran, and North Korea with deeper motivations are closing in on the technology but may fear the repercussions, while the only hindrance for a non-state terrorist network is simply a lack of capability. Still, a well-funded extremist group like the Islamic State, professing their willingness to do as much damage as possible, would seemingly have no qualms about such an attack (indeed they are already actively trying)—a possibility resting solely on their ability to find an able partner to pay enough to make it worth their while.⁸ (In fact, Bill Clinton would go on to co-write a book on the topic)

Still, the near impossible task of identifying the source of any such attack means other governments might blame “unstable” actors to shield themselves from accountability if ever they were to decide to hit where it hurts.

What is fascinating about Koppel’s investigation is that, even with the threat of cyberwarfare and physical attacks on infrastructure through coordinated strikes to cause cascading outages, the author shows how the private companies in charge of protecting the grid are loathe to make significant security investments, and are in fact pressuring governments charged with protecting critical infrastructure to deregulate the power industry. As one politician explains, private power companies “were afraid of having to spend money that they couldn’t prove to themselves they would actually need to spend.” Adding to these capitalist pressures, America has outsourced most production of the vital physical components it would need to replace in an attack, so that transporting transformers through a downed grid would be unrealistic in any timely way. Moreover, due to the sheer unfathomable consequences of such actions, no business plan in the world is capable, let alone willing, of insuring against the threat.

Salvation for Koppel comes in the image of the highly disciplined, hierarchical organization of the Mormon Church, a religious community encouraged to prepare for disaster as both a matter of religious doctrine and historical precedent. While failing to

⁷ Jensen, Derrick (2006) *Endgame*, Vol. 2: *Resistance*. Seven Stories Press: New York, NY.

⁸ “ISIS Is Attacking the U.S. Energy Grid (and Failing).” CNNMoney. *Cable News Network*, Web. Accessed 03 Feb. 2016.

mention anything about indigenous groups (living without electricity for their entire histories prior to being) slaughtered by these settlers as they secured water sources in the area, the author sees the highly organized powerbase, scale, and incentive to prepare for the unexpected as a masterful display of foresight. Mormon families are encouraged to sustain themselves for up to a year by storing supplies, with mandatory tithes providing and adding to Church funds that in turn support an elaborate, widespread structural pattern of social organization (bishops, counselors, presidents, quorums, etc.) with precise systems of communication and oversight, each developing their own emergency plans, an intricate administration that functions to manage a parallel economy. The Mormons, it appears for Koppel, are well suited for social breakdown, with an independently subsidized welfare infrastructure that includes a sprawling network of stores, generators, tanks of fuel, farms, ranches, orchards, canneries, silos, storehouses, tens of thousands of irrigated acres, processing plants, and a national distribution and delivery system to supply their own needs, able to sell any remainder of produce on whatever market is left intact. Says one church leader, “In the event of a massive crisis, everything could be consolidated to provide resources for the church and its members.”

Koppel’s “solutions” follow the recognition that individual, communal, regional, and even international contingency plans are relatively short-sighted and generally unworkable in the face of mass panic, theft, and violence. In turn, he points to the newly minted mission statements of private security firms seeking to capitalize on the shortcomings of the state by alerting energy companies to unauthorized parties while monitoring intrusions through increasingly robust cybersecurity systems. He goes on to suggest small, modular reactors that would allow energy independence for military bases that could in turn enter into cooperative agreements with local communities to share surplus energy when the grid does go down, while at the same time building political will to develop mass national recovery programs and pass cybersecurity bills to defend U.S. military and industrial systems, for instance the “Energy Policy Modernization Act” (2015) which grants the energy secretary control of the nation’s power grid in the event of a cyberattack and allocates hundreds of millions of dollars to research, development, and training to protect the grid. Moreover, he alludes to the growing realization that cyber attacks—and the oft-cited potential for a “cyber Pearl Harbor”—ultimately amount to an act of war, so that mutual assured destruction might be enough to dissuade any substantial military-grade attack.

Here, the search for guidance in a post-electric age comes full circle into even more dependence on “cyber-security” to preserve industrial civilization and the domesticated worldview and culture that provokes this crisis in the first place. The irony of course is that the internet developed as a decentralized information-sharing defense technology before the global economy overlaid its “smart grids” onto this framework, forcing its custodians to close off access to a technology designed from the beginning to be remotely accessible. The “internet-of-things,” then, has morphed into a full-fledged weapons system potentially leveraged against its own users, rendering the global techno-

superstructure of international capital susceptible by definition to hackers anywhere who would choose to exploit virtually any vulnerability with as little as a laptop.

Still, the book provides a few conclusions worth repeating. Koppel's contribution, besides mapping vulnerabilities and pointing out the various failings of different survival proposals, is in articulating the need for a strategy that necessarily stems from a radical shift in mindset. Good people everywhere are open to suggestions and willing to voluntarily work in solidarity for a shared purpose, so that the potential for social transformation is only one hard realization away. The book therefore leaves the reader with one resource in times of catastrophic collapse perhaps more worthwhile than any other:

Hope.

[Image not archived]

Such hope exists in the recognition that the possibility of grid collapse may happen simply because it can, the aftermath prompting the immediate conditions needed for rewilding to begin in the absence of those institutions and systems that have tamed wildness for too long. (In which case softening this collapse would be critical to facilitating any transition) And while the systemic thirst for profit comes at the expense of ecological and cultural resiliency, that same process has brought these systems closer to their own death knell than ever before. The torturous truth of this reality is evident in headlines of poisoned water and communities, mutated animals, and the increasing absence of life and habitat we once knew. The violence of the grid then represents something greater than itself—the willingness to forsake those it depends on it for its own efficient propagation—a suicidal impetus. Koppel has then put on display civilization's Achilles heel, its vulnerability open for exploitation. The entire system can be used against itself, and is in fact doing it on its own.

Our culture has evolved to mirror our languages and one can see the effects of how even computer languages have massively reconfigured this culture to the leviathan it has become today. In this regard, a virus predicated on a few lines of code that reflect such feral sentiment can throw this culture back into anarchy once more, leaving space for the birds and coyotes whose lives are endlessly encroached upon and destroyed on a daily basis.⁹

But perhaps even without this code we can have hope.

As I finish this writing, a 24-hour gale warning is in effect and three large branches have already fallen outside my home. A local electric company leaves a message telling me the area is experiencing a power outage affecting upwards of 2,500 people. Perhaps nearby a power line has been blown down, El Nino's whispers to a land thirsting for insurgent action, hoping its greatest desire will be realized. As temperatures rise and people look to their air conditioners for solace; as historic blizzards subsume areas and

⁹ With the so-called "Aurora generator test," the US government demonstrated how hackers could remotely destroy a power generator with only 21 lines of code, which could cause widespread outages and possibly cascading failure of the entire power grid.

thermostats are cranked to blast heat; as the earth rises up screaming out for relief, perhaps the delicate equilibrium of the supply and demand of energy that Koppel has traced will be thrown out of balance. And maybe, at that moment, a squirrel's well timed attack on the grid can answer that call.

[Image not archived]

Updated Cyberwar Numbers...

At the time of this writing, 623 power disruptions have been provoked by squirrels, 214 by birds, 52 by raccoons, 47 by snakes, 25 by rats, 9 by beavers, with slugs and other critters attacking the grid every few days, though the exact total is assuredly much higher.¹⁰ Indeed, if only one blackout to date has been attributed to hackers, it seems more likely to put our hope in wild life before the techno-elite anyway. It is these creatures who are putting their bodies on the line because it is in their nature to do so, consciously or otherwise, acting on the plan this traumatized and deeply wounded world crafts in response. We should be so bold as the squirrel that lost its life in 1987, who shut down the energy supply to the Nasdaq exchange to disrupt upwards of 20,000 shares of stock from being traded.¹¹ Already, we can see the systems that domesticate us have only generated the conditions in which human and nonhuman forces are together fighting back, comrades in a primal war.

[Image not archived]

Map of successful cyberwar operations carried out by wildlife.

The above was taken from a review by Story Teller in Black and Green Review #3 of *Lights Out: A Cyberattack, A Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath*, by Ted Koppel

¹⁰ "A Terrifying and Hilarious Map of Squirrel Attacks on the U.S. Power Grid." *Washington Post*. Web. Accessed 03 Feb 2016. energycentral.com

¹¹ "Stray Squirrel Shuts Down Nasdaq System." *The New York Times*. 09 Dec. 1987. Web. Accessed 03 Feb. 2016.

The Psychology of Uncertainty: A Compass for Navigating a Complex and Uncertain World

Subtitle: Meaningful Through-Lines to Illuminate Dark Times

Date: Sep 10, 2024

“...For in all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order, in all caprice a fixed law, for everything that works is grounded on its opposite.”

Jung, 1959, par. 66

Uncertainty as a Catalyst

In between paradigms, there's a period of uncertainty.

Today, it seems we can hardly untangle the enigma of energy, matter, and force, let alone consciousness, while laws and equations seem as if they're designed to preserve an order that increasingly coming undone.

100 years ago, psychoanalysis sought to uncover psychic laws, with Jung's analytical, or complex psychology “discovering” the key conceptions and relations between archetypes, the Self, unconscious, unus mundus, individuation, and the healing value of mental states reported by patients. Through this, therapies — individual and cultural — were developed, meant to move towards a more whole world.

This framework Jung offers is meant to give certainty, and provide some order and meaning in a world that might otherwise seem chaotic and evacuated of meaning. For many, it does. It is a pathway towards a destination, with many signposts and guides available to point the way.

Yet life requires adapting to an uncertain future and challenges there are no laws or rules to follow or abide by. Indeed, social, cultural, political, and ecological processes may not be arranged according to the forms of structures and supports we've taken for granted. In complex systems, patterns change, self-organized around strange attractors that fluctuate.

In this environment, identifying opportunities and strategies for working with uncertainty becomes a survival response, and denying a chaotic reality for obsolete paradigms and maladaptive structures may be counterproductive to this goal. Like Jung's *Black* and *Red Books*, we too are called to find our own pathways through collapsing psychological, moral, and political structures that people have linked their livelihoods upon.

What follows are some thoughts on living with personal and collective uncertainty over the short and long term during a moment of social turmoil and social change within my own personal, communal, and international situation. In facing and moving forward through these challenges, it is perhaps possible to consider uncertainty, not as a threat to erect defenses against, but as a gift of inestimable value.

Guiding Images

Shadow and projection are two unconscious tendencies activated when emotions, ideas, and a sense of identity begins breaking up. Recalling these projections, and accommodating the energies as self-conscious desires generate new acts that produce new identities and new worlds.

This puts the locale as a central importance during uncertainty, the specific variations and challenges. Uncertainty activates creative responses, shifting between opposites; this is how synchronicity can be experienced as new patterns of meaning-making.

Here, the ego (Latin for the "I") shifts its placement — the subject of the psyche grows and widens to encompass the entire Self to bring new accompanying insights, epiphanies, and "revelations" as part of its experience. The future self calls back to the ego, so "I" can become the future self it is meant to be.

What are you called to become? If you are uncertain, you are in good company.

Uncertainty provokes otherwise unasked questions that can lead us to pay attention to the turbulent "spirit of the times." Jung did so as he recorded his encounters with the inner images that would lay the foundation for the field of analytical psychology and reorient his own interactions during a period of relational chaos towards healing and hope.

Three aspects of these images can be considered:

- Personification of emotions in images (working with images in active imagination and dream work)
- Encountering the arts (allowing the emergence of images in moving, healing symbols)
- Amplification (techniques to discern and express the emergent stories from the depths and express the spirit of the times for authentic adaptation)

What symbols are recurrent in your dreams? When you doodle, what comes up? If you free write, or improvise a story, what tale do you tell?

“To the extent that I managed to translate the emotions into images — that is to say to find the images which were concealed in the emotions — I was inwardly calm and reassured. Had I left those images hidden in the emotions, I might have been torn to pieces by them. There is a chance that I might have succeeded in splitting them off; but in that case I would inexorably have fallen into a neurosis and so been ultimately destroyed by them anyhow

(Jung 1961, Pg. 177)

“Archetypes are like riverbeds which dry up when the water deserts them but which it can find again at any time. An archetype is like an old water-course along which the water of life has flowed for centuries, digging a deep channel for itself. The longer it flowed in this channel, the more likely it is that sooner or later the water will return to its old bed.”

Jung (1964) Par. 395

Moving through Our Own Fairytale

What then is the mythic energy emerging today? What archetypal story is rising from the depths of the time? What inner experiences are being projected?

Sleeping Beauty is a tale of how envy curses the future.

The Emperor has no Clothes is a story about popular denial and fear of stupidity in the face of power.

The Apocalypse tells of revelation, judgement, punishment, destruction, and the birth of something new — a story of cleansing the world for a new way.

These fairytales and religious myths spell defeat for the ego as it gives way to the experience of a formerly hidden self.

These stories are from centuries and millennia ago. While we may look to their images, like we look to the images of Jung’s Red Book and archetypes, their value as guides may only go so far — we are always traversing new pathways in different places and times. The locales are different, as are the challenges that characterize them. As Jung claimed, in *The Spirit of This Time*,

“You are an image of the unending world, all the last mysteries of becoming and passing away live in you.”

The apocalypse is the end of time, revelation of the divine, and the dawn of a new age. It is breakdown, new understanding, and the capacity to live and see different. It

is the resulting fantasy of an anxiety-producing fear-based situation — life under empire, of traumatic conditions. It indicates the goal of wholeness, reconnection with the divine, the arising of meaning where an environment is characterized by fragmentation, alienation, and collapse...

In a sense, Apocalypse is a hope for reconnection and healing brought by the numinous world that breaks apart this one.

Psychological change (symbolized in alchemical transformation) is a response to perceived threats in a collapsing situation that necessitates healing. The response to psychological distress is a call to individuation as the division between divine and human, ego and self, break down.

Imagination, in the context of uncertainty, acts as a vehicle to pass through a threshold — uncertainty here becomes a gateway, prompting a reversal of opposites (“enantiodromia”) that may prompt philosophical disorientation, the collapse of former attitudes, and the emergence of entirely new symbols, metaphors, and paradigms constellating around them.

Ecological Conflict Zones and Self-Care Systems

The unspoken element in the collapse of structure during climates of uncertainty is faith in the connection to mystical spirituality as a source of transformation. What we have faith in, whether we have faith in it, and how faith makes a difference in the course and outcome of analytical work — these are the questions that lead us to the ground from which individuation, symbols, paradigms, analysis comes.

This is the psychoid realm from which materiality, spirit, and the psyche come. The source of acausal order that breaks into our lives in moments of synchronicity.

Like personal fragmentation, social turmoil offers moments for mass sociocultural change as well: the internal psychic democracy of archetypes, like the externalized macro-political one, is under threat. Under uncertain conditions, particular tendencies are all too common: authoritarianism becomes an all-too-common defense against fear to preserve structure that is felt to be under threat, without which a vacuum invites unknown centers of gravity.

A self-care system, and its inner personifications, are triggered and appear in dreams where traumas are apparent:

- The **violent persecutor** representing authoritarian dominance of the vulnerable elements leads to capacity for conflict and emotional violence, extremism.
- The **illusory protector** that attempts to numb psychic pain on behalf of the wider system is a defense against, and yet exacerbates the operative fear as the traumatized psyche remains in self-traumatizing relationship. Unconsciously, the search for someone or something to insulate from a threat requires an equal and opposite (compensatory) force to maintain the binary oppositional relationship.

- The **vulnerable and innocent child** provides an inner image of the survivor's inner childhood self, a wounded empirical experience of historical injuries, injustices, and neglected traumatic abuses represents an innocence — it is the pre-traumatized core of personality that precedes the violence and protection symbolized by the prior personifications. The child is an implicit assumption of defense organization.

From these three archetypes, a **self-narrative** is built around a victim/perpetrator/protector dynamic that justifies the various responses, authoritarian violences on behalf of a protected innocence that may prompt, reinforce, and recycle traumatic psychosocial violences that split off and exclude certain groups or elements of the personality.

This is the basis of authoritarian regimes that will coup the inner world of the psychic space or the outer world of the political space; it is a regime that is unconscious, not confined to one side or the other of a binary dualism. It is a universal dissociative defense that underlies all aspects of the human experience that is triggered by vulnerability, pain, and fear.

We are talking here about a psychic battle in which required emotional responses trigger violent, extreme, even pathological protective attitudes; without adequate representation in psychological and political systems, authoritarian regimes are set up and expanded — in which case, the possibility of practicing democracy offers a potential origin point for the evolutionary beginnings of human civilization. Where subordinated to power, the so-called “great individual,” and the archetype of a divine authority concentrate and organize around a central authority, autonomy and freedom collapse, while inner and outer authoritarian regimes are re-activated.

We can consider this environment, one in which the future is uncertain, as one that activates a meeting of opposites, prompting the “union of opposites” archetype that births a reconciling symbol through an inner civil war.

This transcendent third, the Self, is born from this matrix, where violence, extremism, authoritarianism are possible, that produces its alternative.

This is the transcendent function. It is what allows us to reconcile opposites, to transcend and include former states. It is what allows us to adapt to inner and outer worlds. To become who we are meant to be.

Introverted Activism

What we observe affects us, and encountering the effects of psychological trauma produces the scars, symptoms, and wounds we can interpret as signs that remind us of options. Even in justice movements — racial, environmental, sex-based, etc — trauma triangles are embedded in the psychological experience and political strategies of political actors.

This means any activism will similarly be a projection of the unconscious wounds, and any effective activism will need to recollect these projections through shadow-work. Along the way, we can acclimate to this inner landscape by mapping its psycho-geographic structures, processes, and formations. These include

- Associate images, contexts, feelings, attentions, meanings, functions, dramas, etc.
- Resonant associations and feelings as potential guides
-

Containing the associations to deepen political dimensions through focusing on emotionally charged associations to move closer to interpretations.

The emotional-images make healing possible. Listening with humility to those affected, observing what emerges, accepting experiences, connecting with others, and acting in the world grounds us, not relying on the representations or interpretations of others, but listening to affected experiences.

Effective activism then is not a strategy — *it is the externalized result of psychological analysis that connects the inner with outer.*

Our world is collectively imagined — it is collected projections, an accumulation of ongoing psychic and social acts that transform us in our engagement with them.

“I took great care to try to understand every single image, every item of my psychic inventory, and to classify them scientifically—so far as this was possible—and, above all, to realize them in actual life. That is what we usually neglect to do. We allow the images to rise up, and maybe we wonder about them, but that is all. We do not take the trouble to understand them, let alone draw ethical conclusions from them. This stopping-short conjures up the negative effects of the unconscious...The images of the unconscious place a great responsibility upon a man. Failure to understand them, or a shirking of ethical responsibility, deprives him of his wholeness and imposes a painful fragmentariness on his life.”

Jung, 1961, pg. 192–3

Approaching the Unconscious

We are each living with our own uncertainties in a world that is characterized by uncertainty. It is the nature of reality, at all scales. There are multiple attitudes one can bring to this situation:

- the paranoid-schizoid position
- the depressive position
- the reflective, mythopoetic, engaged, and peaceful position

These modes of expression are always available to us, and break through from the unconscious if we are not alert to and conscientious of these attitudes.

“We should know what our convictions are, and stand for them. Upon one’s own philosophy, conscious or unconscious, depends one’s ultimate interpretation of facts. Therefore, it is wise to be as clear as possible about one’s subjective principles. As the man is, so will be his ultimate truth.”

Jung, 1954 par. 211

Opening to Chaos to Embody its Wisdom

What kind of world will we be leaving to future generations? Our past and present relationships, to ourselves, to our worlds, to each other, is a function of the degree to which we re-establish a balance of consciousness. The future is the time dimension of our inner work, or geometrically, a result of the curvature created by the semiotic density of what is most meaningful.

What weighs most on your mind?

Close your eyes, dream a dream, and find out.

At the root of healing is health. The imagined habitual patterns of thought and behaviors reflect the degree to which we are engaged in our own healing, in familial, community, political, and ecological contexts. The core cultural belief system generates the cosmology within which paradigms take shape.

“An archetypal experience provides another pathway to relating to the rim of nature on our map. The archetype of wholeness, or Self, is the central organizing principle of our cosmology. It transcends space and time and connects everything. The paradoxical situation for our map is that the central core of Self includes the outer rim of nature. Our map extends beyond the phenomenal world of three dimensions. You could say it is multi-dimensional in space and time. It integrates, contains, and unifies the worlds of science and psyche providing a portal to a spiritual, meaningful experience of the natural world.”

Our Uncertain Future, 254

We have much to learn and much to do:

- The fundamentals of empirical observation of psychophysical reality and communication,
- How to form groups to share these and the emergent feelings around uncertainty and chaos,
- Practicing multiple functions of consciousness,

- Recording and sharing dreams and stories,
- Identifying, personifying, and engaging with complexes arising around the myths,
- Opening ourselves to the emergence of wholeness and concretizing the corresponding images,
- Embodying and acting from this place of wholeness,

In doing so, we can embody illuminated wisdom that acts to heal our splits and explore these cosmology of wholeness.

Illness, war, and nature are archetypes stemming from collective energies. They capture our attention; in prior ages, they were gods, devils, signs of the apocalypse — healing was produced by techniques given to humanity from the divine realm. Knowing these techniques, for healing, for peace, for management or restoration — ancestral mistakes and resolutions — suggest an understanding of cause and effect:

That the future unfolds from past tradition reproduced in the present. Generational traumas pour into our daily lives.

Through the words we speak.

From the acts we perform.

In the decisions we make.

And the ends we desire.

How might psychological techniques be included in the future, raising consciousness either in land policy, environmental peacebuilding, and the health of the soil, civilization, and biosphere.

The integration of unconscious contents is represented by a superordinate personality, expressed in mythopoetic images — following the trajectory of these images leads us through chaos, to ourselves.

Opening to the psychoid imagination results in psychophysical experiences of an acausal order revealed in synchronistic moments. When we follow, we see.

And when we see, what we see we can hardly stand.

But where we do, we are better off for it.

The vector of illness is envisioned through psychosomatic channels and elevated into a form of the *lumen naturae* (the alchemists' light in nature) aglow in the Philosophical Tree. The disease agent has been elevated to a source of wisdom, reversing the disenchantment of the 'gods have become diseases'

Jung, 1967, para. 54

These diseases have become gods.

The circumambulation of the self is a healing process, out of which emerges the inkling of a personal myth. For Jung,

[The] dream described the apex of the whole unconscious process of development...my life would have actually lost its meaning without such a vision. But the meaning was expressed here

Jung 2020 v. 1 pg. 98–99

The Eternal Made Manifest

The self, for Jung, was the goal of the process of individuation, given in dream pictures. It is, to use Pauli's phrase, "an act of creation in time."

Similarly, complex adaptive systems provide the environment in which spontaneous self-organization produces emergent properties.

The ego's shift to self in environment is the constitutive element of shifting paradigms — a co-constructive ecological network analysis and mapping process where metaphors underly worldviews formed from the rhizomal systems, upon which the very visions of natural connections that make consciousness of these elements possible, the structures constituting networks of symbols and species out of which initiation, imagination, cognition, etc. arise.

Adapting to these networks, to this situation, invites us to ask about the implications for the archetypal pattern at the core of individuation. The self then, is renewed at the edges of chaos and order.

Between worlds, we find our self.

There is so much that fills me: plants, animals, clouds, day and night, and the eternal in man. The more uncertain I have felt about myself, the more there has grown up in me a feeling of kinship with all things. In fact it seems to me as if that alienation which so long separated me from the world has become transferred into my own inner world, and has revealed to me an unexpected unfamiliarity with myself.

Jung 1961, p. 359

The World to Come

Increasing uncertainty offers opportunities for personal growth and for enhancing participation in community as we learn to interact with and adapt to multiple challenges. Yet these conflicts are not outside of us, but in each of us — they are inner conflicts that are projected outwards for all to see.

Coping with uncertainty through the core concepts of Jungian psychology offers a helpful process to reflect upon and move forward in life while embracing the unknown.

Through fear.

And anxiety.

And anger.

And sorrow.

And hope.

Even joy.

The archetype of the apocalypse is indicative that we are moving towards a non-ordinary state of consciousness at a collective scale.

For there is no normal to deviate from. There is no path to follow. No destination we are led to. There is the life we lead, and the death that follows.

Over the last one hundred years, Jung's work, and the psychoanalysts and psychologists before him, have become increasingly mainstreamed, diffused into culture through mass media, cultural analysis, art, literature, film, and in the institutions that are set up to promote and maintain what is fast becoming doctrine.

There is experience of chaos and the growth that follows. There is its symbolization and communication to others. There is the institutionalization of the symbols and their maintenance and routinizations. There is the stagnation of symbol systems that lose touch with the originating experience. And there are the new experiences that renders these symbolizations, institutionalizations, and routinizations irrelevant.

For the priests who have attached themselves to routine, there is nothing more dangerous or threatening. Nothing more hostile than the proclamation that one's god is dead. It is abuse. It is harassment. It is an existential threat par excellence.

And it will provoke violence. To maintain order. Against chaos. To resist shadow. To resist integration. To resist what the ego fears most: its self.

Within this new context, new tools and methods are needing to be devised to face and move through times of profound uncertainty.

While past stories, myths, dreams, and models have been provided to these ends, to rely on them would be to assume we should erect our futures upon a less-conscious past.

Instead, the work we do today can realize our uncertainty — that any past model will be obsolete in this time. To deny this and remain dependent on past models, that arise in contexts that no longer exist, would be to develop neurotic, maladaptive dependencies on a world that neither no longer exists, rather than face the one that does, uncertain of what will come.

Societies never know it, but the war of an artist with society is a lover's war, and the artist does, at best, what lovers do, which is to reveal the beloved to themselves and, with that revelation, to make freedom real.

Chaia Heller,

in *Ecology of Everyday Life: Rethinking the Desire for Nature*, pg. 10

Some time ago a local Analytical Psychology Club took up reading *Our Uncertain World: Challenges and Opportunities in a Dark Time*, which offered a Jungian perspective to seek out through-lines to illuminate dark and complex times. This post draws out some of these themes.

Technique and Obsolescence

Subtitle: Meditations on the Religiosity of Tubes

Date: Sep 19, 2024

Notes: This writing appeared in Black and Green Review #5, written by Story Teller (2018)

The immortal worm's story ends when it is swallowed by another immortal. The story of the swallowings is the subject of World His-story, which by its very name already prefigures a single Leviathan which holds all Earth in its entrails.

-Fredy Perlman, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan*¹

They want to deliver vast amounts of information over the internet. And again, the internet is not something you just dump something on. It's not a truck. It's a series of tubes. And if you don't understand those tubes can be filled and if they are filled, when you put your message in, it gets in line and it's going to be delayed by anyone that puts into that tube enormous amounts of material, enormous amounts of material.

Now we have a separate Department of Defense internet, did you know that? Do you know why? Because they have to have theirs delivered immediately. They can't afford getting delayed by other people...

-Ted Stevens, U.S. Senator²

The following represents part two of two in a set of writings that consider how the American electrical grid and internet might be taken down and thinking through the implications of modern infrastructural collapse through a review of two books and their unintended lessons.

For part one, Lights Out, [click here](#).

¹ Perlman, Fredy (1983) pg. 43, in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan: an essay*. Black and Red, Detroit, MI

² Stevens, Ted (2006) "Your Own Personal Internet" Wired. Taken from www.wired.com Accessed 4/8/2017

Introducing the Literary Genre as Cultural Ecology

Andrew Blum begins the preface of his best-selling book *Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet* (2012) when a Brooklyn squirrel kills his internet connection by chewing through a rubber wire.³

This death stirs the author to investigate the internet's physical structure over a course of two years, traveling the tens of thousands of miles of buried cables that link continents, buildings, and people together in a history of names and landmarks that define the complex technology. A primary evolutionary force today, the internet is now thoroughly integrated into the earth, its tubes converging to form the infrastructure necessary for it to function.

The book spans genres to map this ground: travel narrative, digital ethnography, adventure novel, dystopian nonfiction, virtual theology, Blum provides in *Tubes* an account to order the chaos of unseen forces, ideological values, and cultural norms of an increasingly high-tech landscape and the ways in which humans have adapted to the brave new world we find ourselves in.

On the Sorcery and Tyranny of the Technosphere

The squirrel jolts both author and reader out of the world of failing metaphors, making the technical anatomy of the internet tangible by illuminating its machinery:

*In basest terms, the Internet is made of pulses of light. Those pulses might seem miraculous, but they're not magic. They are produced by powerful lasers contained in steel boxes housed (predominantly) in unmarked buildings. The lasers exist. The boxes exist. The buildings exist. The Internet exists—it has a physical reality, an essential infrastructure, a 'hard bottom,' as Henry David Thoreau said of Walden Pond.*⁴

The omniscient nature of the internet means its points of presence are everywhere, streaming human activity across glass fibers between them.⁵ For Blum, it is initially

³ Blum, Andrew (2012) *Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet*. HarperCollins Publishers: New York, NY.

⁴ Ibid, 4

⁵ Omniscience is a term found in new cosmological literature, for instance in Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry's *The Universe Story*, representing an idea elaborated upon in Joel Primack and Nancy Ellen Abrams' *The View from the Center of the Universe*, speaking to the idea that *every* place in the universe is the center of an ever-expanding universe. Swimme writes:

>“the central archetypal pattern for understanding the universe's birth and development is omniscience...a developing reality that, from the beginning, is centered upon itself at each place of its existence.”

Consider those wisdom traditions speaking similarly, as with Black Elk in *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*:

recognized to reside in the “black cable modem with five green lights, a blue telephone adapter...and a white wireless router with a single illuminated eye” beside his living room couch.⁶

From there, the line moves into the basement, through the yard past the squirrel to a fiber junction box, where a thick bundle of cables aggregates the surrounding neighborhood into “strands of glass...node8M48,” in North Brooklyn, moving to a “head-end,” a fenced off building containing a cable modem termination system whose router, “sprouting yellow wires,” is plugged into a “master head-end” in Hicksville, Long Island, where the broadband internet services center’s (BISC) routers “aggregate all the signals coming and going between Cablevision’s customers and the rest of the Internet” – networks like Level 3, AT&T, Hurricane Electric, and KPN that connect in specific places: “60 Hudson Street, 111 Eighth Avenue, Equinix Ashburn, Equinix Newark, Equinix Chicago, and Equinix Los Angeles.”⁷

Unlike the usual metaphors used to describe the internet—“web,” “cloud,” “net,” “village”—*Tubes* aptly represents the otherwise undetectable links that are now crucial for civilization’s many networks to operate. The technosphere, veiled in a technical language so often left to specialists, deforms a sense of reality by clouding the ability to distinguish between self, internet, and ideas of either, enclosing and uprooting its users into a placeless existence eclipsing the real world.⁸ By focusing attention on its material structures however, Blum *thus* works to demystify, decipher, and dissolve the illusions that disappear and invisibilize the real story.

In doing so, Blum’s journey takes on for him the significance of a religious pilgrimage, searching out the face of the internet’s hidden structures and the gurus that guide him as he navigates the terrain. Along the way, a kind of mystical strain runs throughout the author’s account, transcending the visible world to discern the controlling powers beyond it, one testifying to a technology that faithfully intends and records a modern economic.

In this regard, technicians and computer scientists are described as the virtual engineers of an occult science, structuring an asylum increasingly regulated by machines, algorithms, and technicians. As one product-philosopher/technology-ethicist describes,

>The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells Wakan-Tank, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us.

This archetypal pattern is one the internet follows as well, where each node (user) is an iterating principle central to the whole so that, as Blum will suggest, it is human intention and the desire to connect that is ultimately responsible for turning the originating activity of the universe into digital content and other concretized forms.

⁶ Ibid, 1

⁷ Ibid, 265–266

⁸ For the study on the Anthropocene, see: www.researchgate.net

“never before in history have 50 mostly male 20–35 year old designers living in California working at three tech companies influenced how a billion people spend their time.”⁹

Readers might then recognize in Blum’s pages the details of their own subjugation, as animals captured and constricted by the fiber and tubes that ensnare them in a pantheon of ruling forces.

Stratigraphic Layers of a New Religious Empire

Blum analyzes the light within these tubes as a cultural artifact shaped by social structures and terrestrial backdrops, “nexuses of information,” whose logical, physical, and topographical conditions together form the layers of a modern domestication. The internet can therefore be described as a set of overlapping realms, electronic signals travel the physical machinery across earthly terrains in this newest imperial project:

*Multiple networks run through the same wires, even though they are owned and operated by independent organizations...the networks carry networks. One company might own the actual fiber-optic cables, while another operates the light signals pulsing over that fiber, and a third owns (or more likely rents) the bandwidth encoded in that light...that allows for the likelihood that many individual networks— ‘autonomous systems,’ in Internet parlance—run over the same wires, their information-laden electrons or photons jostling across the countryside, like packs of eighteen-wheelers on the highway.*¹⁰

Not unlike archaic civilizations governed by the warrior-priest-kings that proclaimed themselves divinities worthy of worship, the culture today might similarly be regarded as guided by a uniform conviction. Digital code and the security of its delivery apparatuses are today invested with the same triple authority (military, religious, political) that these techno-priests wield as they are tasked with regulating daily life and organizing behavior that governs technical, cultural, and ecological realities.

A seamless, omnipresent progression, discernible patterns and rituals become apparent within the internet’s hulking mass, cemented in the daily services and communion its attendants devote their lives to.

Like every religious history before it, there are moments and places where powerful ideas take material shape, their psychic and aesthetic components arranging narrower and ever more impoverished experiences for their users over time. Blum traces the internet’s origins as the conception of the survivability of information through an

⁹ PBS. “Your phone is trying to control your life,” retrieved at

¹⁰ Blum, 19

experimental nationwide computer network, before drifting to the aged relics, major centers, and internet onramps that make up its storied past.

He visits the cable landing stations, the trucks and ships that lay cable beneath cities and oceans, and data factories to gain insight into the servers, routers, modems, exchanges, and all the rest of the instruments, plastic, metals, fiber optics, boxes, discerning from these remains the social order contained in each pulse of light. The handful of global megahubs that represent hundreds more regional hubs, each capture and redistribute traffic along the paths where industrial and colonial dynamics have only advanced, intensified, and accelerated in sophistication, are ruled now by the single, golden law that repeats the digital kingdom's prophetic destiny:

“Get your packets to their destination as directly and cheaply as possible, by increasing the number of possible paths.”¹¹

An architecture and narrative of control has thus been set up, circling the earth, plugging continents in through telegraph cables, ocean lines, and port cities, converting countries into call centers, expanding with the ferocity of evangelists espousing a manifest destiny.

The consequences include what Blum calls “cities of light,” whose fiber strands converge in access points and critical vectors that move and store electrified data. Deep inside this complex, our digital avatars are imprisoned, enslaved to those who sell online produce to bidders seeking information on prospective customers.

The entirety of our social order is present in the inner workings of these tubes, stratigraphically signaling the geologic boundary of a new reigning creature that has drastically altered the flow of energy with a synchronizing technique, yoking and repurposing cultural memory:

*This is the cloud. All of those buildings like this around the planet create the cloud. The cloud is a building. It works like a factory. Bits come in, they get massaged and put together in the right way, then packaged up and sent out. But everybody you see on this site has one job, that's to keep these servers right here alive at all times.*¹²

The reality is mundane, banal, ordinary: the psychic aspect of land is traumatized by civilization, empire, capital, and technology's imperial ambitions, a lineage producing new behaviors to cope with the artifice of screens, “clouds,” gadgets, and instruments that redesign our experience of and relationship to the world.¹³

¹¹ Ibid, 109

¹² Ibid, 259

¹³ Domesticated animals, much less stimulated than their wild counterparts, will often evolve stereotypes (of 35 million farm, lab, and zoo animals and pets in the world, estimates are 91.5% of pigs, 82.6% of poultry, 80% of American minks living on fur farms, 50% of lab mice, 18.4% of horses have some stereotypy), defined as repetitive, invariant, and seemingly pointless behaviors hypothesized to exist when a biological need cannot be expressed, for example when captured gophers dig holes to feel safe, or captured carnivores pace intensely for hours on end.

A Mathematics of Light

Blum journeys across the anatomy of this newest Leviathan to search out its “aura,” each physical connection presenting another organ of efficiency where light speed connection is valued above all else. Cheap, fast, and reliable capacity is purchased, traffic and congestion grows, new tubes connect formerly separated nodes, and profitable companies accelerate the rate of networked exchange. He describes his revelation, that the internet should be conceived of not as a noun but a verb, an “internetting” of global culture approaching light speed:

*What I saw was not the essence of the Internet but its quintessence – not the tubes, but the light...better thought of as math made manifest; not hard, physical tubes, but ineffable, ethereal numbers...for all the constantly advancing miracles of silicon, the planet itself remains unassailable, along with the speed of light and the human desire to be connected...the Internet was made of light.*¹⁴

Blum does not include much in the way of the energy systems and power structures it takes to force light-speed travel across enormous distances when volts of electricity are sent through cables, nor does he speak much to the ecological effects of laying tubing, the wastelands of trashed computers and discarded devices, nor the changes in surrounding life places, imagined spaces, and domesticated dreams such technological “progress” induces in the human mind.¹⁵

He does not talk about the transformation of earth into the tubes themselves, nor the rate of emissions arising from this process, nor the energy it takes to sustain it.

Instead, the internet’s essential places and the moods they engender are described, along with the altogether overwhelming nature and degree of its complexity as a whole, aspirations of near-frictionless profit provoking crises of bandwidth in which states and firms are sacrificed in pursuit of a higher purpose. Blum translates his revelation:

It worked according to an incontrovertible physical truth: a pulse of light goes in one end and comes out the other. There is plenty of magic in the light itself—the rhythm and wavelength of its pulses determine the amount of data that can be transmitted at a time, which is in turn dependent on the machines installed on each end. But none of that changes the need for a continuous path. Individual strands of fiber can be spliced together end

¹⁴ Blum, 163

¹⁵ Studies on the ecological impacts of the internet infrastructure, for instance a Greenpeace report on internet data centers, show how the videos, pictures, emails, status updates, news, and tweets generated are stored in giant data centers packed with computer servers that consume huge amounts of electricity, often from polluting dirty energy sources and clustered in locations offering tax incentives and cheap costs.

*to end by melting the tops, like candles—but that process is delicate and time-consuming. The path of least resistance is unbroken. Hopefully.*¹⁶

Targets for Terrorists

As energy bubbles up from the earth to be extracted and processed into fuel for the technologies we increasingly devote our lives to, what relevance do IT workers, hackers, security experts, electricians now have for the companies and states they minister to, shepherding and securing their hobbled flocks unendingly afraid of the looming specter of computer death?

Perhaps in recognizing their destinies are impacted by powers greater than themselves, it is only natural to attempt to evoke favor from the apparent supernatural forces they are dominated by, paying technicians to channel this divine power to heal any machine afflicted with a virus.

Like each religion before it, the internet situates a glorified memplex, culturally accreting sacred sites, relics, monuments, apostles, stories, and ritual services.

One of Blum's interviewees forecasts the places to be attacked and defended, celebrated and hidden in what he anticipates as the battle space for an oncoming spiritual feud:

*Are we creating through this book a road map for terrorists? By identifying the 'monuments,' as you refer to them, if they are known and damaged and destroyed, it's not just one building that goes down, it's the entire country that goes down, and is that a wise thing to be broadcasting to the world...Do you want to be the guy who says, 'here's what you attack to take down the country'?*¹⁷

Already a Scotland Yard 2007 operation broke up an Al-Qaeda plot to blow up the Telehouse compound and with it do extensive damage to the London Internet Exchange—what Telehouse technical services director called “strategically important organizations at the heart of the internet,” in an interview with the Times of London.¹⁸

The threat of sharing information about critical infrastructure built for the purpose of sharing that same information is apparently not too great, and ultimately Blum's interviewee shares his knowledge for one simple reason: “They wanted the attention; it would be good for business.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid, 168

¹⁷ Blum, 116

¹⁸ For a brief analysis of Al Qaeda's plot, see Simson Garfinkel's article, “Could Al Qaeda Plunge England into an Internet Blackout,” retrieved here www.technologyreview.com In the article, Garfinkel compares the attack with an imagined one on the AME West compound he visited, pointing out, “some luddite terrorist using my name could easily have called, arranged the tour, and then blown up the gigaswitch with a pipe bomb.”

¹⁹ Blum, 115

The perennial contradiction between profit and safety resurfaces: while secrecy may from a security standpoint make sense, from an economic perspective it does not, so any group will broadcast into the marketplace for the sake of this intention. The decentralized design of the internet is similarly juxtaposed against the tendency to concentrate hubs to reduce the time it takes to send and communicate content as it moves along the tubing to increase profitability. These principles of publicity and secrecy, distribution and concentration form the basis of the dual nature of the internetting world, evident in a contradictory aesthetic of “cyberiffic” tones of Silicon Valley’s building interiors, compared to the often discreet and anonymous steel buildings at undisclosed addresses owned by indeterminate companies.²⁰

Whether any of these targets remain essentially symbolic or functional in primal or ecological warfare is a question to be taken up when considering the underlying strategy and tactical advantage behind any potential action. It may be easy enough to kill off a portion of the North American Network Operators Group (“NANOGers”), so-called “wizards behind the internet’s curtains” (who Blum writes are the only ones who would know how to fix the internet’s biggest pipes) at a party for instance — “if a bomb went off in its midst, who would be left to run the Internet?” — or somehow bypass the sophisticated security systems to infiltrate an exchange — or strap a bomb to a Brocade MLX 32 router at the core of some large internet exchange at Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Palo Alto, or London to prevent hundreds of gigabits (billions of bits of information made of light) from being sent each second.²¹

The obvious vulnerability is recognized, as one employee at the “center of Milwaukee’s internet” muses to Blum on the mass of tubes serving twenty five thousand people before them: “look what someone could do in here with a chainsaw.”²²

If the Internet is generally a series of tubes connecting machines, then it exists as a series of routes that can be cut and nodes that can be crippled. Resistance, the increased friction on a flow to hinder and discourage its movement, is antithetical to the previously mentioned golden rule of the internetting impetus of light-speed profit. One might seek to launch a tube-slicing or box-breaking spree—the larger, more connected, and most indispensable the bulk of conduits, the better: the most heavily trafficked international Internet route for instance, between New York and London.²³

As one article points out,

²⁰ Despite such secrecy, websites like Empire Logistics, LilSis, and Data Center Map are a few examples of how often invisible power structures, relationships, and processes in logistical infrastructures can be mapped, with special attention to vulnerabilities, key sites of struggle, choke points, and connections to broader dynamics and solidarity opportunities along global supply chains, presumably rupturing the flow of capital by shutting down major thoroughfares. For more, see

²¹ Ibid, 119

²² Ibid, 23

²³ Ibid, 180

“roughly 99 percent of global Web traffic is dependent on deep-sea networks of fiber-optic cables that blanket the ocean floor like a nervous system...tangible targets – creating very real choke points in the system.”²⁴

Beyond that, destroying the thirteen root servers that decode IP addresses, stopping their replication, and killing backups would prevent all internet browsing while taking down phones, computers, businesses, etc.; governments or hackers could use their internet kill switches to shut it off and keep it down; data centers could be demolished; key engineers, architects, and others capable of rebuilding core internet components could be attacked; cyberwarfare operations or ransomware could be employed, and on and on...Looking at the technopriest class as similarly vital, their annihilation might have a comparable effect. Without wizards behind the curtain, who will sustain the spectacle?

To what degree would such attempts be effective? Would destroying servers and routers, slicing network paths, or eliminating super-empowered actors seriously delay messages by rerouting them through alternative pathways? To what extent would physical damage slow a connection, or halt it completely? And to what purpose? To delay the messaging by a fraction until tubes are repaired, the boxes replaced? To hinder and disrupt the ease and facility of “resource” extraction so long as one is able? To free oneself of the internet altogether? And always, for how long?

Never forever. Any significant action causing internet failure has arguably remained minimal and always temporary due to the basic premise of the internet’s original design. Power may go out and regional access may not work, but the internetting impulse remains. Major hubs and exchanges have fail-safes and backups, so that it is, for all practical purposes, “self-healing.”²⁵

Whether cables are cut by earthquakes or sharks, or fishing boats cast anchors unaware, or a buried fiber-optic cable is accidentally cut with a shovel, knocking Armenia offline for twelve hours, repairs are relatively instantaneous.²⁶ Put otherwise, while the internet’s extremities may be vulnerable and fragile on an individual basis, the overarching structure of the whole is much more resilient. More likely than anti-tech activists crippling communication infrastructure may be a country or company forgetting to pay, as when the entire Australian continent was shut off from internet services after the Australia Internet Exchange forgot to pay its bill.²⁷ Here, the intention and directives guiding those whose hands are on the machinery is evident as a crucial motivating force.

Attacking the internet’s physical structures would likely result in delays of hours, perhaps a day or two. For anything approaching weeks, or theoretically months or

²⁴ Kleyman, Bill (2014). “How the Internet May Be Taken Down.” Data Center Knowledge. Retrieved 7/14/17 from www.datacenterknowledge.com

²⁵ Blum, 200

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 83

years, chaos would seemingly have to be introduced through a highly developed code or the equivalent degree of physical destruction of critical infrastructure on such a scale that its replacement could not occur in any timely manner—capabilities largely out of reach of most would-be “anti-civilizational” activists, and certainly disincentivized by increasing scales of state and industry sponsored retaliation.

For an example of a weapons system designed to knock out all electricity of an enemy country, see the Zero Days documentary above that considers the Stuxnet weapon system which destroyed Iran’s nuclear capabilities as a smaller part of the Nitro Zeus project that would take out civilian power grids along with Iranian defenses if an Israeli attack on Iran drew in American responses, at 1:45:30

In all these cases, recovery points, security measures, and the decentralized nature of internetting in general would likely mean the global energy systems that empower the internetting in the first place would make better targets than the internet itself.

As pointed out, the only hacker-caused blackout to date was launched against Ukraine, presumably by Russian actors, lasting as long as it took to restore power manually.²⁸ Since the event, Ukraine has been recognized as the unofficial training ground for Russian cyberwarfare operations, presumably in preparation for future real-world missions against perceived threats.²⁹

[the original “Technique and Obsolescence” article was published in 2018, four years prior to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia]

Any serious large-scale cyberattack, therefore, seems more likely to be done by national governments targeting one another for geopolitical strategic gain than any non-state actor, though it is well known to be the case that governments kill their own internet, as with Iran or Egypt during the Arab Spring, and even the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit cut communication services to disrupt coordinated protests.³⁰

For now, we can be confident that the internetting-of-things that occurred in the five years since Blum’s book came out has subsequently recruited and weaponized the technosphere’s mass of connected devices to make them and the tubes between them a viable and persistent threat to anyone remaining dependent upon them, as individuals and institutions paralyzed by ransomware, like the critical financial and energy systems digitally assaulted in cyberspace every day, have all found themselves to have become targets in a new war game playing out across tubes that take shape in the images and stories that flicker across screens.³¹

²⁸ For more on Russia using Ukraine as a cyberwarfare training ground, see Andy Greenberg’s article, “How an Entire Nation Became a Test Lab for Cyberwar,” (2017), retrieved 7/14/17 from www.wired.com

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ See David Kravets’ article, “San Francisco Subway Shuts Cell Service to Foil Protest; Legal Debate Ignites,” (2011), retrieved 7/17/17 from www.wired.com or Dana Lievelson’s 2013 article, “The Government’s Secret Plan to Shut off Cellphones and the Internet, Explained,” retrieved 7/17/17 from www.motherjones.com

³¹ On Ransomware and the vulnerability of the internet of things to hacking, see, Brian Buntz (2017) “WannaCry Aftermath: Is IoT Ransomware in Our Future,” retrieved 7/17/17 from www.ioti.com For

Obsolete Techniques

Might some successful attack, if only for a moment, serve as a breath of fresh air, a temporary break in the monotony of second life, shocking people back towards the non-digitized world? So long as the basic narrative of technological progress and profit remains intact, attacking individual tubes of electricity or the boxes they inspire will likely not in any way be a major setback for civilization if taken as an exclusive method of activity or resistance. The internet, as a technology, exists as the hyper-specialized body of techniques developed to share information, now largely for commercial purposes, out of which entire industries have been erected. Within the context of civilization and capitalism, it is a medium that motivates countless numbers to stake the entirety of their lives upon the machinery of their own domestication.

Resisting this technology is, then, very nearly impossible in any meaningful way. If one wanted to, one could go behind their couch and smash their modem and phone with a hammer. Easier, unplug them. Disconnecting others who do not wish to unplug however will likely remain temporary and therefore generally ineffectual in any permanent sense. Instead, the tubes and boxes would need to be deprived of electricity *at the very source* of the physical energy they depend upon while simultaneously deprived of the psychic energy it takes to reproduce the narrative that such modern techniques are essential to live. Resisting technology in any relevant way beyond mere symbolic victories will not occur through physical and electronic attacks on infrastructure alone, as they are only effective so long as methods of rewilding are not neglected.

Online connection and disconnection offer weapons for both assault and defense. As Blum writes, “to be on the Internet is to want to be found.”³² The social aspect that internetting implies (as distinct from the energy infrastructure it relies upon) is thus both a vulnerability and asset. There is ostensibly no way to physically attack this edifice in any lasting way (or at the very least, it has never been achieved apart from webpages suffering from temporary DDoS attacks or brief moments where regional connections are severed), assuming taking down the entire internet, or the larger technological systems it exists within across the planet, is even the goal at hand. The benefits of any lone attack by the anti-tech activist is negligible at best because the force of resistance in such examples is simply too weak or unavailable to be maintained in the face of a self-repairing Leviathan.

Further, for the same reason insurgents don’t start by breaking their own modems, smashing their own routers, and cutting their own telephone wires in order to avoid repression, activists would likely further be “disadvantaged” in the war they wage if they were to attack the same regional information communication technologies they depend on for reconnaissance, securing necessary supplies, organizing, etc. In a civilized context of economic competition and state power, try as one might, attacking critical

more, Steve Ranger’s “Cyberwar: A guide to the frightening future of online conflict” is also helpful, retrieved 8/7/17 from www.zdnet.com .

³² Blum, 30

infrastructure does not make it go away, *because the perceived need for it does not go away*; instead, technology's *raison d'être* is reinforced, evolving more effectual security measures to defend against alleged threats, developing new security protocols, etc.

This is the realization Blum's demystification of abstraction provides:

The internet represents our own collective desire and so as long as it is desired, it remains. The world we have is the world we desire, as evidenced by our reproducing it in each moment.

He explains,

“everything you do online travels through a tube. Inside those tubes (by and large) are glass fibers. Inside those fibers are light. Encoded in that light is, increasingly, *us*.”³³

To attack this digital “*us*” without attacking the civilized context and rationales that produce and sustains “*us*” amounts to a kind of symbolic, nonstrategic martyrdom and indiscriminate attack that serves only Leviathan's reified narrative that it is essential to protect the civilized from what can only be interpreted as an incoherent doctrinal cancer: “anti-progress.”

Any movement against civilization, individual or otherwise, recognizing the futility of physical attacks against infrastructure alone, might shift to *human intention* as the location where the battle for primal anarchy might be waged.

Attacking the grid's physical apparatus *without* undomesticating from the same structures one might seek to attack would be an unreasonable, impotent, time-consuming activity that misunderstands the scale necessary to be effective.³⁴ If technological progress means improved “efficiency” in actualizing a given potential or end, then the internet, its infrastructure, and the technosphere itself, along with civilization or domestication as a whole, are amassed bodies of techniques that have at times and epochal moments been understood to be obsolete as survival methods in the face of advanced techniques.

But symbolically attacking largely irrelevant or easily repairable cables and tubes that remain nonessential to the overall structure of the internet and civilization will remain largely ineffective unless enough energy is invested into non-technological life-ways, depriving the technosphere of the effort, intention, and energy it takes to remain operational and relevant in the first place. Where intention goes, energy flows. Or as Blum writes, “people go to where things are.”³⁵

Electrification, perhaps the ultimate expression of domesticated energy, grounds the internet's pulsating light, re-presenting Leviathan's collective will in each new click, like, tweet, post, and communicated message or transaction.

³³ Blum, 6

³⁴ Of course, for some, this may not matter.

³⁵ Blum, 183

To live a life where such technologies are unnecessary and obsolete, it is vital to develop survival techniques where technological disconnection—a life without these specialized techniques and apart from what is internetted—is not a disadvantage, but cultivated as an unmediated pathway to access the universal energy coursing through the earth, now used to power machines. On its own, this reconnection is able to entirely resist technology, alienation, and the division of specialized labor that reproduces the ultra-domesticated existence separating us from what our aboriginal bodies long for. It is perhaps the only technique able to do so, beyond a suicidal “final solution” of a nation or non-state network that would use a weapon against another and in so doing undermine the foundational economic infrastructures it depends on in an interdependent world — unlikely, to say the least, Hollywood and spy-thriller novels notwithstanding.

But how does a life without electricity endure? Whereas anarchists could arguably be happy with the ability to wrest power away from state and corporate power using decentralized media, the technosphere it depends on has become omnipresent, omnipotent, increasingly omniscient in its own right. Learning to live outside electricity and domestication to adequately resist the electrification of life remains a necessary ingredient, more so than blogging about attacks on power stations will ever be.

What then is the place for breaking boxes and cutting tubes in the war for anarchy and the wild? The artifacts that facilitate such relations can be attacked insofar as civilized networks can be leveraged against themselves, victims of the same national and technological power they promote.

Inevitably, whether state or non-state actors take down grids across the world or their citizens simply learn to live without them, letting them crumble without repairing or resurrecting them when they do, they will eventually cease to function one way or another if wildness is ever to recover. Like any specialist faced with a disrupting technology, the technopriests advocating subservience to the electric gods they serve, charging fees and collecting tariffs, can do nothing once others have realized these gods themselves are dead and dying, their religion decaying as the biosphere’s energy flows are uncaged to flow freely again, repairing themselves and the landscapes as the fountain of energy bubbles up into healthy communities once more.

But if the direct connection to the surrounding land necessary for a life apart from Leviathan is forsaken, will it matter? Such structures might remain only scapegoats to condemn while denying the unmediated experience of wild nature with distractions.

On some level, this necessitates a kind of appraisal, detailing and examining the processes of civilized life each of us are subject to.

Is it possible to live without a phone, internet, or electricity today? Where and how? What local networks can aid us towards these ends? How can life exist without civilization, in perpetuity? Is life so domesticated that one cannot survive without the imprisoning asylum around? How can this reality be undone, as fast as possible, totally and completely? If not, why not?

If it requires internet, electricity, or civilized structures to facilitate the experience of true liberation and a life attuned to a wild and uncontrolled existence, then how to

distinguish between technological necessity, desire, and addiction? At what point will these structures become outmoded towards such ends and how to move beyond even them?

Blum continuously asks what the purpose of internet connection is, or any connection, at all? Such questions provide opportunity for the complete reformulation of a mathematics of light:

What does your body need at its deepest levels?

What foods satisfy those needs, and how can these foods be freely sought and attained?

Where then should one live or move to directly access the energy necessary for life in each passing season?

What is worth giving attention to and reproducing in each new present? A web site? A Facebook group? A pithy tweet? A coping mechanism? The company tasked with repairing damaged tubes? The sentiment behind the messages delivered through these tubes?

What online activity is absolutely essential, and what remains only the residue of domesticated habituation?

Answering questions like these—how to live a life unmediated by tubes of controlled energy—we approach the guiding attitude driving the technosphere onward and can consider how to dismantle technoculture and make the internet obsolete at a personal level. Such answers begin to establish the lifeways necessary for uncivilized life to take root.

Dispossessed of nearly every landbase by civilization, anyone might be forgiven for embracing the hyper specialized techniques made indispensable to survive each new day. Still, one might perceive a specter of mass refusal taking shape, where a permanent unplugging from infrastructure at increasing scales could begin to return life to the instincts of its deepest nature.

To continue civilized pathways would be to accept a place as hyper domesticated animals, helplessly reliant upon schemes designed to augment subservience, where any “resistance” would remain superficial and ineffective so long as the depth of an instinctual nature remains unexplored.

Retrieving a Depth-of-Place

The question of civilization and resistance, as will be argued in this last analysis, remains a technical question: how do we survive, together, here, based on what is available to us, now (and forever)? We can today recognize that civilization no longer (if it ever did) provides an answer. Rather, other techniques are needed to render civilization obsolete as a force of social organization and adaptation to new conditions.

While it is often assumed civilization cannot or will not voluntarily transform itself into a sustainable mode of operation, to believe a planetary eco-militia front will force

civilization to its knees can seem even more far-fetched than voluntary transformation (though admittedly, any scenario in which humans survive an upcoming bottleneck is too). To run from it, or fight against it, as Perlman points out, is to invite obliteration of those communities of resistance that try either:

*The community can remove itself physically from the monster's reach, or it can stay where it is and try to hold its own against the beast...ultimately none flee for good, since the Leviathan will shrink the size of the world and turn all places of refuge into cleared fields... [its] institutions are not a part of Life but a part of Death. And Death cannot die.*³⁶

Any hope for a future may likely depend upon the degree to which transformation is voluntary and the only conceivable way to stabilize and sustain a “post-wild” world, forced into interdependence by the body of domesticating techniques it co-evolved with in symbiosis.³⁷

In the wake of social collapse, there can be no assumption that the simple vacuum of civility would be preferable to intentional transition. Rather, the abrupt collapse and absence of structure tends to leave millions vulnerable and unable to withstand the murderous technology of the genocidal state.³⁸

It is also difficult to believe civilization would go down without taking everything with it. Here, uncivil imaginings are valuable in re-ecologizing the suffocating traumas of cityscapes. In this critical space, informal bioregional networks, permanent subsistence zones, and feral bands of human animals intimate glimpses of approaches where landscapes are not continually assaulted by extractive industry, but offer places where healthy cultural patterns have a chance to reemerge to establish roots.³⁹

³⁶ Perlman, 31–33

³⁷ On the question of whether the technosphere has so domesticated the Earth and biosphere that the climate feedback loops can now no longer be stabilized *without* technological innovation, for instance increasing dependence on carbon capture technology or preventing nuclear meltdown, consider Philip Sutton, co-author of *Climate Code Red*, suggesting at the 2015 SLF Great Debate (“To Collapse or Not to Collapse: Pushing for economic ruin or building a great transition” on 2/13/2015, retrieved at

>“*The notion that you can avoid ecological collapse by causing economic collapse is...a nut's idea. If you cause economic collapse, we have too much carbon dioxide in the air right now. What system is going to take it out under 20,000 years? The only way we're going to get that excess CO2 out of the air is if we build the capacity to take it out and we have some hope...Unless we try to think through what we want and make it happen we can't make it happen...economic collapse as a tool for ecological salvation is nuts, it's unnecessary, and it is actually counterproductive in blocking the ability to restore a safe climate. It's actually going to make our job worse.*” (56:30)

³⁸ Timothy Snyder's *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* offers an analysis of Nazi Germany's aggression and the vulnerability of collapsed states to serious violence, genocide, and untold oppression and death that may be helpful in considering realistic scenarios following collapse in which power vacuums are filled by pathological tendencies.

³⁹ The positive vision of a green anarchy takes many forms, for instance in Graham Purchase's *Anarchism and Ecology*, Seaweed's *Land and Freedom: an open invitation*, or Do or Die's “Down with

To unplug from the machine for the sake of subsistence may still involve domesticated techniques, but can begin the process of unlearning the totality of oppressive techniques. From here, assaults against any civilized remnant can be launched, providing non-electrified networks of anonymous activists the places, groundwork, and support needed to attack the legitimacy of the state, omnipotence of industry, and reified economic doctrine from the refuge of rewilded land and lives. To imagine these forces breaking down in the face of an exponentially growing wild instinct one has only to remember:

Anything can happen.

It is elsewhere envisaged that religions evolved from the symbolic rituals associated with significant moments in life: birth, subsistence patterns, death.⁴⁰

Burials, ceremonies, rituals, hunting magic, art, power structures, seasonal calendars, all aligned to what was perceived as a sacred order stemming from wild nature's divine essence.

Whereas this life-giving energy directly patterned ancestral cultural expressions, rooting them in what might be called animistic "religious" experience, today that same energy flows through lines that power the machines that surveil us. That energy has now been so distorted as to have fashioned a cybernetic religion, one that would sacrifice living experience for an existence mediated by a class who enrich and uphold themselves in a division-of-specialization, clicking life away with religious fervency.

To confront this new techno-religious empire, better techniques for collapsing the edifice to retrieve the experience of wild nature will need to be encouraged.

The collapse of complex adaptive systems necessarily occurs when a system is deprived of energy.⁴¹ Knocking out the energy systems that maintain and power Leviathan's processes can increase the stress and, potentially, ensure that the plas-

the Empire, Up with the Spring, Part Two," which can be found in the anthology *Cracks in a Grey Sky*. Aric McBay's "Goal 2" and "Strategy E" may provide a path as well:

>to defend and rebuild just, sustainable, and autonomous human communities, and, as part of that, to assist in the recovery of the land...[to] rebuild a sustainable subsistence base for human societies (including perennial polycultures for food) and localized, democratic communities that uphold human rights. From "Decisive Ecological Warfare," in *Deep Green Resistance: strategy to save the planet*

⁴⁰ For more on the origins of Paleolithic religion, see D. Bruce Dickson's (1990) *The Dawn of Belief: Religion in the Upper Paleolithic of Southwestern Europe*. Studies in Cognitive Archaeology, like Stephen Mithen's *Prehistory of the Mind: The cognitive origins of art, religion, and science* suggests a novel theory of the mind in which separate mental modules are fused together through social and linguistic pathways that recombine specialized intelligences into metacognitive breakthroughs that fluctuate over time. Religion, like art or science then, would combine social, technical, and natural history intelligences in symbolic forms, as when artifacts for social interaction, specialized technology, and anthropomorphic thought promote a cognitive fluidity that selects for greater attunement to the life-support systems a community depends on.

⁴¹ One theory for societal collapse is that energy return on energy invested (EROEI) is a chief concern in maintaining social complexity, so that a 3:1 to 5:1 EROI ratio can sustain the essential overhead energy costs of a modern society. Because the continual input of energy from sunlight is necessary to keep ecosystem services functioning, collapse can be seen as the sudden loss of the energy

tic geologic layer of the Anthropocene—the tubes within which the entire civilized culture is now confined—may be so deprived of energy as to lay buried for millennia, obsolete and unused, marking the point at which humanity no longer desired to remain in its civilized state.

Following Blum’s lessons however, while the technosphere’s physical veins that energize this system can be momentarily slashed, the apparatus itself will not bleed out for as long as there are those seeking to sew shut its wounds for the sake of convenience, security, and control, upholding civilization as the only conceivable technique to mediate power and secure privilege at the behest of its constituents. Yet it also seems the only way the community of life, human and non-human, together will survive.

To ensure biospheric stability (and any hope for a present in the future), only a rewilded, free arrangement is able to transcend paradigms of commodification and profiteering to achieve what at this point would be indistinguishable from a miracle. At the very least, one might experience life, however briefly, without external control, unconstrained in the devotion to wild instinct, freed of civilization, unmediated by the electronic signals that displace our deepest natures.

“The future will be worked out in the tension between those committed to the Technozoic, a future of increased exploitation of the Earth as resource, all for the benefit of humans, and those committed to the Ecozoic, a new mode of human-Earth relations, one where the well-being of the entire Earth community is the primary concern.

This is the jumping-off point, the razor’s edge, the great divide, the call to action and commitment. Will we be about the Technozoic, or will we be about the Ecozoic? Our response will reverberate through every future epoch.”

-Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story*

In it, the anthropocene is described in terms of a “conspicuous stratigraphical signal of anthropogenic changes in production and consumption across the biosphere,” and thus the mass of total human technology, now weighing 30 trillion tons, with more

needed to maintain social complexity, stratification, internal and external communication, and exchange and productivity.

Joseph Tainter’s book, *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, analyzes social collapse in this framework of energy flows and diminishing returns. Further, due to the second law of thermodynamics, all complex adaptive and nonadaptive systems alike must eventually collapse *by definition and design*, as sufficient energy flows cannot ever be maintained forever due to the finite nature of energy in the universe.

For more on the role of energy flows and their effect on complexity in cosmic history, see Fred Spier’s article, “How Big History Works: Energy Flows and the Rise and Demise of Complexity,” published in *Social Evolution & History* 4(1), March 2005 (87–135), updated and available here: www.sociostudies.org

technofossil “species” than biotic species, potentially signals its geologic layer. Following science-fiction writer Arthur C. Clark’s third law, “any sufficiently developed technology is indistinguishable from magic,” the core of the technosphere, far from being a force separate from humans, can be located in the matrix of relationships that create cultural and individual identities of deepest value and meaning. This implies a deeply integrated existence wherein human activity, thought, the natural world, and unseen reality are all interrelated, exuding a magic-like power so long as the intricacies behind the technosphere’s operating systems remain inaccessible.

Blum’s writing then contributes to an anthropological understanding of this phenomenon of magic, in the tradition of Weber, Frazer, Mauss, Malinowski, and Evans-Pritchard, or reimaged by voices like Starhawk, David Abram, Malidoma Some, and others. Blum’s case differs however in the sense it is he who effectively becomes the “primitive” coming to terms with the more sophisticated techniques he works to get a handle on, an outsider charting the material patterns conditioned upon a potent witchcraft assumed to underlie the basic state of reality.

The persistent repetition of these “senseless habits” as an increasing percentage may mean the animal is suffering in a barren environment, so that abnormal repetitive behaviors help protect emotional responses through coping mechanisms. In this regard, do addiction behavior sequences evoked by modern electrical stimulation similarly provide coping mechanisms to deal to the horrible stress of having been removed by hyper civilized life from the rich, natural environments of early ancestors, interfering with an animal’s nervous system and quality of life?

While the question of humans is not a focus, Temple Grandin suggests in her book, *Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals*, that a well-designed animal welfare program would stimulate seeking (searching, investigating, and making sense of the environment) and play systems that produce feelings of joy in the core emotional systems in the brain, avoiding rage, fear, and panic systems when able. In contrast, wild areas that keep animals occupied and activate positive emotions are optimum environments to prevent these stereotypies from forming at all or reducing them when they do. For an overview of Grandin’s book, see grandin.com

These electronic information factories amount to 1.5–2% of global energy demand (3% in the U.S.), growing at 12% per year; the data centers and telecommunications network behind the internet and cloud are ranked 5th against countries for electricity usage, emitting hundreds of millions of tons of CO₂ each year, or 1% of all emissions released from fossil fuels. A report on the impacts of submarine cables on environments conclude that electromagnetic fields and heat dissipation pose a threat to the marine environment, along with toxic contamination and disturbances.

Whether the Internet of Things will be a net benefit for the environment is thus by no means clear, requiring one weigh the use of fossil fuels, automated work, and electrical efficiency against landfills of e-waste, with the United Nations University estimating 53 million tons of e-waste being disposed of worldwide while around 67 million

tons of new electrical and electronic equipment were put on the market, predicting a rise by a third to 65.4 million tons by 2017. Further, while these environmentally destructive activities are certainly capable of disrupting ecological services, the damage to our minds may be just as significant, albeit in new ways not yet understood. On internet addiction as a disorder, see www.scientificamerican.com

For reports or studies mentioned above, see: www.greenpeace.org www.bfn.de
i.unu.edu

Since 2007, the original Telehouse (North) building has since been joined by larger, more sophisticated ones, Telehouse East and Telehouse West.

www.empirelogistics.org

littlesis.org

and

www.datacentermap.com

The Ted K Archive

A text dump on 'Fairytale from Ecotopia'
2026

Fairytale from Ecotopia

The author might be a really great green anarchist advocate on net, I just didn't want to archive a stand alone web page with the title 'revitalizing terrorism' as I think that's a very misguided advocacy strategy at best, or running cover for something darker at worst.

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