

Desert¹ noun

1. A barren or desolate area, especially:

a. A dry, often sandy region of little rainfall, extreme temperature, and sparse vegetation.

b. A region of permanent cold that is largely or entirely devoid of life.

c. An apparently lifeless area of water.

2. An empty or forsaken place; a wasteland: *a cultural desert*.

3. **Archaic** A wild, uncultivated, and uninhabited region.

[Middle English, from Old French, *desertum*, from neuter past participle of *deserere*, to desert; see **desert**².

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Author's Note

I have written *Desert* as a nature loving anarchist primarily addressing others with similar feelings. As a result I have not always explained ideas to which I hold when they are, to some extent, given within many anarchist and radical environmental circles. Hopefully I have written in an accessible enough manner, so even if you don't come from this background you will still find *Desert* readable. While the best introductions to ecology and anarchy are moments spent within undomesticated ecosystems and anarchist communities, some may also find the following books helpful—I did.

- Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: HarperCollins, 2008).
- Fredy Perlman, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983).
- Christopher Manes, *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company; 1990),
- Clive Ponting, *A Green History of the World* (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

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- Active disillusionment is liberatory

Something haunts many activists, anarchists, environmentalists, many of my friends. It haunted me. Much of our subcultures tell us its not there, that we can't see it, hear it. Our best wishes for the world tell us not to see it. But for many, despite their best efforts—carrying on with the normal activism, the movement building, living both according to and as an expression of their ethics—despite all this, the spectre gains form. The faint image grows more solid, more unavoidable, until the ghost is staring one in the face. And like many monsters of past tales, when its gaze is met people freeze. Become unable to move. Give up hope, become disillusioned and inactive. This malaise, freezing, not only slows activist workload, but I have seen it effect every facet of many of my friends' lives.

The spectre that many try not to see is a simple realisation—the world will not be saved. Global anarchist revolution is not going to happen. Global climate change is now unstoppable. We are not going to see the worldwide end

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to civilisation/capitalism/patriarchy/authority. It's not to happen any time soon. It's unlikely to happen ever. The world will not be saved. Not by activists, not by mass movements, not by charters, and not by an insurgent global proletariat. The world will not be saved. This realisation hurts people. They don't want it to be true! But it probably is.

These realisations, this abandonment of illusions should not become disabling. Yet if one believes that it's all or nothing, then there is a problem. Many friends have dropped out of the 'movement' whilst others have remained in old patterns but with a sadness and cynicism which signals a feeling of futility. Some hover around scenes critiquing all, but living and fighting little. It's not the despair; I can handle the despair. It's the hope I can't handle.'

The hope of a Big Happy Ending hurts people; sets the stage for the pain felt when they become disillusioned. Because, truly, who amongst us now really believes? How many have been burnt up by the effort needed to reconcile a fundamentally religious faith in the positive transformation of the world with the reality of life all around us? Yet to be disillusioned—with global revolution, with our capacity to stop climate change—should

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not alter our anarchist nature, or the love of nature we feel as anarchists. There are many possibilities for liberty and wildness still.

What are some of these possibilities and how can we live them? What could it mean to be an anarchist, an environmentalist, when global revolution, and world-wide social/ecological sustainability are not the aim? What objectives, what plans, what lives, what adventures are there when the illusions are set aside and we walk into the world not disabled by disillusionment but unburdened by it?

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1. No (Global) Future

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- I love us, there's so much we can do and be, but there are limits

- From anti-globalisation to climate change

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In many ways Anarchism was/is the libertarian extreme of the European Enlightenment—against god *and* the state. In some countries such as turn of the Twentieth Century Spain it *was* the Enlightenment—its militantly pro-science anti-clericism being as much an attraction as its anti-capitalism. Yet the rubbish of history is not so easily discarded and progressive revolutionary movements have often been, in essence, form, and aim, the continuation of religion by other means. As an example, the belief that universal peace and beauty would be reached through apocalyptic tumults of blood and fire (revolution/the millennium/the collapse) indicates firmly that as an enlightenment ideology, Anarchism has been heavily burdened by its Euro-Christian origins. John Gray was talking about Marxism when he said it was a “... *a radical*

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version of the enlightenment belief in progress—itself a mutation of Christian hopes ... [Following] Judaism and Christianity in seeing history as a moral drama, that's last act is salvation.”² While some anarchists never fell for such bunkum, many did, and some still do.

These days Progress itself is increasingly questioned both by anarchists and across society. I have yet to meet anyone today who still believes in the *inevitability*³ of a global anarchist future. However the idea of a global movement, confronting a global present and creating a global future has many apostles. Some of these are even libertarians and look hopefully to the *possibility* of global anarchist revolution.

The illusory triumph of capitalism following the destruction of the Berlin Wall lead to the proclamation—more utopian⁴ than real—of a New World Order—a global capitalist system. The reaction of many to globalisation was to posit one from below, and this was only re-enforced by the near simultaneous public emergence of the Zapatistas and the invention of the Web. The subsequent international action days, often coinciding with summits, became the focus for the supposedly global anti-capitalist “movement of movements.” The excitement on the

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streets enabled many to forestall seeing the spectre by looking in the direction of the so-called global movement. But there never was a global movement against capitalism, then,⁵ or ever,⁶ just as capitalism itself was never truly global. There are many, many places where capitalist relations are not the dominant practice, and even more where anti-capitalist (nevermind anarchist) movements simply don't exist. Amidst the jolly unreality of this period of Global Resistance some could get really carried away, "We have no interest in reforming the World Bank or the IMF; we want it abolished as part of an international anarchist revolution."⁷ Such statements are understandable if written in the drunk-like exuberance one can sometimes feel on having defeated the police, but they are found more commonly. The self-description of one Anarchist Federation reads, "As the capitalist system rules the whole world, its destruction must be complete and worldwide".⁸ The illusion of a singular world capitalist present is mirrored by the illusion of a singular world anarchist future.

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The illusion of a singular world capitalist present is mirrored by the illusion of a singular world anarchist future.

I love us, there's so much we can do and be, but there are limits

Anarchists are growing in number. Groups and counter-cultures are appearing in countries where there were few, or no, social movement anarchists' previously. Yet an honest appraisal of our strengths and prospects, and those of the communities and classes we are part of, would show clearly that we are not growing "the new society in the shell of the old,"¹⁰ that someday will liberate the world in a moment of rupture. The earth has a lot of places with a lot of people; a reality that can increasingly easily get lost in the web-encapsulated global (activist) village¹¹ To want to rid the world of capitalist social relations, or further still civilisation, is one thing. To be capable of doing so is something else entirely. We are not everywhere—we are rare. Actions, circles of friends, social centres, urban guerrilla cells, magazine editorial groups, eco-warriors, housing co-ops, students, refugees, arsonists, parents, squats, scientists, peasants, strikers, teachers, land based communes, musicians, tribespeople, street gangs, loving insurgents and so, so much else. Anarchists can be wonderful. We can have beauty, and self-possessed power and possibility in buckets. We cannot, however,

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remake the entire world; there are not enough of us, and never will be.

Some may argue that a global libertarian revolution can succeed without being made, or significantly aided, by overt anarchists so present numbers and resources are null and void. While it's a given that social crises and revolt are regular occurrences in societies based on class warfare; to put one's faith in the Revolutionary Impulse of the Proletariat is a theory approximate to saying "It'll be alright on the night."

Neither we, nor anyone else, can create a libertarian and ecological global future society by expanding social movements. Further, there is no reason to think that in the absence of such a vast expansion, a global social transformation congruent with our desires will ever happen. As anarchists we are not *the* seed of the future society in the shell of the old, but merely one of many elements from which the future is forming. That's

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ok; when faced with such scale and complexity, there is a value in non-servile humility—even for insurgents. To give up hope for global anarchist revolution is not to resign oneself to anarchy remaining an eternal protest. Seaweed puts it well: Revolution is not everywhere or nowhere. Any bioregion can be liberated through a succession of events and strategies based on the conditions unique to it, mostly as the grip of civilisation in that area weakens through its own volition or through the efforts of its inhabitants ... Civilisation didn't succeed everywhere at once, and so its undoing might only occur to varying degrees in different places at different times.¹³

Even if an area is seemingly fully under the control of authority there are always places to go, to live in, to love in and to resist from. And we can extend those spaces. The global situation may seem beyond us, but the local never is. As anarchists we are neither entirely powerless nor potentially omnipotent, thankfully.

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The mobilisation at the Copenhagen UN Climate Change was billed by many as the next Seattle¹⁵ and some groups have claimed they are

“building a global movement to solve the climate crisis”¹⁶ Greenpeace, for instance, says “climate change is a global public ‘bad’. To solve it requires global collective action ... We have no alternative but to build a global grassroots movement, move politicians forward, and force corporations and banks to change direction.”¹⁷ I’ll take it as a given that you the reader understand the naive unrel-

ity of such lobby groups but it’s worth looking at those on the less-institutionalised end of climate-

change campaigning. There are three main tendencies and sometimes folk wander from one to another. Firstly,

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effect on climate change, at least have practical and sometimes achievable objectives in mind i.e. halting the destruction of an ecosystem/the worsening well-being¹⁸ of a community or simply increasing self-sufficiency.¹⁹ Thirdly, there are those nostalgic anti-capitalists who envision climate as a metamorphosis of the “alterglobalisation movement”²⁰ (notice it’s increasingly no longer anti-globalisation). An anonymous writer described the last tendency well:

[When activists] try to convince us that it’s the ‘last chance to save the earth’ ... its because they’re trying to build social movements ... There is a growing and disturbing trend that has been lingering around radical circles over the last few years, based on the idea that blind positivity can lead to interesting and unexpected successes. Michael Hardt and Tony Negri’s books have provided some of the theoretical bases for this, and it has been taken up by some who want to unite the masses under the banner of precarity, organise migrants and mobilise for summits. For many coming from the left wing tradition, it has been the message of hope that they were wanting

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to hear at a time when their ideologies seemed more moribund than ever.

Theoreticians who should understand capitalism well enough to know better, write that a global basic income or free movement for all is an achievable goal. They may not believe it themselves, but ostensibly want to inspire others to believe in it, claiming that the 'moments of excess' generated by such utopian dreams will give rise to potent movements for change. Climate is certainly a suitable testing ground for the politics of manufactured hope, being so alienated from our actual everyday realities. But whilst the new movement politicians—facilitators not dictators—watch their movements grow, there is still a case for living in the real world.²¹

Outside the convention centres the new stars appear more and more like those within. Inside and out the message is that a global future is winnable if only we organise. However, the reality both within ecosystems generally and people's stomachs in particular is that there is no global singular future²² and no imaginary community,

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Given our obvious inability to re-make the entire world the way we might like it to be, some replace the myth of a global revolution with a belief in imminent global collapse—these days usually some mix of climate change and peak oil. As we shall see later (both in coming chapters and our future years) global heating will severely challenge civilisation in some areas and probably vanquish it in others. Yet in some regions it will likely open up possibilities for the spread of civilisation's rule. Some lands may remain (relatively) temperate—climatically and socially. As for civilisation, so for anarchy and anarchists—severely challenged, sometimes vanquished; possibilities for liberty and wildness opening up, possibilities for liberty and wildness closing. The unevenness of the present will be made more so. There is no global future.

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2. It's Later Than We Thought

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- Ghost acres feed population overshoots
- Climate change brings possibilities as well as closures

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Observed climate change is faster than expected

One recurring theme in environmentalism is that the apocalypse is always imminent but forever deferred. Every generation seems to have one last chance to save the planet. Biologist Barry Commoner said back in 1970, “*We are in a period of grace, we have time—perhaps a generation—in which to save the environment from the final effects of the violence we have already done to it.*”²⁴

Similar pronouncements can be heard today but the period of grace is probably over. Back in 1990 the editors of *The Ecologist* set out a general evaluation of the state of the earth in *5000 Days to Save the Planet*:

Today we are told that our planet is in crisis, that we are destroying and polluting our way to a global catastrophe... We may have as few as fifteen years, perhaps as short a time as 5000 days to save the planet... One of the major concerns arising out of the Gaia theory is that we are pushing natural processes beyond their capacity to maintain an atmosphere fit for higher forms of life. Beyond a certain point, the system may flip to an entirely new state which would be extremely un-

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comfortable for life as we know it... once triggered, the change to the new state could occur with extreme rapidity.²⁵

By 2005 the countdown envisaged in the title had reached zero and the originator of the Gaia theory, James Lovelock, was writing *The Revenge of Gaia* where he stated that he thought the living earth was probably now moving irrevocably to a hot state. Lovelock came to this conclusion as a result of seeing scientific observations of climate change surpassing what most predictions said was meant to be happening. In an address to the Royal Society he stated,

The positive feedback on heating from the melting of floating Arctic and Antarctic ice alone is causing an acceleration of system-driven heating whose total will soon or already be greater than that from all of the pollution CO₂ that we have so far added. This suggests that implementing Kyoto or some super Kyoto is most unlikely to succeed we have to understand that the Earth System is now in positive feedback and is moving ineluctably towards the stable hot state of past climates.²⁶

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Lovelock's public advocacy of nuclear power,²⁷ disbelief in wind farms as a panacea, and clear statements that massive climate change is now probably inevitable have made him unpopular with many greens. He's definitely off message. It's rather inconvenient, then, that he's got such a good environmental and scientific pedigree. As a polymath in his 90s he has worked in many fields. Notably, he invented the Electron Capture Detector that made possible the discovery of the Ozone Hole and the writing of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.²⁸ His initially-heretical Gaia hypothesis, of a self-managing living earth, is now widely accepted under the title Earth System Science. He's long argued for wild-land expansion and been sympathetic to ecological defence actions. As an avid hiker he even carried out a personal bombing campaign around the right to roam, way back in the 1930s! His detractors often admire his pioneering work but say (in a somewhat ageist manner) that he has now gone a bit batty. The real problem, though, is that he has made a professional career of being beholden to no one else's ideology or pay packet. As such he has the capacity to say what many in scientific and environmental institutions are thinking but

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are afraid to say directly in public. Lovelock thinks that a range of factors have led to a consistent under-diagnosis of the extent of human effects on the earth. These factors include

- A speed and complexity of change that research/publication schedules cannot keep up with.
- A failure to see and comprehend the living earth as a dynamic self-regulating system.
- A lack of joined-up thinking due to academic compartmentalisation.
- Governmental pressures on the writing of IPCC synthesis reports.
- The possibly considerable masking of present heating by global dimming.³⁰

It's beyond the scope of this text to give an overall summation of Lovelock's thinking, never mind the wider science around global heating. Part of the nature of the problem is that by the time you read this the science will have moved on considerably. If you are interested, have a look at the sources I have referenced and read wider yourself. However, while the details may vary, the direction of much of the science seems to be that we are probably heading for a considerably hotter earth, and fast. Recent observations put us

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decades further down the road than many of us thought even a few years ago. Combined with inertia around reducing carbon emissions, this makes the chances of stopping massive climate change probably rather slight.

While NGOs are still babbling about stopping a two-degrees warming, increasing numbers of climate scientists are discussing a four-degree warming by the end of the century or even as early as 2060.³¹ This is by no means a fringe worry. The 2007 IPCC report predicted a rise of between 2 and 6.4°C this century. Bob Watson, its former chairman, has warned that the “*world should work on mitigation and adaptation strategies to ‘prepare for 4°C of warming.’*”³² This is bad enough but Lovelock goes further and cites a number of mechanisms he thinks are already moving us to an even hotter state, of which the melting of sea ice mentioned above is the most well known.

What could this new hot state look like? Some highlights:

- Hot deserts spreading over much of the global south and into southern and even some of central Europe.
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in Siberia, Scandinavia, Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and even to a certain extent in the Antarctic.

- Mass attempts at migration from arid zones to the still habitable areas.
- Mass human die-off coupled with accelerating species extinctions.

Lovelock puts it rather bluntly:

Humans are in a pretty difficult position and I don't think they are clever enough to handle what's ahead. I think they'll survive as a species all right, but the cull during this century is going to be huge... The number remaining at the end of the century will probably be a billion or less.³³

Of course, I don't *know* this is a true picture of present and future climate change. The true complexity of the Earth System (and human social dynamics within it) is probably beyond our comprehension (definitely beyond mine) and models should not be confused with reality. My informed hunch (that's all one has in the fool-making business of describing the future) is that the picture painted is probably a reasonable approximation. You may not think so, but I

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would ask that you run with me as it's a possibility worth considering. This hunch is as much informed by an anarchist critique of capitalism as it is a reading of climate science. Looking around me, it's a lovely bright day and the leaves of the trees are almost shining; but little in the society in which I live indicates to me that a problem of the scale and complexity of climate change is going to get fixed. Given that, I feel that the big question posed is not so much *if* we will reach a world somewhat resembling that outlined above but *when*.

Lovelock is seriously proposing that such a world (or to be more accurate, such worlds) will emerge by the end of this century, and that emergence trends will start to become obvious by mid century. It could take longer, but either way it may be advantageous to take such shifts into consideration when thinking about what we want to achieve in our lives.

Here, to be clear, we are not about a millennial apocalypse, though it may feel like that to some caught in its more horrible or exciting moments. Rather we are talking about massive accelerating change. James Hansen (NASA), comments, "If we wish to preserve a planet similar to that in which civilization developed and

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If we wish to preserve a planet similar to that in which civilization developed and

to which life adapted, Palaeolithic evidence and ongoing climate change suggest that CO₂ will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm.³⁴

Chances are it won't be. The environmental niche that civilisation (class-divided, agriculturally-sustained city culture) developed in is on the way out. With it will probably go many of civilisation's citizens. And there are many, many citizens.

Ghost acres feed population overshoots

Integral to the growth of industrial capitalism has been a vast increase in human population. There are now around seven billion of us compared to around 600 million at the beginning of the 18th century. That jump has happened in thirteen generations³⁵ and in large part it was no accident. Silvia Federici has clearly laid out that a key foundation of early capitalism was the destruction of women's control over their own fertility: "*wombs became public territory, controlled by men and the state, and procreation was directly placed at the service of capitalist accumulation.*" While it was capitalism that first enforced and then enabled this most recent mass

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expansion, in doing so it was/is singing an older anthem of civilisation³⁶—this time, though, with mechanical amplification.

I was born in the mid-1970s when the human population was four billion; by the time I die (I hope not before 2050) the UN estimates that the earth's human population will be over 9 billion.³⁷ This estimate, though, presumes business as usual. Whether this happens or not will depend on three interdependent factors: birth control, death control, and food supply.

Worldwide, despite the continued edicts of cult patriarchs such as the Pope, many are increasingly using birth control to limit family size. The continuing power struggle to enable us to do so is a key battle and one around which many anarchists—amongst others—have organised.³⁸ However the spread of birth control—and the fight for women's liberation³⁹ more generally—will not stop the probable doubling of human population in my lifetime. With decreasing family size already a global norm in much of the world, the ability of industrial medicine and hygiene measures to enact death control is now key. The human population, at least in business-as-usual projections, will continue to rise until at least 2050 as long as those alive today live their

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expected lifespans and have the expected number of children. However, we do not have to wait until then to overshoot the planet's human-carrying capacity (its maximum permanently supported load) as we have probably done so already. Industrial civilisation has managed to push up food supply by both colonising ever-more wild land and developing fossil fuel reliant green revolution⁴⁰ agro-technologies and transportation. Essentially, industrial agriculture relies on the harvesting of ghost acreage⁴¹ (the fossils of photosynthetic production from millions of years ago) to produce food at the present rate. This can be only temporary, for unless one is a believer in the cornucopian myth that resources are limitless, someday the fossil-fuel hunting will fail. When this will happen no one really knows, though many argue that we have already passed peak oil. Some counter that hydrogen fuel cells, solar power, nanotechnology, and green goo will somehow avert a population crash. These apostles of progress more and more resemble cargo cults in their belief that technology—marshalled by either the market (if capitalist) or state planning (if socialist)—will provide all that is needed. In the unlikely event that they're right,

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and the food supply does keep up with population growth, the highly-managed nature of the provision will guarantee that freedom (for both humans and other animals) is increasingly scarce. So the rapidly-growing human population needs fossil fuels to stay alive. Most of us are eating oil and illness is largely controlled with energy-intensive technologies. Here is yet another reason I doubt the ability of activists, or states for that matter, to convince society to decarbonise. It sounds nice, but for millions, if not billions, it would mean shorter lives if humanity stopped importing from the past. On a significantly hotter globe, a major human die-off could be on the cards even if one does not go along with the ideas around peak oil. As much of the majority world becomes hotter, farmers will be unable to afford the petrochemical-based imports necessary for continued production even if fossil fuels don't run out. Further, while industrial agriculture has temporarily increased land's carrying capacity, in the process much so-called productive land has been denuded and without the application of fertilisers would now be unable to produce as much food organically as it did originally. Even Southerners to still able to have access to fossil fuel inputs will find magic potions

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lose their powers when soil dries, bakes, and blows away. With low nutrition and/or lacking medicine, disease will harvest much of the hungry. It would be nice to imagine that those countries still able to produce considerable food quantities (in part thanks to improved growing conditions—more on that later) would gift it but I wouldn't hold your breath. A billion people on earth are hungry already.⁴² Rather than the spectacular mass death of whole communities, this mostly causes increased childhood mortality and decreased overall lifespan. Yet capitalism has from the beginning, had definite form (just ask the Irish) in allowing (and causing) millions to starve more dramatically. Mike Davis reminds us of an often-forgotten example when he writes (in *Late Victorian Holocausts*) of the 30-60 million people in the later part of the 19th century who starved to death, “*not outside the modern world system, but in the very process of being forcibly incorporated into its economic and political structures.*”⁴³ Similar hungers have taken their toll throughout the following century, many engineered by state socialists, those most-attentive students of British Empire. It would be hopelessly utopian to believe that hunger could be exiled from the human condition

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but mostly those dying today of starvation do so whilst others in their societies keep eating. Hunger is the language of class warfare. Power has many levels and amongst much of the poorest, starvation in the future is likely to be played out as gendered violence, as it is now.⁴⁴

I will leave it to others to argue about the relative contribution of population numbers or industrial consumption patterns (as though both are not now intrinsically linked) to global heating. Today, global (and local) population growth is a barrier to any significant de-carbonisation. Tomorrow, capitalism's present inability to out-engineer its addiction to fossil fuels will likely result in a massive population crash.

Climate change brings possibilities as well as closures

Global heating, population growth, peak oil, and other environmental limits are probably not *the* apocalypse that will end the reign of capital and the state everywhere. The Global Collapse is probably no nearer than The Global Revolution. Nevertheless it does mean that a totalised global capitalism, enclosing all within it, becomes even less likely. The Western project of cultural expansion faces its limits. As part of that, the

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The very nature of states is to control populations, but many of the billions will not hunger quietly. Yesterday the late Victorian holocausts triggered millenarian uprisings amongst those being swept away by the spreading flood waters of the world system. Tomorrow, as the tide retracts and surplus populations are left on the (desert) sand, we seem set for yet another, if anything more brutal, century of wars and insurrections.

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3. Desert Storms

- The military looks to the future
- Hot wars and failed states
- Peacekeepers in the graveyard of the living
- From (food) riots to insurrection

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Whilst politicians of both states and social movements repeat platitudes, smile at their constituents, and face off against each other, some realists are looking to a climate-changed future less as something that can be avoided and more as something that will need policing. In *National Security and the Threat of Climate Change*, leading thinkers and actors from the US military investigate a wide range of scenarios. Their first finding was that “*projected climate change poses a serious threat to America’s national security.*” How?

In already weakened states, extreme weather events, drought, flooding, sea level rise, retreating glaciers, and the rapid spread of life-threatening diseases will themselves have likely effects: increased migrations, further weakened and failed states, expanded ungoverned spaces, exacerbating underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit, and increased internal conflict. In developed countries, these conditions threaten to disrupt economic trade and introduce new security challenges, such as spread of infectious disease and increased immigration.⁴⁵

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As well as seeing climate change as “*a new hostile and stressing factor*” that will produce novel threats generally, they also saw it as exacerbating existing specific ones.

Climate Change acts as a threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world. Many governments in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East are on edge in terms of their ability to provide basic needs: food, water, shelter, and stability. Projected climate change will exacerbate the problems in these regions and add effective governance to the problems. Unlike most conventional security threats that involve a single entity acting in specific ways at different points in time, climate change has the potential to result in multiple chronic conditions, occurring globally within the same time frame. Economic and environmental conditions will further erode as food production declines, diseases increase, clean water becomes increasingly scarce, and populations migrate in search of resources. Weakened and failing governments, with an already thin margin of

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survival, foster the conditions for internal conflict, extremism, and movement towards increased authoritarianism and radical ideologies...

Because climate change also has the potential to create natural and humanitarian disasters on a scale far beyond those we see today, its consequences will likely foster political instability where social demands exceed the capacity of governments to cope.⁴⁶

Similar nightmares and fantasies are talked about by military experts elsewhere.⁴⁷ It should be remembered that armies plan for what could possibly happen, not what will definitely happen. Additionally, there is institutional self interest in thinking the world is getting more dangerous if your job is providing enforced order. However, it is worth taking their predictions of strife seriously not least because when policy recommendations such as theirs are enacted, shadows of their dreams can become reality. Just as generals are always fighting the last war, so too their vision of future ones are shaped by present conflict. It should come as no surprise then, that much of the discourse around climate change is

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centred around hot wars, failed states, and the political violence that can emanate from them. Potential cold wars, within the global north and extreme south, are given less prominence. I will follow this convention for now, though I will return to such possibilities later.

Hot wars and failed states

Looking at conflicts today there is already an obvious Equatorial Tension Belt which is expected to significantly expand. Its existence is due to a whole host of variables not least of which are the accumulated environmental impact from collapsed civilisations, the legacies of direct western colonialism, high population levels, the presence of resources useful to capitalism, and habitats that are on the margin of agriculture viability.⁴⁸ Given what the US generals describe above, some governments in these regions will fall, whilst others, to varying degrees, will fail. Some states will retract back to their (maybe shifting) capitals leaving the rest of their supposed territories in a mosaic of war and peace. Others will be in civil war, revolution, and inter-state conflict. There will no doubt be much horror but also much potential for constructing free lives.

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Unsurprisingly, there is division among thinkers on what the great powers of today will be able to do. Some argue that they: “... *may be drawn more frequently into these situations, alone or with allies, to help provide stability before conditions worsen and are exploited by extremists.*” And that they “... *may also be called upon to undertake stability and reconstruction efforts once a conflict has begun, to avert further disaster and reconstitute a stable environment.*”⁴⁹ Others predict a markedly-reduced planetary policing role in an effective end to the New World Order declared by the US which, “*lacking the means to help local authorities restore order, ‘will likely fall back on a combination of policies that add up to quarantine.*”⁵⁰

Social movement anarchists in these regions might want to think seriously about what practical preparations can made for self-rule, civil war, survival, and the unfortunately inevitable emergence and strengthening of authoritarian forces and conflict. “*We must have the ability to defend ourselves, survive, and exploit crises in society including capitalist attempts to destroy us. The industrial nature of today’s society has already determined the instability tomorrow.*”⁵¹

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“exceeding the ability of government to cope” the glory days of Anarchism may be back. “If climate change results in reduced rainfall and access to the natural capital that sustains livelihoods, poverty will be more widespread, leading to increased grievances and recruitment opportunities for rebel movements.”⁵² Who knows, we may even see scenes as dramatic as the anarchist armoured trains of Maria Nikiforova. From the steppes of the Ukraine to the sierras of Mexico and the streets of Barcelona a huge number of those who ever identified as anarchists did so embroiled in overt war.

Unfortunately, in most places, rebel movements are more likely to be statist than anarchist. This is partly thanks to the large number of established authoritarian gangs compared to libertarian ones, but also because in extreme situations people turn to extremist so-called solutions. In some places this might be self-organising decentralisation and mutual aid, but in many there will be no social solution possible, just the false promises of despots and prophets. That’s not to say we couldn’t compete with them by spreading rival millennial hopes of a new dawn, but if we are honest with ourselves, having thrown aside religion, it would be a travesty of our ethics

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to pick it up again in the cause of gang recruitment and the joy of trouble.

Where visible and dramatic libertarian social forces do arise it is likely that many from other parts of the world will travel to join them. As the clouds darken, some of our family will run towards outbreaks of armed resistance—wherever they may be. This comes from a deep felt love and feelings of solidarity but also because, let's be honest, for many conflict is attractive and anti-militarists rarely get the opportunity for outright war. The nihilistic desire—amplified in an increasingly complex world—to just get out there and fuck shit up is, if not a creative urge, definitely a strong one. That's not to say everyone has it, but many do. Here there is an uncomfortable symmetry between our emotional drivers and those of fighters generally.

In the ex-territory of failed and fallen states, inter-ethnic conflict will become ever more common, at least until populations are cut back to a level more fitting a much hotter world.

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breakdown than wars between nations. Climate trends will ignore borders, and failed states prone to conflict will spread like a disease.⁵⁴

Peacekeepers in the graveyard of the living

Such forces of inter-ethnic conflict will be far more widespread than groups organised around European originated political ideologies—libertarian or authoritarian. They are, after all, able to provide real solutions (if only temporarily) to people's immediate needs in areas where the basics for survival are outnumbered by thirsty mouths. This is done, of course, by wrenching resources from The Others. Additionally, inter-ethnic conflicts can erupt when the cause is hopeless but the emotional driver is strong. The consoling belief that individuals willingly join conflicts driven only by rational strategic considerations, family narratives, or historical burdens dissolves when brought into the light of the expressed desires of many fighters themselves. For a dramatic European example one only needs to read Mattijs van de Ports's study of a community swept up in civil war. In *Gypsies, Wars and other Instances of the Wild* he presents voices of

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people who “*in festive mood, took on the role of barbarians.*”

‘How is *this* possible in Europe at the end of the twentieth century?’ was the question that played obsessively through my mind... What the war in former Yugoslavia forced us to digest is the fact that people proved willing to make a conscious and active choice to embrace regression, barbarity, a return to the wilderness. Take the Serb fighters who dream of a return to the Serbia of the epic poems ‘where there was no electricity, no computers, when the Serbs were happy and had no cities, the breeding grounds of all evil.’⁵⁵

That some modern day militias reflect romanticist desires whilst shelling towns, massacring villages, and being killed in turn, should neither surprise us nor necessarily fully invalidate romance. It does however suggest—along with the honest expressions of joy in destruction mouthed by some soldiers in every war as well as by many anarchists—that there is a coupling of some sort between a generalised urge to destroy and a disgust at complex human society.

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Randolph Bourne was right when he said “*war is the health of the state*”⁵⁶ but this other driver is at work too, especially where the opponents are no longer states. French anarchist anthropologist Pierre Clastres’ description of war among Amazonian tribes is not directly transferable to conflicts involving non-anarchist peoples but nevertheless an echo does resonate: What is the function of primitive war? To assure the permanence of dispersal, of the parcelling out, of the atomization of groups. Primitive war is the work of a centrifugal logic, of a logic of separation which expresses itself time to time in armed conflict. War serves to maintain each community in its political independence ... Now what is the legal power that embraces all differences in order to suppress them, which only supports itself to abolish the logic of the multiple in order to substitute it the opposite logic of unification? What is the other name of the One that refuses in essence primitive society? It is the State.⁵⁷

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It is not all hubris and doubletalk when military spin-doctors describe statist invasions

as peacekeeping. Ethnic diversity and autonomy often emerge both from mutual aid in community and animosity between communities. I like to think (and our history backs this up) that self-identified anarchists will never inflict such pain as the Serb nationalist militias (an example I purposely chose for its repugnance) but we should admit that our wish to fuck shit up is partly driven by the same urge-to-civilisational-dismemberment as can be found in many inter-ethnic conflicts, and in the minds of fighters more generally. As central power is weakened in some areas, possibilities will open for anarchy in both its happy and its horrible meanings.

From (food) riots to insurrection

Climate wars to come may wipe out many anarchists but is unlikely to kill off Anarchism, which as a political movement has survived significant culls of its adherents in past local apocalypses.⁵⁸ Despite all the horrors of the last two hundred years, Anarchism is, as the *New York Times* put It, “*the creed that won’t stay dead*.”⁵⁹ This is heartening, but we are not ideological machines. It does matter that anarchists themselves—i.e. you, me, our families, and

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the friends we have yet to meet—keep on living—not just the ideal. It matters to me! Give or take the particularities of the local, we may have twenty years (probably more) to prepare for these ruptures, not as an alternative to other tasks at hand, but as an integral part of a long term multi-pronged strategy. For some, it will also be a matter of life or death.

While future climate wars will be an extension of the present conditions they are likely to be far bigger and more extreme. In some places peoples, anarchists among them, could transform climate wars into successful libertarian insurrections. In others the battle may simply be for survival or even death with dignity and meaning. Those in relatively stable social environments—politically and climatically—will probably be faced by an increasingly oppressive surveillance state and a mass that increasingly fears the barbarism beyond the walls.

What actual practical stuff needs to be done will depend largely on where and who you are. While we may have some shared aspirations, climate change reinforces the basic truth that we do not have one shared global future. While everywhere the enemy is estrangement and domestication,⁶⁰ the situations in Basingstoke and

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Bangladesh are different in the present and will be in future.

During his lecture at the Royal Society, Lovelock stated,

We now face the stark choice between a return to a natural life as a small band of hunters or a much reduced high-tech civilisation...⁶¹

Rather than a choice, there is likely to be both sorts of survivor (as there is now)—high-tech industrial citizen and low-tech gatherer-hunter anarchist. In between these two extremes will be, buried or hungry, the “much reduced” (many from climate wars) along with those eking out a possibly freer (or not) life on the margins of agricultural/pastoral viability. Let’s look then at what possibilities there may be for liberty and wildness in some of these diverging life ways.

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4. African Roads to Anarchy

- Anarchic elements in everyday (peasant) life
- Peoples without governments
- Commons resurgent as global trade retracts
- Outwitting the state

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Anarchic elements in everyday (peasant) life

To examine future possibilities for liberty in peasant life, let's, as an example, look to the continent most often written off. These days "*Africa has an image problem*:"⁶² war, famine, disease, and charity appeals. As time goes on, this skewed view of a diverse continent will be further exaggerated by worsening climate change and the interventions of disaster capitalism.⁶³ In the previous sections we saw that climate change will cause and exacerbate civil wars largely through increasing the scarcity of food, water, and cultivatable soil. Many envision these future conflicts as a generalisation of the image they hold of present-day Africa. In doing so they are mostly mistaken.

Most of Africa's current wars are fuelled more by the presence of resources and less by their scarcity.⁶⁴ Retractions in global trade should deny oxygen to some of these fires. For instance, as the oil runs out, areas such as the Niger Delta, under siege by state/corporate oil interests, are likely to become once again backwaters rather than battlegrounds. I take it as a given that we will not

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see an Africa-wide conversion to western-originated Anarchism, so what societies evolve into will, in large part, be defined by what they are now. And here is some good non-news from Africa—in many places and on many levels its cultures have significant anarchic characteristics, with a minority being functioning anarchies. I'll hand over for a moment to Sam Mbah, a Nigerian anarcho-syndicalist:

To a greater or lesser extent... [many] traditional African societies manifested an anarchic eloquence which, upon closer examination, lends credence to the historical truism that governments have not always existed. They are but recent phenomena and are, therefore, not inevitable in human society. While some anarchic features in traditional African society existed largely in past stages of development, some of them persist and remain pronounced to this day. What this means is that the ideals underlying Anarchism may not be so new in the African context. What is new is the concept of Anarchism as a social movement ideology. Anarchy as abstraction may indeed be [largely] un-

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known to Africans, but is not at all unknown as a way of life...

Manifestations of anarchic elements in African communities ... were, and to some degree still are, pervasive. These include the partial or complete absence of hierarchical structures, state apparatuses, and the commodification of labor. To put this in positive terms, [some societies] were (and are) largely self-managed, egalitarian, and republican in nature.⁶⁵

The extent to which Africa is viewed as a basket case in world opinion is in part the extent to which its societies are anarchic and not fully enclosed within capitalist relations.

Why have anarchic social relations survived in Africa to such a degree? Jim Feast, writing for the American anarchist magazine *Fifth Estate*, has some answers:

In sub-Saharan Africa, aside from in the minority of countries with a large, white settler population and valuable resources (such as diamonds or copper), there was little penetration of capitalist agricultural forms or government into the

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these exist surrounded by more incorporated populations, while others are truly remote from external power—through luck or active avoidance. Environments that are not conducive to empire are a significant factor behind the survival of some of these cultures and their ability to defend their autonomy.

A number have remained anarchic within themselves whilst superficially accepting outside power. This should not necessarily be seen as assimilation. Governments don't like to let outright opposition go unpunished lest it encourage others. Yet they don't always have the capacity to fully internalise preexisting or maroon societies, especially wily ones. For the community, the *"state power and the alien political culture ... are so different and so powerful that... direct resistance soon proves to be unaffordable; passive accommodation is impossible as well. The most acceptable possibility is some kind of collaboration that allows things to continue almost as before, with the idea that 'we were here before them and we will be here after them'"*⁶⁸ In some situations this is as simple as unspoken contracts approximate to "We'll pretend you're governing us, you pretend to believe it." In other situations outwitting the state may involve a complex set of tactics including

these exist surrounded by more incorporated populations, while others are truly remote from external power—through luck or active avoidance. Environments that are not conducive to empire are a significant factor behind the survival of some of these cultures and their ability to defend their autonomy.

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providing key functions, retraditionalisation, regular movement, and manipulating the balance of competing external powers. Some may object that these anarchies are not those we would design if we were to sit down and plan the so-called ideal society for them⁶⁹—but they are anarchies none the less. Though far more egalitarian than surrounding societies, they usually have some level of sex- and age-stratified power relations, a division of labour, and sometimes rely on animal slavery. I don't view any of these things as good but it should be remembered that to differing extents these are aspects of all civilised societies. At least these cultures don't have class warfare or the state! In this sense they are anarchies even if they don't conform to all the aspirations of western-originated Anarchisms. They should not be idealised (any more than present-day Chiapas or 1936 Barcelona) and you don't have to support them. But these are existing anarchies, the active social creation of millions of people through time resisting the concentration of power. Any overview of possibilities for liberty would be foolish to ignore them. Those of us who are freeing ourselves from authority can find insights, inspiration, and warnings from their examples.⁷⁰

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Commons resurgent as global trade retracts

For those in Africa, the fact that anarchies exist and some anarchic tendencies remain widespread beyond them, leaves routes of escape and survival open that can be used as authorities collapse, retract, or are destroyed. It should be noted that many commons-based societies within Africa are fall-back positions that were turned to after complex kingdoms collapsed or were dismantled by invading empires (both Western and African). While colonial elites often policed through local traditional authorities, they came to blows with them too. Dominant classes act in their own interest, not in that of an abstract system of hierarchical power. The attack on local authority by outside elites opened up possibilities for anarchy in the past and this pattern continues.

Jim Feast once again:

Here's an irony of history. In the last 15 years, in [some parts of] the industrially undeveloped world, the state has withered away, not because of its supersession, but due to the extension of global capitalism. Talk of state collapse on capital's periphery doesn't mean govern-

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ments have completely vanished, but that many states have diminished from the totalized agencies of control we experience in Northern tier countries... Since independence, most sub-Saharan African countries have been one-party states, headed by corrupt strong men who rule by combining military coercion with the distribution of favours to wellplaced followers ... The intelligent strong man sees that not only his immediate cronies (who staff the state) but tribal leaders of every significant stripe must be cultivated by financing infrastructural projects (that offer prime opportunities for graft) in their bailiwicks. But with structural adjustment policies forced upon these nations, this form of government has [often] ceased to exist because funds to sustain the patronage networks are no longer there... In a movement to shore up elite rule, there has been a widespread morphing into multi-party democracies. From 1988 to 1999 the number of states in sub-Saharan Africa featuring multi-party elections went from nine to forty-

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five. This temporarily and cynically solves two problems for state rule... It restores a patina of legitimacy to a system that can no longer provide either patronage or welfare services to its citizens, and reinvigorates it by dividing clients among the competing parties, so each political grouping has need to siphon fewer funds since it serves a smaller client base⁷¹ ...

Another loss of state power is the inability of it to provide minimal welfare to the citizenry, such as education and medical care, which structural adjustment programs eliminate as too costly. While some of these services are taken over by international relief organizations, most that continue are done so by groups from the distressed society itself. In other words, as Thomson puts it, 'Declining state capacity required civil society to increase its self sufficiency.' The once repressed women's groups, trade unions, farmer's associations and other grassroots networks are assuming greater responsibility in social and economic life ...

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rican road to Anarchism] ‘whereby the money economy and the state, which are in a condition of partial collapse or withdrawal, cede more and more functions to non-monetarized, non-statist village communities that are organized on the basis of mutual aid?’⁷²

This is already happening in some areas in a non-newsworthy manner without overt conflict. In others this revitalization of the commons is *one* of the forces filling the power vacuum left by the warring fragmentation of failed states. The structural adjustment mentioned is of course time specific. There is an ebb and flow of projects of power, as the expansion of China into Africa shows, but nevertheless the process observed is a pointer to what may happen in many places as global trade retracts in a resource-poor, climate-changed world.

Outwitting the state

As well as those we could mischievously label lifestyle anarchists,⁷³ Africa has a growing, though still small, number of groups organising under the banner of Anarchism. These are unlikely to change the face/s of the entire

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continent but may play significant roles in emergent movements and struggles. To repeat the earlier quote from Seaweed: “*Any bioregion can be liberated through a succession of events and strategies based on the conditions unique to it.*” Even if we accept the foreclosure of any possibility of global anarchist revolution, there is no reason to say a regional anarchist insurrection somewhere in Africa (or elsewhere) is not on the cards and this is made more likely by the factors we have discussed already. In probably overly optimistic terms Sam Mbah states:

The process of anarchist transformation in Africa might prove comparatively easy, given that Africa lacks a strong capitalist foundation, well-developed class formations, and relations of production, or a stable, entrenched state system.⁷⁴

While a surprising number of African dirt roads lead to anarchy⁷⁵ much of what we have touched on here relates to many rural areas across the planet to differing degrees. For instance, in his excellent, *The Art of Not Being Governed*,⁷⁶ James C. Scott recounts numerous examples of lived anarchies in upland Southeast

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Asia. Even outside of anarchies, peasant communities whose self sufficiency has not been entirely vanquished still often retain high levels of autonomy—Land is Liberty!⁷⁷ Sadly in many places communal traditions have been eradicated, the commons (or wilderness) enclosed, and farmers forcefully transformed into wage labourers. In others, however, they have not, for a diverse set of reasons, not least of which is resistance. States do not always get their own way. The tide of Western authority will recede from much, though by no means all, of the planet. A writhing mess of social flotsam and jetsam will be left in its wake. Some will be patches of lived anarchy, some of horrible conflicts, some empires, some freedoms, and of course, unimaginable weirdness. As states and recede and fail—through entropy, stupidity, revolution, internal conflict, climate stress—people will continue to dig, sow, herd, and live—most, admittedly, in vastly more challenging climates, and few with the guarantee of a peaceful life. In many places commodified land will be reclaimed as commons and new communities will be formed by refugees from the collapsed economies. Anarchic societies—old and new—will need to defend their liberty and lives, through

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We have glimpsed some of the possibilities opened up (and closed) by both climate wars and the retraction of state governance from rural communities but what about liberty at the shifting outer borders of civilisation? And what of liberty beyond those borders—in the wild?

african roads to anarchy

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5. Civilisation Retreats, Wildness Persists

- Empires spread deserts that
empires cannot survive

- Nomadic freedoms and
the collapse of agriculture

- Sandgrouse and creosote

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
‘My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works: ye Mighty, and despair!’
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Ozymandias* 1817

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Empires spread deserts that empires cannot survive

Read it in the ruins of Ur and Mu Us, the desertified fields of Wadi Faynan⁷⁸ and the Techuacan Valley.⁷⁹ *Empires spread deserts that they cannot survive.* Raids, insurrections, and desertion often mark the fall of civilisations but the real groundwork for their destruction has always been done by their own leaders, workers, and zeks. We are all working towards the destruction of our civilisations.⁸⁰

“Civilised man has marched across the face of the earth and left a desert in his footprints.”⁸¹

The extent to which global heating will cause the expansion of hot deserts is unknown but that they will do so—and drastically—is a pretty safe bet. The interaction of soil, climate, and civil power will continue to be a dominant factor determining both history and the opening up of territory for free-er lives. That agricultural systems will fail as the arid worlds spread means that, once again, civilisations will have to retreat from much of their previously conquered lands. In some places this be total, in others a matter of degree.

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the coyotes or the cactus wrens. Not by the harvester ants or the rattlesnakes. Not the namib quicksteps, the meercats, the acacias, the tahrs, the sandgrouse, the red kangaroos. Deserts and arid environments generally are often biologically diverse though by their nature, the life is sparser than in other biomes. While some desert areas are lifeless, in most, communities of animals, birds, insects, bacteria, and plants run, fly, crawl, spread, and grow in lives unordered, undomesticated by civilisation. Wildness is in us and all around us. The battle to contain and control it is the constant labour of civilisation. When that battle is lost and the fields are deserted, wildness persists.

Behind the dust, meanwhile, under the vulture-haunted sky; the desert waits—mesas, butte, canyon, reef, sink, escarpment, pinnacle, maze, dry lake, sand dune, and Barren Mountain.⁸²

Nomadic freedoms and the collapse of agriculture

I remember sitting crouched in the red, under the hot sun, the wind low, the silence of the desert was absolute... or it would have been if it wasn't, of course, for all the gossiping: There are

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people here, not all deserts are unliveable, but a surplus for states is barely possible. The sparseness of life favours nomadism—whether by herders, foragers, travellers, or traders.

No one can live this life and emerge unchanged. They will carry, however faint, the imprint of the desert, the brand that marks the nomad.⁸²

While the concentration of power can arise in any society that has some level of domestication, overall the more nomadic a people the more independent they are likely to be. Governments know this, as can be witnessed by widespread attempts to *settle* their desert nomad problems. Whether it is the obstinate survival of Aboriginal life ways in Australia,⁸⁴ the uncompromising resistance of the Apache led by Victorio, or the recent Tuareg insurrection in the Sahara, nomads are often adept at fight and/or flight.

Helene Claudot-Hawad says in a discussion of Tuareg conflict with modern states that, “*State boundaries have by definition a fixed, immovable, and intangible line, that are purposefully made not to be transgressed. They separate what are meant to be mutually-opposing entities.*”⁸⁵ That the resistant independence of nomads is often mixed with a

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practical disbelief in borders makes them threatening to the very ideological basis of governments. Global heating will stimulate transformations in human land use. As noted in the previous chapter, in some places self sufficiency will likely replace export-orientated monoculture, while in others withered crops may be replaced by animal husbandry. In the expanding arid zones a good proportion of those who successfully adapt may do so by embracing nomadic freedoms and transhuman pastoral subsistence.⁸⁶ In others still, nomadic pastoralists and agriculturalists may revert to hunter-gathering. For most of our species' existence, all were foragers, and wilderness was our home. Hunter-gatherer societies include the most egalitarian on earth⁸⁷ and where such cultures have survived to modern times they have done so in areas remote from centralised power and often unsuitable for agriculture. For example the Spinifex people of the Great Victoria Desert have been able to continue their traditional lives despite the advent of Australia, as their homelands are so barren that they are not even suitable for pastoralism.⁸⁸ The !Kung too managed to live well and free as gather-hunters in a very harsh environment—the Kalahari.⁸⁹

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When agriculturalists face extreme food stress or external violence, foraging is an adaptive strategy that has been turned to, many times. For some this may be temporary, for others permanent. Thus, with spreading desertification we could see, in some places, a spreading desertion from civilisation to something resembling our original anarchist wild-life. Whole new bands of foragers may evolve following collapses of agricultural viability and the retraction of exuberant, energy-rich state powers. Given the present condition of many arid-zone pastoralists and foragers it is more likely that in most cases we will see hybridity—an increase in autonomous nomadic populations relying on both animal herding and foraging.

Sandgrouse and creosote

On a more general level, many of those with a longing for wildness and a need for freedom from authority have gravitated towards the frontiers, often hot deserts and semi-arid regions.

As I wander out in the gentle spring,
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Such possibilities are present—and will be more so—in many regions. Even for those within the walls of the supposed global powers, there will be an expanding outside. In the already water-stressed areas of southern Europe, deserted farms and villages have been re-inhabited by anarchists, hippies, cults, and others wishing to flee the direct gaze of authority and desert the prison of wage labour. Similar drop-out situations are present in the drying heart of Australia and the western deserts of North America. Here, importantly, aboriginal communities persist or are re-establishing. The long indigenous strategy of survival—“we were here before and will be after”—may bear desert fruit. As numerous contemporary struggles illustrate, anarchists and native peoples can make good allies. Some of the oldest communities live in deserts. In the Mojave is a Creosote bush clonal colony that’s slowly widening circle is estimated at being 11,700 years old. Recent genetic testing has indicated that the Bushmen of the Kalahari are probably the oldest continuous population of

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humans on Earth.⁹⁰ These communities—both plant and human—are inspiring examples of resilience, but having survived millennia in the hot deserts, they may not survive the still-spreading cultural one. The ancient Creosote bush ring is quite low to the ground and grows on US Bureau of Land Management land “*designated for recreational all-terrain vehicle use*.”⁹¹ The Botswana government has forcefully relocated many Kalahari Bushmen from their homelands into squalid resettlement camps, seemingly to enable diamond mining.⁹² For free peoples and wildlife the harshness of our cultural desert is a most-threatening environment.

Overall, then, as the planet heats up we should remember the nomadic freedoms of the herders and foragers, the refugia of aboriginal peoples and renegade drop-outs, the widening habitats of desert flora and fauna. That arid zones will expand brings positive possibilities as well as sadness for the diminished, often previously vibrant, ecosystems.⁹³ There can still be a beautiful flowering in the desert.

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will become unviable. Species will become extinct. While there will be survivors in the expanding desert lands many will choose to flee the heat. Some of these migrations—to some extent already happening—will be intranational but many will be international.

In the hot arid world survivors gather for the journey to the arctic centres of civilisation; I see them in the desert as the dawn breaks and the sun throws its piercing gaze across the horizon at the camp. The cool fresh night air lingers for a while and then, like smoke, dissipates as the heat takes charge...⁹⁴

These are some of the last words in Lovelock's *Revenge of Gaia*. As civilisation and much of humanity flees and/or dies as the hot deserts expand what of the cold deserts—what of the new “arctic centres of civilisation”?

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6. Terror-Nullius Returns

- Civilisation expands as
the cold deserts thaw
- Genocide and ecocide in
the (not) empty lands
- Lives of liberty/slavery on
the new frontiers

Altogether elsewhere, vast
Herds of reindeer move across
Miles and miles of golden moss,
Silently and very fast.
— from *The Fall of Rome*, W.H. Auden⁹⁵

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Civilisation expands as the cold deserts thaw

As we evolved in Africa, cold deserts have always been quite hostile to human endeavour and thus, while increasingly affected by civilisation, they have remained largely undomesticated. This will not last.

Reports from climatologists, indigenous peoples, sailors, seasonal site workers, and ecologists all confirm that the effects of global climate change are magnified in the far north. In Greenland Sten Pederson leans down to harvest cabbages,⁹⁶ something unthinkable a few decades ago. Through the newly ice-freed arctic waves, survey ships push forward in search of oil, gas, and riches.⁹⁷ In much of the far north (with the exception of those areas scarred by the legacy of Stalin's gulags and new cities) the intrusions of civilisation are sparse or temporary but they are increasing, and many think we are on the brink of a new gold rush. Buried treasure becomes reachable and previously frozen territory becomes more hospitable to settlement and agriculture. Civilisation will expand as the cold deserts thaw.

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Civilisation will expand as the cold deserts thaw. It's a dirty secret that many Northern governments are actively looking forward to the effects

of climate change on the lands they occupy (at the moment often only symbolically). There will be some winners in the (increasingly) water-rich, thawing Far North just as there will be many, many losers in the water-stressed hot regions. Climate doesn't believe in justice. "Some ... regions of the world ... may experience gains from global warming in the next 20 to 30 years, such as more favourable farming conditions in some parts of Russia and Canada."⁹⁸ "The northern quarter of our planet's latitudes will undergo tremendous transformation over the course of this century, making them a place of increased human activity, higher strategic value, and greater economic importance than today."⁹⁹ This transformation will be fuelled by the climatic effect of fossil fuel burning and the opening up of new reserves. "The region could be home to 90 billion barrels of oil worth a whopping \$7 trillion at the current oil price—and 30 percent of the planet's untapped gas reserves according to the US Geological Survey."¹⁰⁰ Earlier, we looked at and focused on hot wars, but cold wars over the control of newly-accessible hydrocarbon, mineral and land so-called resources are also possible, though they would have a fundamentally different character. "Cold areas are

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generally developed countries and hot areas are generally developing countries ... Conflict among developed countries might lead to concentrated fatalities while those in developing countries might lead to conflict that is more diffuse.” “Where the Hot War is characterised by the breakdown of state functions and internal strife, the Cold War exemplifies conditions of expanding state control and external conflict.”¹⁰¹

The emergence of a new Cold War—once again primarily between East and West centres of power, though this time solidly about the Far North—is on the cards.¹⁰² For now the probability of full-on war in the new Polar Tension Belt is far less than that in the hot areas of the planet, not least as many of the countries in question are nuclear powers. Fracas resembling the UK-Icelandic Cod Wars combined with diplomatic grandstanding, such as the recent planting of the Russian flag on the seabed of the north pole,¹⁰³ will no doubt increase. The only thing that will categorically prevent conflict in the region is if it's found that there is nothing worth scrapping about. This is unfortunately unlikely—the opening up of the very sea itself brings new possibilities for trade and movement even if little is found below it.

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“Antarctica will see enormous changes due to terraforming that will create opportunities for economic exploitation. With many sovereignty claims in the region, there is a chance that conflict will be the outcome.”¹⁰⁴ There is a lot of ice on Antarctica and significant disputes are unlikely to hit until mid-century if not much, much later, but that does not mean states are not laying foundations. It is a cruel irony that much of the science that has enabled awareness of climate change and allowed glimpses of past climates has come through the sterling efforts of scientists working in state institutions—the British Antarctic Survey for example, whose presence in Antarctica is in large part funded to underline imperial claims over a continent the true conquest and domestication of which can only come through massive climate change. In the meantime the seas of the Far South—especially around the disputed Falkland islands—are increasingly party to oil prospecting.

Ecocide and genocide in the (not) empty lands

When the British state declared Australia terra nullius, it was defining the land as empty. The peoples, the wildness, were to be made invisible,

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The Arctic, overall, has the classic lines of a desert landscape: spare, balanced, extended, and quiet... The apparent monotony of the land is relieved, however, by the weather systems moving through, and by the activities of animals, particularly of birds and caribou. And because so much of the country stands revealed, and because sunlight passing through the dustless air renders its edges with such unusual sharpness, animals linger before the eye. And their presence is vivid.

Like other landscapes that initially appear barren, arctic tundra can open suddenly, like the corolla of a flower, when any intimacy with it is sought. One begins to notice spots of brilliant red, orange, and green, for example, among the monotonic browns of a tundra tussock.

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A wolf spider lunges at a glistening beetle. A shred of musk ox wool lies inert in the lavender blooms of saxifrage... The wealth of biological detail on the tundra dispels any feeling that the land is empty; and its likeness to a stage suggests impending events. On a summer's walk, the wind-washed air proves deathlessly clear. Time and again you come upon the isolated and succinct evidence of life—animal tracks, the undigested remains of a ptarmigan in an owl's casting, a patch of barren-ground willow nibbled nearly leafless by arctic hares. You are afforded the companionship of birds, which follow after you. (They know you are an animal; sooner or later you will turn up something to eat.) Sandpipers scatter before you, screaming *tuituek*, an Eskimo name for them. Coming awkwardly down a scree slope of frost-riven limestone you make a clatter—and at a distance a tundra grizzly rises on its hind legs to study you; the dish-shaped paws of its front legs deathly still... [But already, even in uninhabited lands], one cannot miss the upheaval, nor avoid be-

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ing wrenched by it. The depression it engenders, because so much of it seems a heedless imposition on the land and on the people, a rude invasion, can lead one to despair.¹⁰⁵

The present invasion is merely a portent of the coming ecocide engendered, as high latitudes warm, by the peppering of the Far North with more installations, fields, and factories. This process will also be one of attempted genocide. Herders such as some of the Sami¹⁰⁶ of Lapland and indigenous of Siberia will likely find their homelands increasingly fragmented and polluted whilst those communities living on resource-rich land will face eradication either by simple dispossession or by assimilation into industrial culture.¹⁰⁷ In a few places such as Greenland where much of the indigenous majority may gain some material benefit from the denudation of their thawing lands, this process may be partly indigenous-driven. In most, however, where aboriginal communities are minorities there will be familiar patterns of repression and resistance.

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present. Tales of dispossession and destruction are many, yet so are ones of resistance. For example, despite few resources, some of the Siberian tribes have fervently opposed the expansion of gas and oil infrastructure on their traditional lands. In one action a hundred Nivkh, Evenk, and Ulita blocked roads with their reindeer for three days against new oil and gas pipelines.¹⁰⁸ In Canada especially, the government and corporations are faced with indigenous warrior societies with a strong land ethic and a growing fighting spirit. While there have been—and will be—victories in the battle to stop the northern spread of empire and its infrastructure, even the most resolute peoples cannot halt climate change itself. Indigenous peoples report that lives and the survivability of lifeways are already being affected. As Violet Ford, an Inuit, says: “*We can’t predict the weather anymore, so it’s very difficult to plan our hunting. It adds a lot of stress and fear into our communities.*”¹⁰⁹ Similar reports come from the Russian Arctic as well, where changes in the melting of ice and snow are causing culture change and endangering the reindeer herding lifestyle of the Nenets herders on the Yamal Peninsular.¹¹⁰ On a bright day on a storm-tossed cape I

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walked with a friend surrounded by forest, waves, osprey, and orcas. Far from any road or village, the place felt pristine, but amongst the trees were the rotting remains of a school. Rusting farm implements littered the undergrowth, and former fields were now the hunting grounds of cougar. Remoteness from markets, the illogic of politics, and land unsuited to colonisation by an imported model had led to the evacuation of this coast. It reminded me that despite the wishes of those who plan worlds, settlement sometimes fails and the wild wins. This will continue to be true.¹¹¹

Lives of liberty/slavery on the new frontiers

Possibilities will emerge as the cold deserts retreat for those who wish to settle/invade/resist/work. Who will populate these new lands? Physical landscapes and the social terrains of struggle frame what we think is possible and thus what we do. In the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, North America Individualist Anarchism (especially that influenced by Henry David Thoreau) was framed directly by the idea and existence of frontiers and thus the real ability to build some level of autonomy and self-sufficiency—admittedly on stolen land! In

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crowded Europe at the same time there was Outside available, and so despite strong currents with an ecological and anti-civilisation perspective many individualist anarchists turned to bank robbing, insurrection, assassination, and art. We can expect the opening up of new lands and North America to have a significant impact on those who wish to desert civilisation as well as those who wish to expand it. There will be many possibilities for lives of liberty on the expanding frontiers, though renegades may themselves lay the foundations for a wider gentrification of the wilderness.

It would be lovely to think that a thousand anarchist log huts will bloom but more prevalent are likely to be workcamps and farmlands resembling something between Dubai's modern gulags and the new Chinese farming and logging colonies of Siberia. In the UAE desert migrant workers live in horrific conditions and are bussed in and out of Dubai daily to build the new super city. They have no rights of citizenship, no rights to stay beyond a fixed term contract, almost no spouses (or right to marry or co-habit), families rarely exist, and there is no official unionisation. Frightened by an "Indian Demographic Time-Bomb," Dubai's rulers have

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initiated a complex immigration quota system where migrants are brought in from diverse countries to keep workers socially divided. In Siberia, 600,000 Chinese workers cross the border in seasonal migration every summer to work the new fields.¹¹²

So there will be lives of slavery as well as of liberty on the new frontiers and—with worsening prospects in much of the warming world and the promise of hard currency—many will choose those new frontiers. Readers with anarcho-syndicalist leanings may notice the striking similarity of such situations with that of the logging and mining camps that were the battlegrounds of the Wobblies. The IWW was the only workers organisation that had any successes in uniting lumpen migrant workers of diverse nationalities in early 20th century America. Culturally divided and without recourse to legal unions and other organs of social democracy, militant informal syndicalism could arise in the New North, possibly even informed by Anarchism.

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While the extent of civilisational expansion in the New North is, like so much in climate change-related futurology, presently unknowable, the trend itself seems a given. In some places it can be resisted, and successfully. In others the hubris of settlement will simply fail. In many places its very expansion brings possibilities for those who would live in new openings or in the old, but warmer, worlds of the gyrfalcon.

1803, just after the Louisiana Purchase from France. It, too, possessed major cities fuelled by foreign immigration, with a vast, inhospitable frontier distant from the major urban cores. Its deserts, like Arctic tundra, were harsh, dangerous, and ecologically fragile. It, too, had rich resource endowments of metals and hydrocarbons. It, too, was not really an empty frontier but already occupied by aboriginal peoples who had been living there for millennia.¹¹³

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7. Convergence and the New Urban Majorities

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- Divergent worlds
- Survival in the slums
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Life expectancy and expectations of modern life

In 2008 humanity passed a significant milestone—more of our species now live in cities than outside of them. I won't even attempt to guess where exactly the growth of cities is leading—other than ecological denudation¹¹⁴. It could be the glimmering glass domes of sci-fi fantasy; the putrid waters of contemporary Makoko,¹¹⁵ or the jungle-immersed abandoned avenues of Mayan cities. In all likelihood it leads in the direction of all three, and others.

One suspects no one knows what the present situation is, never mind where it is headed. As Mike Davis puts it,

Very large cities—those with a global, not just regional, environmental footprint—are thus the most dramatic end-product, in more than one sense, of human cultural evolution in the Holocene. Presumably they should be the subject of the most urgent and encompassing scientific inquiry. They are not. We know more about rainforest ecology than urban ecology.¹¹⁶

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The rate of change is staggering. For illustration take mega-cities, those with more than ten million citizens. While there were none in 1900, by the mid 1970s there were three mega-cities, and between then and 2007 the number grew to nineteen, with the total expected to rise to twenty seven by 2025. That's 3-27 in around fifty years. Overall, since the beginning of the 1990s, cities in the (rapidly) Developing world have expanded by three million people a week.¹¹⁷ That's roughly equivalent to a new city the size of Bristol, Bratislava, or Oakland *every single day*.¹¹⁸ For now, the urban majorities look set to continue expanding as people are subject to forces that push and pull them away from agriculture and towards the freedoms and slaveries of the metropolises. While the distance between the globe's financially richest and poorest continues to widen, UN statistics nevertheless show incredible changes for much of the world's populations; lifestyle shifts that often are not reflected in any comparable paradigm shift amongst activists in the Developed world. As Hans Rosling has pointed out, the planet is often seen as divided between

... we and them and we is the Western World and them is the Third World. And what do you mean with Western

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'And what do you mean with Western

World?’ I said. ‘Well, that’s long life and small family, and Third World is short life and large family.’¹¹⁹

Such a simplistic picture always obscured class, cultural, and regional differences but there was some truth to it. Not anymore. The changes in life expectancy and family size world-wide are just the most obvious changes. Alongside them are huge transformations in health (both good and bad),¹²⁰ child programming, and the increasing degree of the commodification of social relations. Yet even on a planet where road accidents now kill similar numbers of people as malaria, the old picture still persists.¹²¹

In the growing cities especially, tangible social revolutions (such as the increase in life expectancy) can combine with media-propelled myths of the (non)American dream to produce unrealistic expectations of modern life. Such expectations encourage attempts at assimilation and submission to power, even as inevitable clashes of class interests and the inability of The System to come up with the promised goods, give rise to furies. On the positive side, many people will at least have longer lives to experience the possibility of love as well as inevitable social dislocation and

World?’ I said. ‘Well, that’s long life and small family, and Third World is short life and large family.’¹¹⁹

Such a simplistic picture always obscured class, cultural, and regional differences but there was some truth to it. Not anymore. The changes in life expectancy and family size world-wide are just the most obvious changes. Alongside them are huge transformations in health (both good and bad),¹²⁰ child programming, and the increasing degree of the commodification of social relations. Yet even on a planet where road accidents now kill similar numbers of people as malaria, the old picture still persists.¹²¹

In the growing cities especially, tangible social revolutions (such as the increase in life expectancy) can combine with media-propelled myths of the (non)American dream to produce unrealistic expectations of modern life. Such expectations encourage attempts at assimilation and submission to power, even as inevitable clashes of class interests and the inability of The System to come up with the promised goods, give rise to furies. On the positive side, many people will at least have longer lives to experience the possibility of love as well as inevitable social dislocation and

widening class inequality.

Divergent worlds

Those who see these transformations as leading the species towards a convergence based on where these trends led the west¹²² would be deluded, even without the real limits now set by climate change, resource scarcity, etc. For a start, some estimate that even if one takes these trends as a given there will still remain a rural population approaching three billion at mid century.¹²³ Many of these farmers as well as many of those in the cities will likely be living in stagnant economies similar to the countries of the “bottom billion” today. Additionally, many of these least-converging populations are likely to be in those countries commonly described as failed states. These countries are unlikely to grow, not least thanks to the additional barriers provided by the rise (or more accurately, return) of the global powerhouses of China and India.¹²⁴ As noted earlier¹²⁵ the presence of these “*large islands of chaos*”¹²⁶ (Paul Collier, ex-World Bank) brings positive as well as negative possibilities—at least from my anarchist perspective. It seems likely, then, that rather than a global convergence we will see the continued emergence of radically divergent

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worlds between nations and within them.

Additionally, sudden trend reversals, in health for example, can surprise. Just look at the unpredicted AIDS epidemic in Africa or the dramatically increased Russian male death rates in the 1990s. Within medicine and amongst elite planners there is a widespread, and not groundless, fear that today's mega-cities and food production are becoming perfect incubators for pandemics of possibly unparalleled ferocity.

A useable (though simplistic and therefore false) summation might be that many people in the long-industrialised countries tend to still hold to a vision of a single Third World that is far less industrialised than much of it is, whilst many in the emerging economies of the global south view their futures as far more rosy and pre-determined than they probably are; and finally, those populations that (from a standard economic perspective) lie at the bottom, will in the medium future look much like they do now, but will probably be living in less hospitable environments. The best one can say is that uneven convergence trends in many of the Developing worlds will (for now) continue (but not universally); there are no destinations given, and the rides may be bumpy indeed, not least due to inter-power rivalry. The trends I have

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mentioned are simultaneously bringing much—but by no means all—of humanity together whilst breeding limitless division. In the ever-jolly words of the US National Intelligence Agency, as well as creating convergence “... *today's trends appear to be heading towards a potentially more fragmented conflicted world.*”¹²⁷

Survival in the slums

While different places are, by nature, different, one near-constant across the burgeoning metropolis are the slums. At least one billion people already live in them, a figure expected to rise to two billion within two decades and three billion people¹²⁸ on earth could be living in non-formalised urban terrains, in shacks, tents, corrugated iron, tenements, and rubbish. Already in many countries slum dwellers make up the majority of urbanites. 99.4% in Ethiopia and Chad, 98.5% in Afghanistan, and 92% in Nepal. Bombay is the global slum capital with 10-12 million squatters and tenement dwellers followed by Mexico City and Dhaka with 9-10 million each, then Cairo, Kinshasa-Brazzaville, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, and Delhi, all with 6-8 million.¹²⁹ The first night I spent in a Third World

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The first night I spent in a Third World

squatter neighbourhood I felt surprisingly at home, as I am sure anyone who has lived in squats (especially land occupations) in the global north would do. The bodged electrics, the air of camaraderie, dirt, the dogs everywhere. If the bright yellow M arches signpost the presence of corporate globalisation then shelters from fading blue plastic and pallets also act as global signposts—this time that you are entering squatter worlds. Waking up with chickens in your face gives the game away somewhat that you have probably woken in the Third World, but having said that, it's also happened to me on-site in South London... The family I was with were lovely and there was so much energy and creativity and resilience crammed into the shack alleys all around, I truly felt like I was in a Temporary Autonomous Zone.

A lot of what I experienced in that community made me strangely proud to be human but those of us who see solutions as arising from autonomy, informality, self help, and class struggle can fall into the trap of seeing what we want to see in the slums. Don't get me wrong—all those engines are present, but so too, to differing degrees, are all the predictable intra-class divisions as well as deepening class oppressions. For instance, just because

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it's a slum—even a squatter settlement—doesn't mean it doesn't have landlords. This often starts at the lowest level with subdivisions: roofs and rooms rented out by established inhabitants to newer arrivals. As Mike Davis points out (in his amazing and frankly harrowing book *Planet of Slums*), “It is the principle way in which urban poor people can monetise their equity (formal or informal), but often in an exploitative relationship to even poorer people.”¹³⁰ Others, from gangsters to big developers, politicians, juntas, and the middle class also get in on the act. In the slums of Nairobi for example, many of those who fall behind on rent, even for a day, face the terror of the landlord and his henchmen turning up to confiscate their meagre possessions, evict them, and worse. Such landlords are referred to by Kenyans as ‘Wabenzi’—those with enough money to buy a Mercedes-Benz.¹³¹

If we have said where much of the burgeoning urban majorities live, what about what they do, where they work, and where they are going? The answers are, obviously, hugely diverse and I won't pretend to be able to tell you. What I will say is that many slum inhabitants could be seen and see themselves as in transition. Transition from country to urban, from refugee to worker,

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from dispossessed to propertied, from dweller in a slum to dweller somewhere else.

This narrative is as old as capitalism. Peasants/agricultural workers are dispossessed and end up in slums. In the West, horrors upon horrors followed, eventually manufacturing the industrial worker¹³² but not before the near century of revolutions born in France in 1848 and dying in Spain in 1938. These insurrections were largely fought by transitional classes somewhat similar to those today, who in the process of being proletarianised lived in “*neither industrial nor village society but in the tense, almost electrifying force field of both.*”¹³³ While this grand tale of class evolution in early capitalism is true(ish), the stories playing out today are unscripted and should not be presumed to share the same so-called ending.

While many in the slums either already work in the world of wage slavery or will end up doing so, many, many others survive in the informal economy, a sector that in some cities is far larger (in terms of human captives) than the economy. Here we have a potential emergence vast in number, who are not going anywhere and seem to be surplus to capitalism’s requirements. “*A proletariat without factories, workshops, and work,*

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and without bosses, in the muddle of the odd jobs, drowning in survival and leading an existence like a path through embers."¹³⁴

Thanks to lack of sanitation, water supply, and drainage, water and the spread of disease are some of the greatest problems presently facing many slum dwellers. Even without massive climate change kicking in, the number of major disasters in urban areas has been increasing rapidly and most of this growth is from storms and floods.¹³⁵ Without storm drains, the future washing away of many settlements seems inevitable, sited as they often are in areas most at risk from flooding. The recuperative power of such communities is incredible, but we can presume that the great floods to come are likely to exacerbate social crisis and instability.

Old gods and new heavens

By far the least pleasant experience I had in the squatter neighbourhood I mentioned earlier was attending a Sunday church service. I had managed to dodge others, but this time there was no escape. The church itself was the biggest building in the neighbourhood and it too was largely built from salvage. I found it truly upsetting to see so many of the people I had spent time with venting

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religious irrationality, enacting inane rituals, and submitting to the authority of preachers, god, and scripture. The church had received some tapes from a Pentecostal denomination in the USA and thus I sat listening to hundreds of squatters who, though English was not their first language, sang out American hymns in psuedo-American accents. In fact, in the country I was in, not a single bookshop in the capital, (all of which were owned by churches), sold anything mentioning evolution, never mind anarchist revolution. It's easy for those of us from societies with high percentages of atheism to underestimate the level of religiosity that is mixed with industrialism in the global south, where, amongst the poor at least, they are often jointly re-enforcing.

Much of radical politics is religion by other means, but in the slums, and amongst the dispossessed generally, old gods are growing in stature. While sects may differ in their degree of quietism or militancy, they share an unreality that is unlikely to aid the map-reading ability of the downtrodden in truly confusing times. The wider case against religion has been argued well elsewhere¹³⁶ so I won't bother, but it is worth noting that while western anarchists' most organised intra-class competitors are political

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groupings, in many third worlds, anarchists are faced by the strengthening ranks of theocracy. That's of course in those places where anarchists do exist, which—though growing—are still not many. In contrast, religious authoritarians seem to be gaining converts everywhere, and generally the more social dislocation, the better the recruitment.¹³⁷ In chapter 4 (African Roads to Anarchy) we looked at the expansion of non-state social provision as governments retract from previous commitments—in part due to structural adjustment and the like. Amongst the obvious pain this creates, I pointed to the possibilities this opens up for libertarian social forces. Unfortunately, in slums from Kinshasa to Gaza, it is religious authoritarians who most often take advantage of this potential to build dual (or multi)power through the provision of health and general care, and this is often done alongside the build-up of armed capacity. The terrible inheritance of leftist failures and successes has only left the field open for the growth of millenarian theocratic authorities amongst the slums and “large islands of chaos.”

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are increasingly living in guarded heavens modelled on the gated suburbs of the USA. Here, Mike Davis argues, they are constructing (or more accurately having constructed for them) Blade Runner style off-worlds away from the disordered and dangerous worlds of the dispossessed. Whilst some such off-worlds are so off that the poor are far, far away, most are potentially within reach. Like Apartheid South Africa (or South Africa today for that matter) these heavens still need workers—cleaners, gardeners, van drivers, and security guards—many of which live in the surrounding hells. As the poisoned oligarchs of Haiti¹³⁸ could tell you, this, despite the CCTV, is not as safe as it looks.

With such divided worlds—and such divided cities—uprisings and generalised conflicts are always in the cards. Military strategists have for decades been predicting uprisings and guerrilla war in the swelling cities, and to a certain extent we are already seeing them, e.g. the battles in Revolution/Sadr City and the like. The combination of unparalleled income disparity, deprivation, crowding, and the spread of criminal gangs and millenarian groups is a heady mix. As a US Army think tank report puts it,

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called world cities ... include marked economic and social polarisation and intense spatial segregation. We also find what is probably an effect of these conditions; the ... large array of anti-state actors. Anarchists; criminals, the dispossessed, foreign meddlers, cynical opportunists, lunatics, revolutionaries, labor leaders, ethnic nationals ... and others can all form alliances of convenience. They can also commit acts of violence and handle ideas that provoke others ... Analyses that focus on a single strand of the fabric of violence—that isolate on ethnic rivalry, mafias, or revolutionary cadre—can underestimate the disruptive power that those phenomena gain when they coincide. Troubles will not come as single soldiers; they will come in battalions.¹³⁹

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In Kenya’s case, slums—all their risks notwithstanding—are actually a stabilising force. The pressures created by the great land dispossession in Kenya by the colonialists, which continued after independence, were partly soaked up by Nairobi’s slums ... Without them, perhaps there would have been a second Mau Mau uprising.¹⁴⁰

Vagabond plants in urban ecosystems

Despite being tools of domestication there are feral possibilities in the cities as there are almost everywhere. Their place as the exclusive terrain of power is a generalised delusion, even if it is backed up by violent facts.

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that can be of great use to the anarchist.”¹⁴¹ The last two decades have seen an emergence of a third wave of anarchists in many of the World Towns: Manila, Jakarta, Mexico City, Lagos, Seoul, Buenos Aires, Istanbul, Delhi, and many others, with a truly remarkable growth in Latin America especially. Here we seem to have the beginning of a return to the flowering of diverse transnational Anarchisms that characterised us a century ago.¹⁴² That this is happening *as part* of globalisation and the growth of cities is not surprising given that the seeds of *social movement* Anarchism are largely carried around the planet on the coat tails of capitalism and often grow best, like weeds, on disturbed ground. As Richard Mabey has put it, civilisation divides life into ...two conceptually different camps: those organisms contained, managed, and bred for the benefit of humans, and those which are ‘wild’, continuing to live in their own territories on more or less their own terms. Weeds occur when this tidy compartmentalisation breaks down. The wild gatecrashes our civilised domains and the domesticated escapes and runs riot.¹⁴³ Earlier we looked at some continuing, if

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besieged, anarchies that continue to live “*in their own territories; on more or less their own terms.*” Even though from birth most of us in the cities have been “contained, managed, and bred” for others’ benefit, possibilities for escape are often present. There are cracks in the pavement and our growth can lever them wider. In most places, by doing so we are unlikely to destroy the concrete utterly but we can open up more spaces in which to grow together.

In some senses vagabond plants are on the other side; they are living in opposition to the city, yet they are simultaneously part of the overarching urban ecosystem. To see them in isolation without implicitly seeing their links and interactions within the wider community would be foolish. The same can be said of those of us with feral ambitions—as urban anarchists we are both consciously other, and intricately within the wider ecosystems—both human and beyond. Anarchists all over the urban worlds are growing their own countercultures whilst actively fighting in wider social and ecological struggles, within and alongside striking workers, indigenous peoples, women’s organisations, migrants, slum communities, and countless others. However, one only needs to look at the recent repression faced

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by anarchists in Chile and elsewhere to remember that being grass between the cracks is dangerous—the weed killer is always on the way. Practical international solidarity is sometimes helpful, but it will be the vigour of the plants themselves and how suitable their environment is that will primarily determine whether they take hold. If, as is feared by many theorists of elite power, the fast-expanding, largely unplanned cities of the global south are fertile ground for the growth of anarchy, the age of the mega-cities will be interesting indeed. What rebellions await? What ideologies will be concocted? How will humanities feel and see themselves following this massive disconnection from the land? Will all these cities remain at the end of the century or are they a transitory bloom?

“*Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.*”¹⁴⁴

We have briefly looked at the expanding urban mono-cultures, but what of their opposite, the besieged biodiverse wildernesses? How will climate change, conflict, civilisational expansion, and contraction affect them? What can we, the weeds, do to defend the wilderness?

by anarchists in Chile and elsewhere to remember that being grass between the cracks is dangerous—the weed killer is always on the way. Practical international solidarity is sometimes helpful, but it will be the vigour of the plants themselves and how suitable their environment is that will primarily determine whether they take hold. If, as is feared by many theorists of elite power, the fast-expanding, largely unplanned cities of the global south are fertile ground for the growth of anarchy, the age of the mega-cities will be interesting indeed. What rebellions await? What ideologies will be concocted? How will humanities feel and see themselves following this massive disconnection from the land? Will all these cities remain at the end of the century or are they a transitory bloom?

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8. Conservation Amidst Change

- Apocalypses now
- "Conservation is our government"
- Damage control
- Nature bats last

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Apocalypses now

As long as class society exists, the war on the wild will continue—they are one and the same. The ideal answer to the question posed at the end of the previous chapter, “what can we, the weeds, do to defend the wilderness?” would be: re-wild where we are (and ourselves) to the extent that civilisations’ false divisions are overgrown. I say ideal, because for all the reasons outlined already and more, in most places we are unlikely to see an ecological transcendence.

But if the millennium is a myth, apocalypses feel more and more like unfolding realities. Many understandably fear that rainforests could die-off in the future thanks to climate change-induced drought,¹⁴⁵ but the fact is that today much of them are already being cleared and burnt to make way for agriculture—still the number one driver of tropical deforestation. Farming has already replaced wilderness on an estimated forty percent of the earth’s land surface¹⁴⁶ so for the animals, insects, peoples, and plants it replaced, the apocalypse has already come. Add the overall hijacking of ecosystem services and the continued pillaging of wildlands for animal bodies, tree trunks, water, minerals, and anything else that can be turned into a

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natural resource, and industrial civilisation is effectively attempting a sustained, blind, and hugely damaging take over of the Earth System. As part of this process, anthropogenic climate change is likely to be a force magnifier. Habitat destruction includes habitat fragmentation, a particularly problematic factor under climate change. And the problem of alien and invasive species, so favoured by non-natural disturbance, is only greater when climate change is added ... The impact of climate change in this heavily fragmented world may be immense.¹⁴⁷

How immense? No one really knows, though plenty are trying to work it out.¹⁴⁸ While there is a lot of uncertainty on the details, most conservation biologists would probably agree that unless “*action [is] rapidly taken, the sixth great extinction event on Earth will be ensured by increasingly fragmented habitat combined with the biological dynamics resulting from climate change.*”¹⁴⁹ Some voices go further. As Stephen M. Meyer points out in *The End of the Wild*, extinction rates—long before significant climate change kicks in—are already in the order of

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three thousand species a year and rapidly accelerating. The situation is truly dire.

Over the next 100 years or so as many as half of the Earth's species, representing a quarter of the planet's genetic stock, will functionally if not completely disappear ... Nothing—not national or international laws, global bio-reserves, local sustainability schemes, or even 'wildlands' fantasies—can change the current course. The broad path for biological evolution is now set for the next several million years. And in this sense the extinction crisis—the race to save the composition, structure, and organisation of biodiversity as it exists today—is over, and we have lost.¹⁵⁰

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rapidly becoming, at best, Ghosts. Weedy Species “thrive in continually disturbed, human dominated environments”, whilst Relic species live “on the margins in ever-decreasing numbers and contracting spatial distribution ... Relic Species do not thrive in human-dominated environments—*which now nearly cover the planet.*” Meyers argues that, “to survive outside of zoos, relics will require our permanent and direct management.” Those relics that don’t get such conservation attention, and even many that do, will become extinct, if not immediately then as Ghost Species. These species are “organisms that will not survive on a planet with billions of people, because of their abilities and our choices. They are ghosts because while they seem plentiful today and may in fact persist for decades, their extinction is certain, apart from a few specimens in zoos or laboratory-archived DNA samples.”¹⁵¹

A great many of the plants and animals we perceive as healthy and plentiful today are in fact relics or ghosts. This seeming contradiction is explained by the fact that species loss is not a simple process. Many decades can pass between the start of the decline and the observable collapse of a population structure, especially where moderate-to-long-lived life forms are

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“Conservation is our government”

So what strategies are conservationists coming up with to protect biodiversity, wildness, and services amidst climate change?

The main proposed answer still seems to be protected areas,¹⁵³ but with greater protection for their surrounding matrix and with an eye to flux and increased interventionist management. Of course, putting a park on a habitat doesn’t automatically result in preservation; in an increasingly crowded world, it’s almost a form of advertising. As Meyer it, “*bio reserves have become the preferred hunting grounds for poachers and meat traders: it is, after all, where the animals are.*”¹⁵⁴ While the predation is largely humans eating the wild, it’s got to the point where the inter-species conflict also flips the other way. “*In Mumbai, slum dwellers have penetrated so far into the Gandhi National Park that some are being*

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*routinely eaten by leopards (ten in June 2004 alone): one angry cat even attacked a city bus.*¹⁵⁵ Attempts to overcome such intrinsic civilised-human-vs.-wild-nature divisions with conservation-as-development projects, eco-tourism community income-generation schemes, and the like have had some success, but not much. Often as not they have simply monetised relationships with the land, bred resentment, and instilled another layer of bureaucracy over the heads of local people, and led to only marginal conservation gains.¹⁵⁶ More successful, horrible though it is to admit, has been the wide-scale fencing off—including sometimes eviction¹⁵¹—of peoples from landscapes, and their continued policing by park rangers. But putting one's ethics aside for the moment, this Yellowstone model seems increasingly unworkable without injections of resources, increased militarisation, and an expansion of land coverage. None of which seem particularly likely on much of the planet. Both conservation's big parks and conservation-as-development projects are effectively forms of government over people that presume a static ecology threatened by a human population in flux. On a climate change-modified earth, where ecosystems are themselves in flux

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We already know some of what this will begin to look like—just look at the incredibly interventionist nature of most of British conservation. The bioregion where I live is bio-diverse—in the context of temperate Europe—but it is heavily managed, in part by conservationists. Given the fragmentation of existing habitat it would probably be disastrous if such management stopped.¹⁵⁹ Effectively in my bioregion it is a ridiculous choice between wild (i.e. self-willed) land and biodiversity. From a radical environmental perspective (not to mention one with an eye to island biogeography) the solution would be rolling back human management of habitat over a large enough area that the ecosystems could function effectively. Realistically it now looks more probable that much of the world’s wildernesses will increasingly resemble my bioregion than vice versa

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There is likely to be plenty of work for those conservation managers with a stomach for the needed endless interfering, but its not the kind of conservation Aldo Leopold would recognise. Even if such massive expansion of governance by conservationists over humanity and protected areas is carried out (doubtful), unless there is a significant slowing of climate change (which I suspect will not happen any time soon) biodiversity will be affected “*in ways that will eventually become impossible to manage*.”¹⁶⁰

A few years back an old friend and comrade told me, with obvious sadness in his eyes, that the earth will need active management for the next 1,000 years. In some senses he’s probably right; the trick of government has always been that it creates problems to which only it can be the solution. While doubting its efficacy, I for one will not condemn those who take this path, motivated by biocentric passion. However, for those unwilling to step away from their core ethics around liberty/wildness/anarchy, other options remain, narrowing though they are.

Damage control

Action, action of any kind. Let our action set the finer points of our philosophy ...

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Out of this planet, out of the earth has emerged a society of warriors, women and men who are planting their spears in the ground and are taking a stand ... Our job is damage control.

There are still places and peoples that civilisation has not yet conquered and in these places lines can be drawn and battles joined. Ecological resistance scattered across the planet has been inspiring and often effective.

Different people use different priority-setting systems to choose where to plant their spears, can I reach and where do I love? For many, the answers to the questions of how and where to defend the wild will be obvious, the local agents of destruction clear, communities roused, places to be occupied available, stuff to be destroyed visible. The thing then is simply to act.

However, many wild ecosystems (and the non-civilised peoples who are of them) have few (if any) allies and many potential warriors live in places with little wildness to defend, or with little chance of victory. Given the scale of the attack on the Earth System/Gaia/Mother Earth, some

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priority-setting systems call for increased focus in particular areas.¹⁶² Additionally, strong personal desires to respond to the call of the wild by seeking adventure, escape, struggling communities, and conflict also drive people to seek other terrains. With the objective of such choices, lets map out some advantages that become clear when we accept that the situation is as bad as it probably is. Given we are in a pretty shitty situation it seems helpful to transform disadvantages into advantages.

*Advantage—We are small in number
but the problems are great.*

The first disadvantage that can be turned around is the simple fact that not that many people are willing to commit to defending the wild, few are libertarians, and fewer still are able to travel far from home or put time and resources into solidarity action or fundraising. When this is coupled with the scale of the global problem, and the number and diversity of battles, an obvious *advantage* appears. The problems vastly outnumber those of us wishing to engage them from our perspective and, thus, we should be able to concentrate on only those battles that most reflect our ethics. We can leave the majority of

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those messier situations, which abound in conservation, to when the struggles that don't raise significant contradictions for us are dealt with. This is likely to be never.

Advantage—Civilisation is genocidal as well as ecocidal.

Some indigenous peoples, driven by deeply-held land ethics, willingly defend from development the bio-diverse wildland communities they are part of. Others are forced to do so as, rightly or wrongly, states often view them as impediments to progress, or simply want to destroy their habitat to enclose human subjects, other Natural Resources, and/or territory. Either way, the genocidal nature of civilisation ensures that the resistance of minority indigenous communities from the mountains of Orissa to the forests of the Amazon is often an ecosystem's best defence. Solidarity and joint struggle with such peoples is often the most successful strategy for wilderness defence and one that usually involves few compromises and contradictions for biocentric libertarians.

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five years the purchasing power of a forest officer's salary (a graduate post) in the Ugandan Forest service fell by 99.6%.¹⁶³ Such situations enable small amounts of outside money to have a significant impact if carefully targeted. Sea Shepherd has managed to gain influence and strengthen conservation in the Islands by providing funds, equipment, and technical support to the Park Service—which had previously suffered from both inadvertent neglect and purposeful underfunding (to hamstring their chance of interfering with politician-backed mafia-style industrial fishing¹⁶⁴). Rangers in some of the planet's most important reserves are often badly armed and suffering significant casualties with little outside support. For instance, one hundred fifty eight Congolese rangers have been killed over ten years defending mountain gorilla habitats, and small amounts of money—not least to support bereaved families—is making a real difference to the sustainability of projects and communities.¹⁶⁵

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powers they do not have. This (unfortunate as it is from an anti-imperialist perspective) can be of great use. For instance, a prison visit to forest conservationist Raul Zapatos by a handful of eco-anarchists from the British Isles on a solidarity trip in the Philippines, combined with a small amount of international pressure from similar circles, was probably a significant factor leading to his release.¹⁶⁶ Numerous similar examples of successful solidarity in ecologically-important areas come to mind. Peoples who have found refuge in wild areas—and wish to defend them—can use and construct ethnicity and aboriginality myths¹⁶⁷ to both carve out protective land rights, mobilise romantic support from outside, and present a self-protective image whether of Peaceful Sages or Violent Savages, depending on utility.

Advantage—Non-state forces are also causing ecological destruction.

Much destruction and many attacks are carried out by forces that, though in no way libertarian, are nevertheless outside of the particular state that controls the terrain on paper: Conservationists from the uniformly-governed west often presume governments control their

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Advantage—Globalisation is spreading.

As part of globalisation, an increasing number of urban social movement anarchists are cropping up in lands claimed by such states such as Indonesia, Chile, the Philippines, and Russia. Many of these are well placed to engage in ecological resistance and solidarity with indigenous peoples and channel people from elsewhere to support such struggles.

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Advantage—Habitat fragments may be unable to preserve biodiversity.

It's generally accepted that—"with climate change, even the best designed protected area system cannot aspire to conserve biological diversity if it consists mostly of isolated units."¹⁶⁸ Meyers states above that wildland fantasies are unlikely to halt biological meltdown; while this is probably true, the fact that many want to believe they might is, in some places, opening the door to large-scale rewilding¹⁶⁹ somewhat resembling the wilderness regeneration advocated by radical environmentalists for decades. Smaller ecological restoration¹⁷⁰ projects seem to be also on the increase.

Advantage—The situation is dire.

One can't really make the situation much worse, and one's actions could help make a real difference in struggles to defend wildness and liberty.

An obvious criticism of damage control is that it can be seen as treating the symptoms and not the root cause. Diagnosis of the malady is clear but it would be deluded to believe one had (or more ominously, was) the cure. Whatever the prognosis, the spread of the disease is surely still worth resisting and if anything, climate change only underlines this. Slowing the destruction of

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wilderness (what Lovelock describes as “*the vanishing face of Gaia*”¹⁷¹) may enable the Earth System to better deal with continuing anthropogenic releases of carbon dioxide, a significant percentage of which—it’s worth remembering—currently arise from deforestation. This is not to say that habitat defence can stop climate change. Like it or not climate change is probably now the context in which ecological struggles are fought, not a subject against which one can struggle.

Nature bats last

In Eastern Europe an amazing wilderness throngs with elk and wolves. Above the woods and pastures of Wormwood Forest eagle owls fly whilst beavers build dams in the rivers and swamps. In what has become effectively one of Europe’s largest nature reserves creepers climb buildings, lynx run in abandoned fields, and pines have long since broken through much of the tarmac. Welcome to the Chernobyl exclusion zone. Following the 1986 nuclear disaster, over 120,000 people were evacuated from the are, most never to return. In the heart of the zone, the previously 50,000-strong city of Pripyat is now deserted—bar a small number of squatters—but is by no means a ghost town. “*Pripyat began*

wilderness (what Lovelock describes as “*the vanishing face of Gaia*”¹⁷¹) may enable the Earth System to better deal with continuing anthropogenic releases of carbon dioxide, a significant percentage of which—it’s worth remembering—currently arise from deforestation. This is not to say that habitat defence can stop climate change. Like it or not climate change is probably now the context in which ecological struggles are fought, not a subject against which one can struggle.

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returning to nature as soon as the people left, and there was no one to trim and prune and weed."¹⁷²

Nature's incredible power to re-grow and flourish following disasters is evident both from previous mass extinctions and from its ability to heal many lands scarred by civilisation. Its true power is rarely considered within the sealed, anthropocentric thinking of those who would profit from the present or attempt to plan the future. Yet the functioning of the Earth System is destructive as well as bountiful and it is not a conscious god with an interest in preserving us or its present arrangement—something we may find out if the Earth is now moving to a new much hotter state. With us or without us, "*while the class war is vicious—there can be only one winner, the wild.*"¹⁷³ In a sense there is solace in this, but we should not look to such victory as Christian fundamentalists look to their rapture, for those species that have been pushed to oblivion will not rise from the dead and neither shall we. Nevertheless, nature bats last.

conservation amidst change

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9. Anarchists Behind the Walls

- Social war in temperate climates
- Surveillance states & security cultures
- Resist much, obey little
- Love, health, and insurrection

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Social war in temperate climates

James Lovelock says that in the “*predicted climate catastrophe ... what is at risk is civilisation*.”¹⁷⁴ I am unfortunately less optimistic—civilisation in some form or other will persist, at least in many regions. It is no accident that the first civilisation to spread globally originates in Europe. Many other civilisations raised up empires only to destroy their environments and collapse. The oceanic climate gave Western European civilisation a wider margin of error, enabling civilisation to escape its own regional locality and devour much of the earth. As with other civilisations, it leaves deserts in its footprints—but being global in reach but temperate in origin the physical deserts are largely elsewhere. Thus some of the key countries historically responsible for global warming will be the least dramatically affected by it—at least directly.

While those large capitalist core countries that span climate zones (Australia, USA, Russia) may see considerable direct disruption, under most models those living in temperate zones—especially oceanic and mountainous lands—can expect a heated, yet *relatively* calm, climate punctuated by extreme events.¹⁷⁶ To a very large

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degree the forecast for social war¹⁷⁷ is likely to be similar to that of the climate forecast: heated, yet *relatively* calm, while punctuated by extreme events. Relative, that is, to situations on a rapidly heating and conflicted planet, NOT relative to social and climatic situations today. Mediterranean lands will probably get far hotter—in both senses—and this may favour the growth of anarchist numbers in a spreading version of what Eurypol has referred to as the “*Mediterranean triangle of anarchistic violence*”.¹⁷⁸ Generally landlocked temperate countries in the middle of continents are likely to see their summers get considerably hotter, and some, such as Lovelock, even predict the functional collapse of existing agricultural forms.

In the film *Children of Men*, countries worldwide seem to be engulfed in famine, insurrection, civil war, epidemics, and other disasters. Meanwhile Britain soldiers on with a banal authoritarian system that sees most people continuing in their class roles and travelling daily to work as much of the planet implodes around them. Polyglot refugees in vast numbers are imprisoned in a seaside ghetto town. Such a picture could be an image from the climate for not just the Britain Isles but many temperate countries, states with

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oceanic borders (which both moderate climatic extremes and enable easier border control) such as New Zealand, Tasmania, etc. While conformity and social copying will, I suspect, remain the norm, increasingly authoritarian conditions and the economic effect of global dislocations, will occasionally ferment spectacular episodes of class anger and the wider formation of dissident cultures—however marginal. Gord Hill of the Kwakwaka'wakw nation may have it about right: The convergence of war, economic decline, and ecological crisis will lead to greater overall social conflict within the imperialist nations in the years to come. It is this growing conflict that will create changes in the present social conditions [with] greater opportunities for organised resistance. The rulers are well aware of this, and it is for this reason that state repression is now being established as a primary means of social control (i.e. expanded police-military forces, new terror laws, etc) ... We are now in a period that can be described as the 'calm before the storm.'¹⁷⁹

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perspective, the UK chief scientist has warned of a “perfect storm” in 2030 due to potential shortages of water, food, and energy that could result in “major destabilisation, an increase in rioting, and potentially significant problems with international migration, as people move out to avoid food and water shortages.”¹⁸⁰ Though this storm may break elsewhere, those states (and their captives) that rely heavily on international trade will be hit.

Such a picture of social conflict should not give the false impression that the coming troubles will result in some kind of libertarian social transcendence. To suspect that the future will see an increase in trouble and that some of those troubles will be us, does not presume any form of overall victory. Rather, social crises are inevitable in societies based on class warfare, and will only be exaggerated by the emerging conditions. Additionally, it would be unwise to ignore the pacifying effect of everywhere else being perceived as worse. In Chapter 3 (Desert Storms) we looked at how lands such as America and the British Isles, etc. may “fall back on a combination of policies that add up to quarantine” and it would be naive to think this would be a policy favoured by states only; indeed we can expect stronger

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Scandinavia and the oceanic parts of northern Europe such as the British Isles may be spared the worst of heat and drought that global heating brings. This puts a special responsibility upon us to ... give refuge to the unimaginably large influx of climate refugees.¹⁸²

Legal immigration today is class- (and to a certain extent race-) selective and this is likely to become only more the case. Overall struggles are extremely unlikely to change this, though when focused on individuals will no doubt continue to have some great successes.

While those of us living behind the walls may be shielded from some of the more overt and large-scale conflicts and opportunities that are likely to characterise this century, the social war is all around us. The lack of overt civil war is merely a sign of the depth of our domestication, as in most places the policing need only be sporadic. Pecking orders are almost everywhere, and from the boredom, pain, and indignity of wage labour to our exclusion from the land

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community, we live in (and are) occupied territory. If we disregard the illogic of private property and take food or shelter when needed, we risk facing security guards, bailiffs, police, and prisons. Though largely absent from the spectacle the class casualties mount up; in my country, on average, the richest live ten years longer than the poorest¹⁸³ and one of the greatest single predictors of fatal heart disease—thanks to social stress—is how low one is in a hierarchy.¹⁸⁴ Just as worldwide, more people kill themselves than get killed in wars and through interpersonal violence,¹⁸⁵ in Britain suicide remains the highest single cause of death for both males and females aged 15-34.¹⁸⁶ Assimilation is painful and trauma, self-harm, abuse, and addiction are rife. As Raoul Vaneigem said, for many “*the greatest kept state secret is the misery of everyday life*.”¹⁸⁷ Our lives can be better, freer, and wilder than this and as anarchists we do our utmost to make them so, not in the ever-after of post-revolutionary heaven, but now. Nevertheless, despite being anarchists, many of us find ourselves in relatively temperate social climates far from overt conflict on the scale likely to be seen beyond the walls. This brings both advantages and disadvantages.

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Surveillance states & security cultures

The Fortress faces inwards as well as out. Increasingly new technologies of control are brought in under the justification of fear of the barbarians—whether terrorists or migrants. Somewhat evocative of dystopias (not to mention the Gaza Strip) covert surveillance drones are already flying British skies—introduced initially for maritime border control, a public justification which the police themselves admit is largely a ruse.¹⁸⁸ In many countries cameras, some now with microphones, proliferate to the point of being practically invisible not because they are covert but because they have been normalised. Pervasive technologies of control, many even paid for by ourselves and adopted voluntarily, such as mobiles, computers, bank cards, and road cameras (with number plate recognition) map social networks, changing affiliations and physical movements.

New communication technologies =

New ways of making us talk

When these new technologies are combined with old fashioned human surveillance, gathered by informers and infiltrators operating within resistant communities, states and corporations can gain a level of oversight that would have been

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unthought of even a few decades ago. Whether or not control technologies converge to create an intelligence state that understands everyone rather than merely gathers data on them is to be seen; but against those preexisting cultures of opposition they are very much already focused. Sadly, much of the focusing is done by us.

The fact that our tyrannical enemy no longer draws its power from its ability to shut people up, but from its aptitude to make them talk—from the fact that it moved its centre of gravity from its mastery of the world itself to its seizure of the world's mode of disclosure requires that a few tactical adjustments be made.

— Silence and Beyond, *Tiqqun* 1

A limited response would be (along with abandoning any dialogue with power and spectacle) relinquishing the use of new near-universal communication technologies. Though this may have wider lifestyle benefits, it may also increasingly make oneself stand out. According to a UK military mid-term projection, “*by the end of the period [2036] it is likely that the majority of the global population will find it difficult to ‘turn the outside world off.’ ICT [information communica-*

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tion technology] is likely to be so pervasive that people are permanently connected to a network or two-way data stream with inherent challenges to civil liberties; being disconnected could be considered suspicious.”¹⁸⁹ We are moving to such a future fast. When the French anti-terrorist police invaded the land community in Tarnac in 2008 one of the public justifications they gave for suspecting that a terrorist cell was forming was that few on the land had mobiles!¹⁹⁰

The agreed convention is that the first step for those who, having planned the future, now wish to bring it about is to make it known, to make one’s voice heard—speak truth to power. Yet “the listener imposes the terms, not the talker.”¹⁹¹ Much of the low-level contestation that characterises activism, and the limited social spaces that make up counter-cultures, actively mark out areas, and people, in need of potential policing. That’s not to say that all resistance is futile (if meaningful, achievable objectives are kept in mind, and tactics not transformed into aims), nor that we should desist from growing communities in which to live and love, rather that we would be wise to understand that many subversive actions—and social relations—increasingly serve the needs of power as well as of liberty. The balance of advantage

should always be taken into consideration. We need to always ask ourselves the question: To what extent is the planned action or method of social relationship likely to haemorrhage data on potentially resistive identities? With increasingly powerful surveillance states and storms approaching, our responsibility to each other, especially to those as yet unimplicated, grows.

Yet, despite this contradiction, if we don't believe in a global revolutionary future, we must live (as we in fact always have had to) in the present. Shelves overflow with histories of past struggles and hallucinations of the post-revolutionary future whilst surprisingly little has been written about anarchist life under, not after, capitalism.¹⁹² Yet that is where most of us in temperate regions are, and where most of us are likely to remain.

The state is not something that can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently.

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In many places we are “*behaving differently*” by spreading love and cooperation AND resisting and/or avoiding those who would be our masters. One of the strengths of anarchist currents has always been the desire, and attempt, to live our ethics now. One does not need to believe that countercultures are pre-figurative to see their value. After all, whilst in most temperate places anarchist subcultures are not “*new worlds for the future*” they still remain “*barracks and sanctuaries for today*.”¹⁹⁴

This is nothing new, even if it does seem (in its own small way) to once again be spreading more widely. The classical anarchist period was propelled forward primarily by peasant insurgencies (think Zapata and the Machnovicha) and essentially bohemian, mostly urban, anarchist “counter-societies” (to use Murray Bookchin’s term for the worlds created by Spanish anarchists before fascist counter-revolution)¹⁹⁵ From Spain pre-1936, to the Jewish anarchists in North America, the illegalists of France, and the Italian anarcho-syndicalists of Argentina; the inhabitants of anarchist counter-societies were always, by definition, active minorities. The minorities may have got larger in insurrectionary moments, but they remained minorities always. The same

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can be said for libertarian subcultures ever since. For the foreseeable future libertarians in temperate regions will remain minorities, even as possibilities for widespread anarchy arise beyond the walls. There are many things we can do, but we cannot change the fact that we will not be joined voluntarily and actively by most citizens. We will always be within and against, and this may become increasingly dangerous for all involved.

I live in an area with a sizeable anarchist subculture. I like living amongst people who make my life lovelier in a society not of my choosing, and with whom I can continue to engage in resistance. Such clustering is unfortunately almost destined to attract unwanted attention. We should hold no illusions about our ability to be simultaneously open to the world yet closed to the state, but security culture measures can minimise the damage. In the end though, our security rests primarily on the wider society, not simply the practices of the subcultures we create. Governments would no doubt lock far more of us away than they do, but for now, in many countries at least, there is some protection in the state's fear that increased repression risks widening resistance and more generally breaking the

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spell of illusory social peace.

Counter-cultures need embedded security to survive, but our main security lies hidden in the wider culture.

When we choose which interventions/campaigns/struggles to fight, and which locations to live in, we should select them, where we can, partly on their potential for social contagion, for the presence of factors that link us, and our ethics, and needs, to those of the surrounding society. Doing so is self protective. Beyond our own security; choosing battles based on where people already are, and linking the anarchies we are growing with existing ecologies, social relations, and gains from previous struggles, has the significant advantage of making anarchy more translatable. As Colin Ward said:

Many years of attempting to be an anarchist propagandist have convinced me that we win over our fellow citizens to anarchist ideas precisely through drawing upon the common of the informal, transient, self-organising networks of relationships that in fact make the human community possible rather than through the rejecting of existing society as a whole in favor of some future soci-

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compatible social relations, enables us to learn
from them, aid them—and be aided in return.
That's not to say we should dilute ourselves. We
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In our own small ways, where we exist, libertarian
communities of resistance are gathering resources
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of people trying to live. Just as we cannot Save
the World, we will not Reclaim the Future; we

will be part of it.

We are not the seed of the future society in the shell of the old, but one of many elements from which the future forms.

Resist much, obey little

When resistance and desertion significantly threaten those in power, repression/counter-revolution is inevitable. One answer to how to make counter-cultures less of a threat to those *within them* would be to drain them of antagonism; make them obviously unthreatening to power. This counsel of evasion and non-resistance has long been articulated in the lived experience of anarchies both outside civilisation and within. Today though, putting aside the ethical issues involved,¹⁹⁷ the fact is that while you can try and ignore the state, if you're within its controlled territory the chances are that the state won't ignore you. Those communities with a land base capable of some level of self-sufficiency will still face intervention, whilst those immersed in capitalism will often have little option but to labour, and (lacking resistance) for worsening hours and wages.

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ably in winnable campaigns), but barring wider social crisis, all the time attempting some level of invisibility.

A lot of what we already do makes sense, even when the overt justifications for such action remain mired in visions of salvation (as outlined in Chapter 1). Ironically, these practical actions are sometimes abandoned when it is realised (correctly) that they will not lead to the transformation of the world. Just as countercultures/communes/communities of resistance may not be embryos of a future mass anarchist society, direct action may not lead to the destruction of capitalism. But it does protect some threatened ecosystems, helps many of us, and stops the further erosion of some liberties. Strikes and syndicalism may not be steps towards a future anarcho-communism but may aid survival in the here and now and open up time in which to live better. Riots may not lead to revolution, but they can break the social spell for many. I wouldn't pretend for a moment that we are significantly slowing the death march that civilisation is taking life on earth, but the "*weapons of the weak*"¹⁹⁸ are the ones they have, not the ones they dream of.

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aboveground but in the networked space between the two. As noted earlier in the discussion of increased surveillance, this ground may be disappearing from under our feet, irrelevant of arguments of its utility. For the resistance cultures that are often skewed generationally towards the young it's easy to forget how fast options narrow. There was a time, not many decades ago, when police had no riot uniforms and had to use metal rubbish bin lids as improvised round shields amidst an inner-city insurgency. Not so long ago animal liberationists could break into laboratories where no motion sensor would pick them up because they hadn't been invented. Charities could run fundraising pushes for medical support for armed liberation movements abroad (SWA-PO)—through the National Union of Students! This is no call for 1980s nostalgia—by others' reports, in many ways things are far better now; but some avenues have closed, and more will follow them.

To an extent, a lot of the type of actions that will become increasingly difficult—spectacular stuff—could be dumped with little loss anyway. Often their only purpose is to make people feel they are Doing Politics.¹⁹⁹ However, some victories and successful campaigns have achieved real gains,

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defended real people and places, often with tactics that may be decreasing in viability. What, then, is the Other side thinking is the future of resistance? For a start we should be clear that we are by no means viewed as the only, or even the main, resistive social force. Unhappiness, poverty, social division, irrationality, and the desire to fight abound, and many in elites understand that the potential for chaos is often barely under wraps. As pointed to earlier in the discussion about the rise of mega-cities, state theorists do not make the mistake of seeing economic crime as divorced from the class war. In terms of the strictly political, many activists seemed rather miffed when September 11th and the growth of Islamic terrorism upstaged the “movement of movements,” which a decade ago was meant to be the only game in town. The growth (limited as it is) of non-state authoritarian actors, whether Al-Qaeda wannabes or far-right race soldiers, shows that there are many potentially insurgent subcultures behind the walls, many of which are our enemies as much as the states are.

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different forms of conflict into generations. In the most common schema First Generation War (1GW) is characterised by the emergence of conflict involving massive armies culminating in the Napoleonic Wars, 2GW by industrialised WWI style conflicts, and 3GW by World War II-style Blitzkrieg. 4GW was developed in theory and practice by Mao and includes, amongst others, the wars in China, Somalia, Gaza, Iraq (following the successful 3GW blitzkrieg invasion), as well as the so-called war on terror. This is a vastly simplified version of the scheme, but you get the idea.

Hammes spends most of the book explaining 4GW, pointing out that this is a form of war the US and co are, and will be, fighting for some time, and that—at least in the 20th century—it is the only type of war it has lost. The Western states have mostly been pretty successful in stopping 4GW “terror incidents” within their borders for a whole host of reasons, not least of which has been their increasing capacity for effective networks. Hammes states that “*Fourth generation war is more than seventy years old and is reaching maturity.*” “*While we are only beginning to understand it clearly, history tells us the fifth generation has already begun to evolve.*” He

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vene and participate in moments of wider social and ecological struggle; to show leadership from below, help instill a fighting spirit, and provide important infrastructure. Success often comes when upsurges seem to appear out of nowhere, but upsurges benefit from will and experience residing in established communities of resistance. Politicos often want to push these moments beyond their natural lifespan, but momentum lasts only so long, and it doesn't take much time for the state to organise. Such situations will not be the foundation for a total libertarian transformation of the world, yet they do have a chance of occasionally achieving real class gains, defending communities and ecologies, making people safer, showing people their own capacity, and breaking social spells.²⁰¹ They can, obviously, be costly both in terms of repression and the calming power of having let off steam. We should also be under no illusion that authoritarian social forces—on both sides of the barricades—will not try to control such moments for their own uses.

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individuals) and largely unmanaged episodes of mass social opposition. For now, a middle ground also exists, mostly occupied by activism and crime—but maybe for not much longer. As I said earlier, subversive actions serve the needs of power as well as liberty, so toleration may last longer than is technologically necessary if it plays the role of inhibiting emerging forms of action. It should also be obvious that the oppositional forms so far mentioned—existent or yet to appear—are methods of opposition, not enablers of transcendence or ending. This will not stop them being claimed as such. In our circles some communists will no doubt see social struggles and outbreaks of disorder as leading to transcendence, while some primitivists will see 5GW as a way of ending civilisation in its heartlands.

Situations in far off lands also call, and those behind the walls can get out—at least at the moment. It is often dangerous to go where battles are brewing, potentiality for anarchies opening up and ecologies needing defence, but some always “*prefer liberty with danger over peace with slavery*.”²⁰² Even some of those who don’t, may feel an obligation to fight, either to a level that may be unsustainable in surveillance states, or with wild places and peoples, which in

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Love, health, and insurrection

It is my opinion that the situation is hopeless, that the human race has produced an ecological tipover point... but assuming there is a possibility of changing the society's "course in the darkness deathward set," it can only be done by infection, infiltration, diffusion, and imperceptibility, microscopically, throughout the social organism, like the invisible pellets of a disease called Health.

Kenneth Rexroth,
Anarchist and Poet, July 1969²⁰³

We have chosen to be anarchists, presumably at least in part because we feel it is more healthy and ethical to be so. It is better not to be bosses and servants in our intimate and social relationships. Turning the pain we feel into resistance is

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If Rexroth were alive today he would not be surprised that it's now probably too late to change the "*course in the darkness deathward set*." Yet

those of us who chose to be anarchist in some of the most domesticated places on earth, still need to find each other—both to be effective and to be socially rounded. We have to maintain some invisibility from power whilst still being socially present enough to be contagious.

Too often some people's activism resembles the manic phase of bi-polar disorder. This is followed inevitably by a depressive phase. Once having become disillusioned, folks' feelings of omnipotence only reinforce illusions of powerlessness. To become stronger and healthier, and encourage and support others to do so, it is sensible to set ourselves realisable short-term goals, rather than adopting an all-or-nothing perspective. This is the case whether it is about what we want our resistance to achieve, what we want to actively create, what we want to learn, or simply what we want to become. In this way our

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conscious action can take on the function of collective therapy, making our lives measurably improved for being anarchists, whilst achieving wider social and ecological gains. There are many answers on how we can do this.

We are anarcho-syndicalists on the shop floor, green anarchists in the woods, social anarchists in our communities, individualists when you catch us alone, anarcho-communists when there's something to share, insurrectionists when we strike a blow.²⁰⁴

An Anarchism with plenty of adjectives, but one that also sets and achieves objectives, can have a wonderful present and still have a future, even when fundamentally out of the step with the world around it. There is so much we can do, achieve, defend, and be—even here, where unfortunately civilisation probably still has a future.

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Much of this piece has been big picture, but that should not detract from the true value of the hands-on, the local, our emotional relationships, and day-to-day projects. The future should not be allowed to foreclose on today, even if today is foreclosing some possibilities in the future. No future is worth living or fighting for that is not existent in the present.

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 To be disillusioned—with Global Revolution
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 set aside and we walk into the world not disabled
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If I cross the river will you cross the river
 Or drown in this desert, this empty cup we're
 drinking from
 If we are beasts, we are not beasts of burden
 So ride alone, or ride with many others
 Just ride away as fast as you can.

Blackbird Raum,
*Valkyrie Horsewhip Reel*²⁰⁵

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7. Andrew Flood, “S26 in Ireland and the Origins of the Anti-capitalist movement,” *Workers Solidarity Movement* (Ireland), 13th September 2000.

8. UK Anarchist Federation, *Resistance*, May 2009, p. 4. These quotes are just illustrations—you could find many similar ones yourself. Don’t take it as a dig if you are allied to these organisations/tendencies. Many of you I know are doing great stuff and are lovely people who I have shared laughs and struggles with.

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7. Andrew Flood, “S26 in Ireland and the Origins of the Anti-capitalist movement,” *Workers Solidarity Movement* (Ireland), 13th September 2000.

8. UK Anarchist Federation, *Resistance*, May 2009, p. 4. These quotes are just illustrations—you could find many similar ones yourself. Don’t take it as a dig if you are allied to these organisations/tendencies. Many of you I know are doing great stuff and are lovely people who I have shared laughs and struggles with.

9. I use the phrase, social movement anarchists, to mean those of us who self-label as anarchists, and feel allied somewhat to largely western-originated, anarchist traditions.

Many peoples and individuals have, and do, live anarchist/acephalous lives, without any link to our relatively modern social movements. I write about these other anarchists in Chapter 4 (African Roads to Anarchy).

10. Statements that refer to building or growing the new society in the shell of the old are relatively common in libertarian writing. Though the concept predates it, the origin of these phrases is thought to be the century old preamble of the constitution of the Industrial Workers of the World: “By organising industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.”

11. Sure the web connects the globe, but most of us end up hearing mainly people just like ourselves: “We end up within these filter bubbles ... where we see the people we already know and the people who are similar to the people we already know. And we tend not to see the wider picture.”—Ethan Zuckerman, Listening to Global Voices, TED (www.ted.com).

12. *Down with Empire, Up with Spring!* (Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington: Rebel Press, 2006), p. 74

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expansion of Heathrow Airport.

19. Some of the groups allied to Transition Towns would be the most obvious example, at least in the British Isles.

20. See Tadzio Muller and Ben Trott, How to Institutionalise a Swarm? (www.zeitschrift-luxted.com).luxemburg.de/?p=412).

21. *You are Now Fucked*, Natterjack Press, (www.natterjack-press.co.uk/menu/downloads.php), p. 74. The title refers to a Climate Camp leaflet the front cover of which was simply the text “You are Not Fucked”.

22. Unless of course climate change reaches one of the truly End Times possibilities outlined well by Mark Lynas in his description of the end-Permian wipe-out. This is a possibility. Mark Lynas, *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet* (London: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 243.

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27. His pro-nuclear stance is practical if you are pro-civilisation like he is. He does not say that nuclear power is the solution to global heating which he sees as now inevitable. He thinks nuclear fission and eventually nuclear fusion are the only technologies capable of 'keeping the lights on' as civilisation retreats. As someone who wants the lights to go out, I can see the logic of his arguments but wanting the opposite have no need to agree with his stance or reject his wider arguments because of it.
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35. In contrast, the pre-historic planetary gatherer-hunter population is estimated to have stayed under 10 million for nearly all of homo sapiens 60,000 generations. Gerald Marten, *Human Ecology* (London: Earthscan Publications, 2001), pp. 26-38.
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37. *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision*, Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, June 2009.
38. The work of new social movement anarchists and feminists from the '60s onwards is relatively well known but anarchist involvement in birth control struggles reaches further back. Emma Goldman, among many things a nurse and midwife, was one of its best-known advocates and for lots of the movement's nameless it was a significant part of their daily organising. This is as much an issue of class struggle as of women's liberation. As Emma Goldman proclaimed, "Large families are a millstone around the necks of working people!" The following quote refers to French anar-

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42. “World Hunger Hits One Billion”, BBC (www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8109698.stm), 19 June 2009.

43. Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001), p. 9.

44. “This girl here, for instance, is in a feeding centre in Ethiopia. The entire centre was filled with girls like her. What’s remarkable is that her brothers, in the same family, were totally fine. In India, in the first year of life, from zero to one, boy and girl babies basically survive at the same rate because they depend on the breast, and the breast shows no son preference. From one to five, girls die at a fifty percent higher mortality rate than boys, in all of India.”—Sheryl WuDunn,

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45. CNA Corporation. *National Security and the Threat of Climate Change* (Alexandria: CNA Corporation, 2007), Finding 1.

46. Ibid; Finding 2.

47. For example: “ ‘With the effects of climate change compounding existing pressures, future operations will be more frequent and more intense than those currently underway in East Timor and the Solomon Islands.’ [Air Chief Marshall Angus] Houston said that rising sea levels caused by climate change would worsen social problems on the islands, many of which are poor and underdeveloped, with the potential for sustained economic growth low in all but a few countries. This meant that island nations would struggle to adapt to climate change, he said, while changing rainfall patterns, its extreme weather and rising sea levels would threaten agriculture and fisheries on which they depended. ‘From there, it is a small step to political instability and social disorder,’ Houston said.”—“Australia Military Head State Warns of Pacific Climate Instability,” *France 24*, 3.11.2010 (wwwfrance24.com).

48. James R. Lee, *Climate Change and Armed Conflict: Hot and Cold Wars* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 7.

49. “National Security and the Threat of Climate Change” (Alexandria: CNA Corporation, 2007), p. 6.

50. Kurt M Campbell, et al, *The Age of Consequences: The Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Global*

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54. James R. Lee, *Climate Change and Armed Conflict: Hot and Cold Wars* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 93.

55. Mattijs Van de Port, *Gypsies, Wars and Other Instances of the Wild: Civilisation and Discontents in a Serbian Town* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998); pp. 15-17.

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57. Pierre Clastres, *Archaeology of Violence* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1994), pp. 164-165.

56. Randolph Bourne, 'War is the Health of the State', Bureau of Public Secrets (www.bopsecrets.org).

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estrangement and domestication as past events, rather they are a process that can be, and is, resisted. For starters, see also: Ian Hodder, *The Domestication of Europe* (Basil Blackwells: Oxford, 1990), Leopold Roc, *Industrial Domestication: Industry as the Origins of Modern Domination*, The Anarchist library (www:theanarchistlibrary.org), Derrick Jensen et al, *Strangely Like War: The Global Assault on Forest*, (Green Books: Dartington, 2003), Jacques Camatte, *Against Domestication* (Leeds: Re-Pressed Distro, 2006), *Beasts of Burden: Capitalism, Animals, Communism* (Antagonism Press: London, 1999).

61. James Lovelock, *Climate Change on the Living Earth* (The Royal Society: 29 October 2007).

62. Speech by the dis-honourable Minister for Foreign Trade (Nigeria) Mr. G Yhema, Crown Plaza Hotel, The Hague, 27 2000.

63. See: Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2008).

64. Contrary to the idea that a decrease in resources is likely to result in increased conflict many surveys have shown that increased resources result in increased conflict. Conflict can be caused by a combination of greed and grievance and often greed is the motor while grievance is the justification. "This suggests that the resource curse, by exposing those in power to the temptations of great wealth, is the most powerful driver of violence and conflict."—Camilla Toulmin, *Climate Change in Africa* (London: International African Institute and Zed Books, 1999), p. 118.

estrangement and domestication as past events, rather they are a process that can be, and is, resisted. For starters, see also: Ian Hodder, *The Domestication of Europe* (Basil Blackwells: Oxford, 1990), Leopold Roc, *Industrial Domestication: Industry as the Origins of Modern Domination*, The Anarchist library (www:theanarchistlibrary.org), Derrick Jensen et al, *Strangely Like War: The Global Assault on Forest*, (Green Books: Dartington, 2003), Jacques Camatte, *Against Domestication* (Leeds: Re-Pressed Distro, 2006), *Beasts of Burden: Capitalism, Animals, Communism* (Antagonism Press: London, 1999).

61. James Lovelock, *Climate Change on the Living Earth* (The Royal Society: 29 October 2007).

62. Speech by the dis-honourable Minister for Foreign Trade (Nigeria) Mr. G Yhema, Crown Plaza Hotel, The Hague, 27 2000.

63. See: Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2008).

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65. Sam Mbah and IG Igariwey, *African Anarchism: The History of a Movement* (Tucson: See Sharp Press, 1997) pp.27-33.
66. The following is worth noting also: "Such limited links were in the interest of the ...[bosses], who purposely created a semiworking class. Thomson states, 'Mine owners and farm managers rely on the fact that peasants [who come to work temporarily] are also producing for themselves back on their smallholdings (farmed in their absence by their families). As workers have this additional source of subsistence, wages can be low'" —Jim Feast, "The African Road to Anarchism?" in *Fifth Estate* Vol. 43, No.2, 2008.
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68. P. Skalnik, *Outwitting the State*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989), p. 13.
69. A personally abhorrent and definitely authoritarian exercise which some anarchists still seem to enjoy...
70. Though obviously not at the expense of looking at the class relations, balances of power, struggles and joys where we live. Too many activists know the intricacies of struggles abroad yet little of the social war all around them.
71. While I agree with the author here, I would say 'the client issue' is a factor behind the spread of multi-party systems but by no means the only one. The collapse of the Soviet

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72. Jim Feast, 'The African Road to Anarchism?', in *Fifth Estate* Vol. 43, No. 2, 2008.

73. A cheap joke at the expense of Murray Bookchin's ridiculous, 'Social Anarchism vs Lifestyle Anarchism' dichotomy.

74. Sam Mbah and IG Igariewy, *African Anarchism: The History of a Movement* (Tucson: See Sharp Press, 1997), p. 108.

75. "Improvement makes straight roads; but the roads without improvement are roads of genius."—William Blake; quoted in Lawrence Millman, *Last Places: A Journey in the North* (London: Sphere Books, 1992).

76. James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland South-East Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

77. If you doubt this not try a pleasurable experiment and get a taste of freedom by eating food not bought with sold time but grown with one's own hands. I suspect the experience will convince you that land is liberty and make you desire more of both. For those who like book references as well as soil under their fingernails see: *The Ecologist*, *Whose Common Future? Reclaiming the Commons* (London: Earthscan, 1993).

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78. Graeme Barker, 'A Tale of Two Deserts: Contrasting Desertification Histories on Rome's Desert Frontier', in *World Archaeology*, vol 33, No.3, 2002, pp. 488-507.
79. Helmut Geist, *The Causes and Progression of Desertification* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), pp. 4-7.
80. Those who doubt this could do with reading Clive Ponting, *A Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilisations*. (London: Penguin Books, 1991). On a side note, before becoming an academic Ponting narrowly avoided jail (thanks to an unexpected jury acquittal) for leaking the truth behind the Belgrano Affair (the British sinking of an Argentine navy warship as it away from the Falklands conflict) whilst he was a senior MoD civil servant.
81. Vernon G. Carter and Tom Dale, *Topsoil and Civilization* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974).
82. Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), pp. 303-305.
83. Wilfred Theiseger, *Arabian Sands* (London: Penguin, 1959). I took the cheeky, though I think worthwhile, step of gender neutralising this quote i.e 'One' was originally 'Man,' they' was originally 'he'.
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89. Nisa, a woman of the !Kung San: “I remember another time when I had been walking with my friends in the bush. Our families were moving from one camp to another and my friend and I were walking ahead of the adults, riding on top of each other, making believe we were donkeys. That’s when my friend Besa saw a wildebeest dead on the ground; then we saw another; they had all been recently killed by lions. We ran back on our tracks, crying out, ‘We saw three dead wildebeest killed by lions!’ The adults said, ‘Ho, ho, our children. our wonderful children ... our wonderful, wonderful children!’” Marjorie Shostak, *Nisa: The Life: and Words of a !Kung Woman* (London: Earthscan,1990), p. 101.

90. Steve Conner, Worlds Most Ancient Race Traced in DNA Study’, *The Independent* (London), 1 May 2009.

91. Rachel Sussman, The World’s Oldest Living Things, TED 2010, (www.ted.com).

92. Survival International, (www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/bushmen).

93. And yes, that includes people.

94. James Lovelock, *The Revenge of Gaia* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 159.

95. W H. Auden, “The Fall of Rome”, in *Collected Poems* (London: Faber & faber, 2004) .

96. Tim Folger, “Viking Weather: The Changing Face of Greenland” *National Geographic* Vol 217. No 6, June 2010, p. 49.

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97. James Melic, James and Demean Bartlett, "Melting Ice Opens Up Potential for Arctic Exploitation", BBC World Service—Business Daily: 22 September 2010, (www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-113819711.
98. Camilla Toulmin, *Climate Change in Africa* (London: International African Institute and Zed Books, 1999), pp. 15-16.
99. Laurence C. Smith, *The World in 2050: Four Forces Shaping Civilization's Northern Future* (New York: Penguin, 2010), p. 6.
100. 'Global Warming Poses Threats and Opportunities to Arctic Region', *Manilla Bulletin*, 6 December 2009.
101. James R. Lee, *Climate Change and Armed Conflict: Hot and Cold Wars* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 167 and p. 17.
102. For example the Russian National Security Strategy, adopted in spring 2009, referred to the possibility of using armed force in conflict over Hydrocarbon reserves. 'Climate Change, the Arctic and Russia's National Security', *Pravda*, 25 March 2010 (www.english.pravda.ru).
103. Vladimir Putin has publicly stated that he thinks there is an urgent need for Russia to secure its "strategic, economic, scientific and defence interests" in the Arctic. Russia Plants Under N Pole, BBC News website, 2 August 2007 (www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6927395.stm).
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105. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape* (New York: The Harvill. Press, 1999), p. xxiii—xxvii.
106. The divisive existence of nation states is already a problem for the inherently transboundary Sami and could prove fatal in their attempts to adapt to climate change, even without civilisational expansion. See: Erik Reinert et al, 'Adapting to climate in Sami reindeer herding: the nation-state as problem and solution', in W. Neil Adger et al, *Adapting to Climate Change: Thresholds, Values, Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 417-431. For a good background also see: Hugh Beach, *The Saami of Lapland* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1988).
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108. Survival International. Siberian Peoples Protest Against Oil and Gas Pipelines, 26 August 2005, (www.survivalinternational.org/news/985).
109. Geoffrey York, 'Indigenous People Describe Real Perils of Global Warming', in *The Globe and Mail*, 14 December 2007.
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114. The tendency emerging, to see cities as nature's salvation, is cargoist nonsense, backed up by carbon counting techniques that ignore the inter-related nature of industrialism. A good recent example of such flawed thinking is: Shanta 'Escape to the City', in *New Scientist* 6.11.2010, pp. 32-34. I note the editors flagged it up on the cover as the lead article with the title 'Urban Utopia', which says it all really!
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116. Mike Davis, *Dead Cities and Other Tales* (New York: The New Press, 2002), p. 363.
117. United Nations Human Settlements Programme, State of the World's Cities 2008/2009 (London: Earthscan, 2008), quoted in Laurence Smith, *The World in 2050: Four Forces Shaping Civilization's Northern Future* (New York: Penguin, 2010), p. 32.
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126. Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 3.

127. Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World (Washington: US National Intelligence Council, 2008), 1999, quoted in Laurence C. Smith, *The World in 2050: Four Forces Shaping Civilization's Northern Future* (New York: Penguin, 2010), p. 43.

128. Robert Neuwirth, *Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, a New Urban World*. (London: Routledge, 2004).

129. United Nations statistics quoted in: Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 23.

130. Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 42.

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132. Leopold Roc, "Industrial Domestication: Industry as the Origins of Modern Domination", The Anarchist Library (www.theanarchistlibrary.org).
133. Murray Bookchin, quoted during a description of historical and present transitional classes in: *Down with Empire, Up with Spring!* (Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington: Rebel Press, 2006), p. 150.
134. Patrick Chamoiseau, quoted in Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 174.
135. Camilla Touimin, *Climate Change in Africa* (London: International African Institute and Zed Books, 2009), pp. 70-118.
136. "The idea of God implies the abdication of human reason and justice; it is the most decisive negation of human liberty, and necessarily ends in the enslavement of mankind, in theory and practise ... if god really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him." Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003). See also: Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Black Swan, 2007).
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132. Leopold Roc, "Industrial Domestication: Industry as the Origins of Modern Domination", The Anarchist Library (www.theanarchistlibrary.org).

133. Murray Bookchin, quoted during a description of historical and present transitional classes in: *Down with Empire, Up with Spring!* (Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington: Rebel Press, 2006), p. 150.

134. Patrick Chamoiseau, quoted in Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 174.

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- 144 Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'Inversnaid', in, *Poems and Prose* (London: Penguin Classic, 2008), p. 50.
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146. Garry Peterson, 'Ecological limits of adaptation to climate change', in W. Neil et al, *Adapting to Climate Change: Threshold, Values, Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 31.
147. T. E. Lovejoy, 'Conservation with a Changing Climate', in *Climate Change and Biodiversity* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2006), pp. 325-326.
148. We can look at tropical forests—those great reservoirs of diversity—in particular. "Projections to 2050 estimate 10% extinction (i.e. species committed to extinction) of all

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149. ‘Greenhouse Gas Levels and Biodiversity’, in Thomas E. Lovejoy and Lee Hannah, eds, *Climate Change and Biodiversity* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2006), p. 395.

150. M. Meyer, *The End of the Wild* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2006), p. 4.

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152. M. Meyer, *The End of the Wild* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2006), p. 16.

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161. Dave Foreman, speaking on the film, *Earth First!: The Politics of Radical Environmentalism*, produced by Christopher Manes, 1987.

162. As has been argued widely there is a need for increased ecological defence in both the 'biodiversity hotspots' (thirty four regions with biological diversity under imminent threat) and the last great tropical wildernesses (Amazon, New Guinea, Congo) as well as at Sea. The scale of the present crisis and the likelihood of future massive climate change may now add weight to the argument calling for a 'long war' focus on the last wildernesses, but it's probably not yet time to give up on the hotspots all together. It's also perfectly conceivable that if the Earth is moving to a hot state then even the 'long war' strategy is rather out the window. Ho hum. For an up-to-date summation of Hotspots see: www.biodiversity.hotspots.org. For a critique see: Peter Kereiva and Michelle Marvier, 'Conserving Biodiversity Coldspots', in *American Scientist*, Volume 91

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163. "Requiem or revival," in, Jaboury Ghazoul and Douglas Sheil eds, *Tropical Rain Forest Ecology, Diversity, and Conservation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 400.

164. Sea Shepherd Conservation Society—www.seashepherd.org/galapagos/

165. The Thin Green line Foundation www.thingreenline.info

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187. Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (London: Rebel Press, 1983).
188. "Police in the UK are planning to use unmanned spy drones, controversially deployed in Afghanistan, for the 'routine' monitoring of antisocial motorists, protesters, agricultural thieves and fly-tippers ... Previously, Kent police has said the drone scheme was intended for use over the English Channel to monitor shipping and detect immigrants crossing from France. However, the documents suggest the maritime focus was, at least in part, a public relations strategy designed to minimise civil liberty concerns. There is potential for these [maritime] uses to be projected as a 'good news' story to the public rather than more 'big brother' a minute from one of the earliest meetings, in July 2007, states." CCTV In 'The Sky: Police Plan To Use Military Style Spy Drones', *Guardian*, 23.1.2010. More recently ACPO confirmed that three forces are already using drones and a national scheme is out for tender, 'Unmanned drones may be used in police surveillance', *Guardian*, 24.9.2010.
189. Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Global Strategic Trends Programme 2007-2036 (London: Ministry of Defence, 2006). 'A source document for the development of UK defence policy' quoted in Gwynn Dyer, *Climate Wars* (Toronto: Random House 2009), p. 5.
190. 'Rural idyll or terrorist hub?', *Guardian*, 3.1.2009.
191. 'Silence and Beyond', in *Tiqqun 1*, (Paris: Tiqqun, 1999).
192. See: Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005); *Call* (London: Short Fuse Press, 2010); Colin Ward,

187. Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (London: Rebel Press, 1983).

188. "Police in the UK are planning to use unmanned spy drones, controversially deployed in Afghanistan, for the 'routine' monitoring of antisocial motorists, protesters, agricultural thieves and fly-tippers ... Previously, Kent police has said the drone scheme was intended for use over the English Channel to monitor shipping and detect immigrants crossing from France. However, the documents suggest the maritime focus was, at least in part, a public relations strategy designed to minimise civil liberty concerns. There is potential for these [maritime] uses to be projected as a 'good news' story to the public rather than more 'big brother' a minute from one of the earliest meetings, in July 2007, states." CCTV In 'The Sky: Police Plan To Use Military Style Spy Drones', *Guardian*, 23.1.2010. More recently ACPO confirmed that three forces are already using drones and a national scheme is out for tender, 'Unmanned drones may be used in police surveillance', *Guardian*, 24.9.2010.

189. Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Global Strategic Trends Programme 2007-2036 (London: Ministry of Defence, 2006). 'A source document for the development of UK defence policy' quoted in Gwynn Dyer, *Climate Wars* (Toronto: Random House 2009), p. 5.

190. 'Rural idyll or terrorist hub?', *Guardian*, 3.1.2009.

191. 'Silence and Beyond', in *Tiqqun 1*, (Paris: Tiqqun, 1999).

192. See: Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005); *Call* (London: Short Fuse Press, 2010); Colin Ward,

Anarchy in Action (London: Freedom Press, 1988); “Growing Counter Cultures” in *Down with Empire, Up with Spring!* (Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington: Rebel Press, 2006), pp. 61-79; CrimethInc, *Dropping Out: A Revolutionary Vindication of Refusal, Marginality, and Subculture* (London: Active Distribution, 2010).

193. Gustav Landauer, *Revolution and Other Writings* (Oakland: PM Press, 2010).

194. *Down with Empire, Up with Spring!* (Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington: Rebel Press, 2006), p. 77.

195. Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868-1936* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1988).

196. Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1992), p. 5.

197. Ward Churchill, *Pacifism as Pathology* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter 1998), pp. 70-74.

198. To use James Scott’s term, in a different context. James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale 1987).

199. In contrast, as French Anarchist Pierre Chardon put it: “Anarchist action—patient, hidden, tenacious, involving individuals, eating away at institutions like a worm eats away at fruit, as termites undermine majestic trees—such action does not lend itself to the theatrical effects of those who wish to draw attention to themselves.” Quoted in David Berry, *A History of the French Anarchist Movement:*

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1917-1945 (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), p. 42.

200. Incidentally the theory/practise of 4GW is highly evolved and while incorporating guerrilla and network war has a wider meaning on paper and on the ground. For this alone, the book is worth reading. Colonel Thomas X Hammes (USMC), *The Sling & The Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St.Paul: Zenith Press, 2004). Quotes, p. xiv and p. 290 respectively. The ALF do make an appearance as a possible screen for a Chinese military 4GW false flag attack on the American livestock industry. p. 259.

201. “To be a feminist, one has first to become one ... Feminists are not aware of different things than other people; they are aware of the same things differently. Feminist consciousness, it might be ventured, turns a ‘fact’ into a ‘fiction.” Sandra Lee Bartky, quoted in Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 1991), p. 184. Whilst many articulate their Anarchism thanks to the written word it’s rare, in my experience at least, that many decide to become anarchist through it. Rather the most powerful propaganda is that of the deed—lived experience, either through involvements in resistance or through meeting the love and lived ethics of anarchist communities.

202. A Polish aristocrat, quoted in Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Cosimo Inc: New York, 2008), p. 70.

203. Kenneth Rexroth, “Radical Movements on the Defensive,” *San Francisco Magazine*, July 1969. Bureau of Public Secrets—Rexroth Archive, (www.cddc.vt.edu/bps/rexroth).

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205 Blackbird Raum, Valkyrie Horsewhip Reel, *Swidden* (Santa Cruz: Black Powder Records).

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