

Indigenous Anarchy & The Need for a Rejection of the Colonizer's "Civilization"

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First, let's define some basic terms. "Indigenous" means "of the land we are actually on." "Anarchy" means "the rejection of authority." The principles of anarchism include direct action, mutual aid, and voluntary cooperation. "Anarchy; A Journal of Desire Armed" envisions a primitive anarchy that is "radically cooperative & communitarian, ecological and feminist, spontaneous and wild."

Civilization is a culture that revolves around cities. A city is a collection of people that live permanently in one place, in densities high enough that they must import their food and resources from outside the city in order to survive and ensure the continued growth of the city. So, cities depend on the exploitation of external bodies to maintain themselves.

This externalisation alienates us from both our food supply and our waste. Our food is purchased from a supermarket, grown far from home, prepared and packaged on an assembly line. We are denied any participation in the processes that feed us. Our garbage gets trucked away to be disposed of somewhere out of our immediate sight, and our human waste is flushed down pipes. We don't fully know where it goes, what it affects, what place it has in our ecosystem.

Civilization aims to dominate life through its various structures that are designed to domesticate us. These structures include industry, colonialism, statism, capitalism, agriculture, racism, schooling, religion, media, police, prisons, military, patriarchy, slavery and more.

Indigenous peoples throughout history have fought and died to resist the forceful encroachment of civilization into their lives. This struggle continues today, as the "uncivilized" are pushed closer and closer to the edge of survival by the "civilized" all over the world, and the technological imbalance between us continues to expand and create a sociological divide that renders us unable to understand each other on even a basic level.

The lifestyles of the civilized and the uncivilized have diverged to such an extent that it has become near-impossible for the civilized to see that their civilization has become an obstacle to our basic survival. Instead, they hold their civilization up as the instrument of their survival and fear living in a world without it. They are so conditioned to the order of their civilization that they can't fathom a life in its absence.

The entire concept of 'civilization' depends on the rule of the colonizer and his brutal subjugation of indigenous peoples. The perpetual march of global civilization is fed by the forced labor

and the exploitation of natural resources in the global South (and historically, all lands beyond the European continent).

In order to strip the land of its resources, the people that live on the land need to be displaced and moved to tightly-packed cities, farms or “reservations” where they will be forced to labor to turn those resources into consumer products for Western markets. This process of civilizing indigenous peoples is rapid, and our culture, language and history is often forcibly extinguished by the colonizers to ensure we don’t attempt a return to our previous “uncivilized” lives and reclaim those lands that they have taken for their industry.

The ruling classes are always looking for new avenues to accumulate wealth for themselves. Rulers create subservient underclasses by depriving uncivilized peoples of their natural habitats so they have no choice but to accept domestication and be integrated into the industrial capitalist system. The ruler can then successfully convert the people they have tamed and domesticated into profitable commodities; docile workers that can labor their whole lives to create more wealth for the ruler.

A ruler sees no use for a hunter-gatherer or any person that is not creating wealth and power for the ruler. If people didn’t need to work for rulers to acquire food and shelter, rulers would cease to have power. So the worst enemy of the ruler is a person that doesn’t depend on rulers to survive, or worse; an entire culture of self-sufficient people. An uncivilized culture that he has no control over is a ruler’s worst fear.

Under civilization, no longer will indigenous peoples be permitted to survive off of their ancestral lands, hunting and foraging. Now to survive in this new world forced on us by the colonizers, we must endure back-breaking labor in factories, warehouses, mines and industrial farms. Our children must be educated in the ways of the colonizers; to shape them into productive and submissive workers. We must depend on the state and colonizers to feed and clothe us. We must consume and waste and participate in destroying the ecosystems that sustained us for millennia. We must be “civilized” so that the ruling class may prosper at our expense.

Freedom Through Rejection

To reject civilization is to oppose this coercive arrangement where our history, our culture, and the collective knowledge that allowed us to survive and prosper on our land is taken from us by profiteering industrialists that would have us devote our entire lives to laboring for their benefit as they deny us access to our own lands and resources.

To reject civilization is to oppose urbanization; the cramming of people into small, barren, concreted areas that can be more easily controlled by our rulers to stop us from breaking with their demands that we be “civilized” and obedient.

To reject civilization is to oppose exploitative industrial agricultural methods that force the rural poor to sacrifice their labor to feed the materially wealthy cities, while rapidly despoiling the land of its fertility and sapping the groundwater for irrigation at a much faster rate than it can be replenished.

Civilization depends on a massively unequal concentration of wealth; a brutal capitalist hierarchy where the few that have been lucky enough to climb to the top control everyone beneath them. At the very bottom of civilization’s hierarchy are the indigenous peoples of the world.

Control & Domestication

The voices of indigenous peoples, whether they are accepted by their colonizers as successfully “civilized,” or rejected as “uncivilized,” have been long ignored by everyone that benefits from the march of civilization and the shiny things it gives them. Shiny things made possible by the

rampant exploitation of indigenous lands and the manipulation and control of indigenous peoples through domestication.

“Control” is the key word to understanding why civilization has come into being. The capitalist colonizers work hard to convince us that we need to be controlled by them and their civilization. That we need their civilization to protect us from harm. If we labor for them, we won’t go hungry. If we give them our lands and relocate to their “reservations” or their farms or their cities, adopt their language and religion, they will give us protection, allow us to survive with “dignity,” accept us as successfully domesticated and civilized.

The irony to this is staggering. The colonizers decimate our forests and slice open our land to empty it of its resources. They slaughter our wildlife to extinction and douse our plant life with herbicides to ensure we can’t sustain ourselves. They render our water toxic and undrinkable. They destroy our climate with their burning of carbon. They murder us if we dare stand in their way.

And then they offer us sanctuary from their tyranny. A choice between enslavement or extinction. Move to their cities, slums, plantations and reservations and be accepted as “civilized,” or die at their hands for being “subhuman uncivilized savages” that can’t be “saved.” Anything civilization can’t control must be purged to ensure the march of civilization continues without obstacle.

To embrace anarchy is to oppose the very idea of control. To reject the authority of the colonizer and his coercive civilization that takes so much from us to provide comforts to cultures that would sooner see us slaughtered than threaten their industry-fueled lifestyles. Anarchy is to trust in ourselves and our neighbors to work together through mutual aid to solve our own problems, without needing the “charity” of powerful authorities.

Anti-civ indigenous anarchists recognize that the very concept of civilization depends on our colonizers’ ability to control us. Our forced assimilation into the colonizers’ alien civilization, and the punitive laws we’re forced to obey are designed to keep us from resisting the perverse order our colonizers force on us. Their order depends on our domestication and the destruction of our way of life. Their civilization is designed to destroy everything it touches.

Embracing our “Inhospitable Wilderness”

The so-called “inhospitable wilderness” that civilization has seen fit to beat into submission is the lifeblood of our existence. For millennia, we lived in peace with this wilderness, nurturing it as much as it nurtured us. We were caretakers of the land, rather than exploiters of it. Now, as civilized people, we labor for a lifetime for the right to assert ownership over a tiny piece of the land. So that we may pave it over and erect a concrete block to live in. If we are successful. Most of us don’t even get this privilege and are forced to pay wealthy landlords for the right to live in one of the concrete blocks they own.

Uncivilized, we roamed freely, wild fruit and herbs grew in every direction; ready for the picking. Freshwater streams filled with fish dotted the landscape. The sounds of wildlife filled the air. Our labor was minimal and the rewards were instantaneous. We only knew abundance. Or, more accurately: affluence without abundance.

Hunter-gatherers are able to meet their immediate needs without needing to stockpile a surplus the way civilized people must do to survive (with agriculture, jobs, loans, savings, mortgages, pensions, insurance). The uncivilized have no want of material possessions because such frivolous things would stand in the way of their ability to live nomadically with the seasons. Having too many possessions forces us to stay in one place at all times to guard those possessions

with our lives, so that we can continue to possess them and not risk them being taken from us. It creates a paranoid security-centric lifestyle that puts owning and protecting property above our most basic needs.

Hunter-gatherers can trust that the environment will provide for us, that going for a walk to hunt or forage will give us and our loved ones with all the food and water we'll need for a few days. After taking that walk, the rest of the day is wide open for casual leisure.

Civilized people love to refer to hunter-gatherers as being stricken by "poverty." But this poverty is a material poverty; a lack of surplus, luxuries, things. In real terms, hunter-gatherers are far richer than the perpetually in-debt civilized workers who have little room for leisure and must measure their entire existence in terms of "time." The civilized, in their agriculture-based societies, must work 5 or 6 days a week simply to survive. The uncivilized have no want of such absurdities. As Marshall Sahlins noted, hunter-gatherers are the original affluent society. With no material needs, there is no need for poverty or wealth. All people may be equal; a true anarchy.

Civilized people plant rows of crops in fenced in, sterilized industrial monocultures that barely resemble the diverse mutually-sustaining interconnected food forests that fed us throughout history. Farmers repeatedly strain the same plots of land year after year to grow these single crops, soaking them with chemical fertilizers and pesticides so nothing but the monocrop can survive. The soil is eroded, barren of life, dependent on the chemical concoctions the farmer must go into debt to procure.

In civilization, water is scarce, controlled and expensive. Fruit comes wrapped in plastic and you must labor in misery for a full day to afford it. Fish is contaminated by the toxic waste that industry spews into waterways, and yet we still are charged for the privilege of eating it. Wildlife has been largely replaced by vast expanses of caged livestock. The endless excrement from these industrial meat facilities also pours into the waterways, further poisoning the ecosystem and sterilizing the land.

The wildness that once defined us has been coerced out of us by our colonizers. Like dogs bred from wild wolves to be obedient and subservient to their masters, we have come to depend on the state and capitalists for our basic survival. Sick and domesticated, we fight each other for the scraps of food thrown down to us by the rulers that deprive us of our land and our very lives.

Understanding Neo-Colonialism

Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah succinctly explained Neo-colonialism in 1965:

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside. The methods and form of this direction can take various shapes. (Most) often, neo-colonialist control is exercised through economic or monetary means. Control over government policy in the neo-colonial State may be secured by payments towards the cost of running the State, by the provision of civil servants in positions where they can dictate policy, and by monetary control over foreign exchange through the imposition of a banking system controlled by the imperial power.

This description of neo-colonialism still rings true today, with indigenous cultures all over the world experiencing what Nkrumah described in its various forms. Most recently, Chinese neo-colonialists have flowed into indigenous lands, promising to lift us up with their wealth. Their

investors, bankers, traders, lenders, developers and charities all promise to improve our lives for the better.

African countries are especially incurring massive debt to Beijing, offering up their land, oil, gas, minerals and other resources as collateral for every new billion-dollar loan they take out. When they inevitably default on these unsustainable loans, China will seize the collateral and strip the continent of its natural wealth. Malaysia recently realized the dangers of this debt trap and pulled out of Chinese development deals. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad warned the world, “there is a new version of Colonialism happening.”

The non-profit Confucius Institute that operates in indigenous lands is a vehicle for Chinese propaganda, restricting what the teachers they supply from China can say, distorting what students learn. This propaganda-via-schooling is designed to promote China’s economic interests by conditioning indigenous children to accept colonization and a life of subservience. Colonizers go to great lengths to normalize the terror they bring and convince us it is good for us.

Kwame Nkrumah:

Neo-colonialism might be also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case.

Similarly to China, South Korea and its multinational corporations have bought farming rights to millions of hectares of agricultural land in “under-developed” countries, in order to secure food resources for their citizens. The history of colonialism and banana republics have shown us that this kind of arrangement has only led to misery for indigenous peoples and the degradation of our lands.

South Korea’s RG Energy Resources Asset Management CEO Park Yong-soo:

The (South Korean) nation does not produce a single drop of crude oil and other key industrial minerals. To power economic growth and support people’s livelihoods, we cannot emphasize too much that securing natural resources in foreign countries is a must for our future survival.

The head of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Jacques Diouf, warned that the rise in these land deals could create a form of neocolonialism, with poorer regions producing food for the rich at the expense of their own hungry people. It’s safe to say that this latest form of neocolonialism has already arrived, and our corrupt governments are signing deals that make us increasingly dependent on these foreign nations and their promises to “lift us up” by building us cities and infrastructure.

It’s integral that we resist their attempts to civilize our lands so that we will be forced to labor for them; helping them steal our natural resources to grow their empires so they may expand further and exploit more indigenous populations across the world.

And our local authorities, who are so quick to sell our futures for the fleeting luxuries of concrete towers and faster trains are just as culpable in this neo-colonial push to shape us into the beggared workers of foreign empires.

The Maasai, a semi-nomadic tribe that inhabits mostly Tanzania and Kenya, have been migrating with the seasons for centuries. They have increasingly been pushed out of their land by the states and business interests that collude to write laws that prohibit them from cultivating plants and grazing their animals on large tracts of their traditional land.

Tens of thousands of Maasai were left homeless after their homes in the Ngorongoro Crater sightseeing area were set on fire, supposedly to “preserve the region’s ecosystem” and attract more tourists.

The Tanzanian government works with Tanzania Conservation Limited, which is owned by the US-based Thomson Safaris, and Ortello Business Corporation; a luxury hunting company based in the United Arab Emirates, to drive the Maasai off of their land. They’re beaten, shot, and their property is confiscated. Young herders are so frightened that they now run whenever they see a vehicle approaching, fearing for their lives.

The state has now ordered the Maasai people to leave their homeland so it can be turned into a hunting ground for affluent tourists who pay a premium to shoot big game animals and take the carcasses home with them as stuffed trophies.

The state aids in these genocidal acts to secure foreign investment to build its cities. The state will always put the civilized before the uncivilized because the entire reason a state exist is to grow its cities and plunder food and resources to feed that growth.

Civilization has always been the weapon used by the powerful to condemn us to a life of servitude. Reject civilization. Reject the state. Reject capitalism. Reject all attempts to conquer our lands and enslave our peoples.

Looking a Gift-Horse in the Mouth: The Technological Divide

We should understand that there’s a big difference between the concepts of “tools” and “technology.” Tools can be made on a small-scale with local materials, either by individuals or small groups of people on occasions when the tools are needed. Unlike technology, tools don’t construct systems of authority and obedience to allow one group to dominate another, just so long as everyone is able to realistically create or acquire tools on their own. Technology depends on the ability to mount immense operations of extraction, production, distribution and consumption. This demands coercive authority and hierarchy. Oppression.

The Fifth Estate explained the pitfalls of technology in 1981:

Technology is not a simple tool which can be used in any way we like. It is a form of social organization, a set of social relations. It has its own laws. If we are to engage in its use, we must accept its authority. The enormous size, complex interconnections and stratification of tasks which make up modern technological systems make authoritarian command necessary and independent, individual decision-making impossible.’

Technology is used by rulers to control and pacify their citizens. The societies of the colonists are laden with technological marvels. But their people are detached from the land they live on, alienated from each other, their eyes constantly fixated on mindless distractions emanating from their screens, as their lands dry up and burn to pay for their addiction to these toxic industrial products.

Technology is used to conquer, to assert dominance, to destroy entire cultures that dare to reject the empire's world order. Libya, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, entire countries decimated by the great technology of the imperialists, raining death down from the skies.

The colonizers will always have better technology than us. Whatever technologies they promise us in return for our cooperation with their agenda will pale in comparison to the technologies that drive their own societies. They'll tell us we need their technology to be civilized, to avoid falling behind the rest of the world, but there is no catching up with the empire's machine. It will grind us up and churn us out long before it ever gives up the secrets it promises.

Technology is a weapon wielded by the most powerful and there is no way for us to ever match that power, so why try? Why dedicate our lives to playing their game, by their rules? To receive their obsolete cast-offs in return? They use their technology to convince us that we are less than them, that we are "backwards" and that they need to "save" us from our "savage" existence. They say all this while their technological supremacy depends on our resources and our labor, on them being able to coerce us into sacrificing ourselves and our children and our children's children to give them the fuel for their big important machines. Machines that allow them to maintain their dominance over us, so that we remain perpetually inferior to them. If they ever gave us what they promise; the liberation they say their technology will bring, their power over us would be lost. We would no longer need them to "save" us from our wildness because we would be as civilized as them.

When we give up so much of ourselves so that they will give us their technology, they make sure we will need them to maintain it. We become dependent on their technology, and thus dependent on them to continue feeding it to us and to fix it when it breaks. Our lives begin to revolve around the technology and we forget how to live without it. And while we're distracted by the calming glow of our little screens, our ecosystems are decimated by the colonists.

Technology is a carrot on a stick and it cannot liberate us, only domesticate and enslave us. Reject it. Reject being measured by our technological prowess or how civilized we are. Reject the colonizer and his false-gifts and manipulations. Reject his civilization. Reject his control over who we are and who we will be.

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