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## Garden Issue 2

Garden

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May 12, 2022

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to organize coherent and direct action against the global techno-industrialist system. With this publication, we aim to disseminate ideas relevant to this cause in order to inspire others like us to stand in opposition to a force which we have judged to be ethically, philosophically, and practically irredeemable. It is our view that the techno-industrialist machine is a violent, destructive, and irreparable system of subjugation, and because of this we do not support any social or political efforts to rehabilitate it. It is on these grounds that we repudiate reformist and environmentalist sentiments, which we believe serve only as distractions that do nothing to counter the true goal of techno-industrialism; that is, the total enslavement and annihilation of Wild Nature. More pressing still, it is our belief that the technoin-dustrial system presents an absolute and urgent existential threat to all life on earth. Thus, we are not a partisan movement, nor do we have any interest in furthering the ideologies of any movement on the left-right political spectrum. We reject the call to engage with issues such as social justice, feminism, anti-racism. If you believe these issues are the most pressing issues facing society today, stay away. We vehemently oppose racism, nationalism, ethno-5 nationalism, any form of fascism or defense of the rule of law. It is our opinion that the pursuit of any one of these values will be meaningless on a dead planet. If you identify with any of these viewpoints, stay away. Finally, we do not advocate that anyone consider this publication an exhortation for violent or illegal action of any kind. We denounce violence as a matter of pragmatism, not a matter of principle. It would be anathema to a nascent anti-tech organization to openly incite violence, which would prompt law enforcement to hinder our ability to spread our message. We hope only to exercise our right to freedom of speech in order to present our personal views authentically and honestly. Always for Wild Nature, Garden

## I. The System is Not Invincible: Analyzing Viable Threats to the US Power Grid

The prospect of a real, violent uprising against the technological system seems, for many, impossible. The machine is too large, the methods of destroying it too extreme, too costly, too messy in their implications. The system, therefore, we tell ourselves, will simply have to collapse on its own. We will have to wait for nuclear war or a Carrington Event or for the Yellowstone supervolcano to erupt and smother the fires of industry with vengeful ash, or better yet, for the ruling class and their technophile acolytes to simply come to their senses, apologize, and turn the machines off themselves.

We wait for a miracle. We wait for poetic justice. For the gods of climate change to swing down from the rigging and declare “ENOUGH!” and thereafter we will rejoice and set ourselves to building our better, cleaner world. We busy ourselves with attempts at educating and organizing our communities, preparing for the day the miracle manifests. We plant communal gardens, cook for the homeless, learn foraging, publish zines. Frankly put, this is not enough.

### ***There are two things a revolutionary must keep in mind:***

1. The system is not invincible. In fact, it is weak, fragile, made vulnerable in its complexity to sabotage.

2. An anti-tech revolution will only be made possible by direct action against the system’s component parts.

It is highly unlikely that an anti-tech organization, or even a network of organizations, would be able to change the world in day. Such an organization or network cannot cut the internet cables that encircle the planet. It can’t launch nukes at Silicon Valley and it can’t heist airborne Ebola out of USAMRIID and hold the world hostage. But that doesn’t mean a hypothetical revolutionary organization is powerless.

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**Garden:** For those of us who long for a life closer to nature, can you say you recommend your path? Or, put another way, what are the pros and cons to the Forest Anon lifestyle? Are the sacrifices worth it?

**Forest Anon:** I strongly recommend this life to anybody who likes nature, freedom, solitude, and adventure. It's often very hard and you have to be okay with being extremely comfortable sometimes. But when you start to witness things you know nobody else does, like animals whimpering in thunderstorms, trees crashing through the canopy, beetles that take decades to emerge from their larval state, deer drinking unaware from the stream you're sitting in; you never want to go back to a regular life. The sacrifices are worth every minute. Even the rough ones. I wouldn't trade it for all of the mansions and money in the world.

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What follows is a short exploration of purely hypothetical scenarios. This is merely a thought-exercise. We do not endorse or condone any illegal activity. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate the vulnerabilities in a system that so many see as omnipresent, omnipotent, and eternal. If we can learn to change the way we see the system, then we are that much closer to changing the world. This particular thought-exercise will focus solely on the United States electrical power grid.

### **PHYSICAL THREATS**

The machine is massive.

In America alone, there are over 55,000 electrical transmission substations. However, if a mere nine critical stations were to fail, the entire nation would be plunged into a crippling darkness. In April 2013, a still-unidentified group managed to infiltrate a crucial substation belonging to Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) located in California. The attack took place in the middle of the night, when the group entered an underground vault at PG&E's Metcalf substation and proceeded to cut fiber cables. Following this, the group began firing on the substation for a total of twenty minutes, during which time they succeeded in taking out seventeen transformers before vanishing long before police arrived. While the attack did not succeed in causing a blackout, it did constitute the "most significant incident of domestic terrorism involving the grid that has ever occurred" in the United States, according to former Federal Energy Regulatory (FERC) Commissioner Jon Wellinghoff. In the wake of the attack, the FERC launched a study and reliability assessment for the entire US power grid. They discovered that physical attacks on nine key substations could disable power for the entire country, coast to coast. Nor would repairing the damage be any easy feat. Here, the technological system's global complexity shoots itself in the foot. If the crucial high voltage transformers are irreparably damaged, it is highly unlikely that they would be replaced at all. The great majority of such units are custom built. The lead time between order and BOOK AUTHOR 10 delivery for

a domestically manufactured HV transformer is between 12 and 24 months, and this is under benign, low demand conditions. The first practical application of the transformer was invented in the USA by William Stanley, but largely as a consequence of American trade policy (“It doesn’t make any difference whether a country makes potato chips or computer chips”- attributed to Michael Boskin, Chairman of President George H W Bush’s Council of Economic Advisors). Furthermore, there is the simple fact that the US does not manufacture high voltage transformers anymore. In fact, there are few that do. Worldwide production is less than 100 per year and serves the rapidly growing markets of China and India. Only Germany and South Korea produce for export to the US. Ordered today, delivery of a unit from overseas would take nearly 3 years. The factory price for an HV transformer can be in excess of \$10 million—too expensive to maintain an inventory solely as spares for emergency replacement.

The implication cannot be understated: A physical attack on nine crucial electrical substations that succeeded in destroying high-voltage transformers would plunge the United States into a darkness that would not be quickly or easily reversed. This would provide fertile ground for any hypothetical antitech organization to seize momentum and gain power.

It should also be noted, in passing, that the vast majority of electrical substations are completely unmanned, unprotected, and have zero video surveillance. The only thing standing in the way of a determined revolutionary group or individual is often a chain link fence and some barbed wire. We will not be expounding on precisely which substations are the most crucial according to the FERC. We leave it to our readers to continue their own research independent of this publication.

### ***CYBER THREATS***

The U.S. power grid is old. It is unwieldy. The reality it was created to serve no longer exists. It was simply not designed to withstand the threats that now confront it.

even recommended me books and gave me tips on how to make cheap hummingbird food.

Using the Freedom of Information Act I filed a request for my dossier, and received forty six heavily redacted pages of the two hundred and seven that are my FBI file. Their profile analysis ends with, “He liked living in nature, was happy, and enjoyed his life.”

**Garden:** You maintain an impressive internet presence and following, both on Instagram and YouTube. How do you get power, internet, etc.? Do you feel it’s important to be available online because you are showing people there’s another way to live? Or is there another reason?

**Forest Anon:** I have two handcranks I use to charge up a series of powerbanks, that way I only need to crank once a week. But during the cold months I’ll have to do it two, sometimes even three times. I like to stay connected for a few different reasons. Some are just simple ones like keeping in touch with friends from my old life. But one reason as of late is I saw the feedback I received, like people telling me my videos bring them joy and make them appreciate life, or help them through dark periods. This one person told me they are stuck inside due to medical issues and my videos make them feel free; it all makes me feel like there is a big reason for doing this. To be told I make someone feel free or desire to live means the whole world to me. Freedom and life are the two greatest gifts.

**Garden:** Do you ever get lonely?

**Forest Anon:** I do get lonely sometimes when the fire is on its last embers, and it’s usually when I think of old memories. But once you shake it off and start a new day you’re just too busy to be lonely. It’s also a big part of why I feed the mice and birds. They are great entertainment and even better company.

I’ve only ever had one visitor and that was my friend Penguin who recently passed away. He got snowed in for three days and swore he would never return. Since the whole FBI ordeal I’ve chosen to not have visitors in order to keep this place a secret. Although I sure would like one every now and then.



mouse dish if needed, and then I walk four hundred yards down to the creek to take a bath if there is no snow.

I spend a lot of time at the creek seeing what kind of critters are around and inspecting the plant life to study how the forest is recovering from the recent fire. After that I hike back up here to the shack where I either read in the hammock or sit on my bench and watch the birds at the feeders. If I have wine brewing I'll check on it. If it's spring I'll tend to the gardens. The heatwaves of the south western United States make summers the hardest, and I spend most summer days pouring water on myself and praying for the sun to set.

At sunset I'll get a fire going to make supper. Once I finish eating I'll pour myself some wine and sit on the hillside while I watch the twilight fade over the desert. That is my favorite part of the day. When darkness has fully engulfed the mountains I'll walk back to the cabin, feed the fire, read and write, and watch the mice chase each other. Then I rinse myself in the bucket one last time, unroll the sleeping bag onto my cot and go to bed.

**Garden:** You were investigated and interviewed by the FBI. Do you mind discussing what that was like, and what led to it?

**Forest Anon:** The FBI opened an investigation on me because I had anti-tech literature visible on my shelves in a YouTube video, and I had once spoken critically of Israel's lobbying for conflict in the Middle East. This was enough to warrant a seven month long investigation that began on May 29th, 2020 and ended on January 14th, 2021 after I agreed to an interview.

They never found me. My mother emailed me saying they were harassing old family members for my whereabouts, and kept giving each of them a number for me to call. I called it and scheduled an interview with them in a random shopping plaza a few cities away.

I was interviewed by three Joint Terrorism Task Force agents, and after speaking for a couple of hours they determined I wasn't any kind of threat to society. They understood I was harmless. They

Chief among these threats are cyberattacks.

The grid is vulnerable to cyberattacks that could cause catastrophic, widespread, and lengthy blackouts. The effect on hospitals, police departments, banks, gas stations, military bases, and families across America could be disastrous. Grid owners and operators, many of which are small to medium sized companies, have to overcome a number of challenges to counter this threat. A 2019 Government Accountability Office review of cybersecurity risks facing the electric grid identified difficulties in hiring a sufficient workforce, limited sharing of classified threat information between the public and private sectors, resource constraints, reliance on other critical infrastructure that could be vulnerable to cyberattack, and uncertainty about how to implement cybersecurity standards and guidance.

One of the greatest cybersecurity threats to the electric grid involves a mundane function known as "industrial control systems." IC's are used to manage electrical processes and physical functions like opening and closing circuit breakers. These systems are now being merged with technologies BOOK AUTHOR 12 that connect to or rely on the internet. This enables remote monitoring and can improve cost and energy conservation, but it also creates more access points for determined hackers.

In 2015, the insurance underwriter Lloyd's developed a scenario for an attack on part of the Eastern Interconnection, which provides power to around half of the United States. Under the scenario, a cyberattack targeting power generators would cause a blackout in 15 states and the District of Columbia, leaving 93 million people without power. Much like in the case of physical attacks, a mere fraction of the total active generators in the system would have to be targeted. Only 10% of Eastern Interconnection's generators would need to be taken offline in order for the system to fail entirely.

## **CONCLUSION**

The system is not invincible. It only wants you to think it is. The electrical grid, the lifeblood of the industrial system, is increasingly vulnerable to complete and utter destruction. That being said, it is unlikely that a disorganized, untrained individual or group would be capable of accomplishing that destruction without discipline and practice. There are electrical substations in every community in the country. There is certainly one near you. It is highly probable that any dedicated individual or group would attempt to “practice” sabotage on targets local to themselves, before moving on to more crucial substations.

Once again, we do not advocate for illegal activity. This is merely an academic approach to the problem of the power grid’s vulnerability and resilience in the light of 21st century threats.

## II. Education in a Technological Society vs Hunter Gatherer Societies

### *INTRODUCTION*

Less than 25% of children today regularly go outside their house to play, and fewer than one in ten children play in wild nature as compared to over half of all adults when they were children. In fact, children spend so little time outdoors that they are unfamiliar with some of our commonest wild creatures (Moss, 2012). Due to the decrease in autonomy within our technological society, the lives of young people have become largely sedentary, giving rise to a number of negative health effects linked to an inactive lifestyle such as Vitamin D deficiency, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and high blood pressure. Skills that would be constituted as necessary for our survival such as hunting, gathering food, building shelter, collecting firewood, and crafting tools are no longer essential when such necessities can be provided by the system for the price of labor. Because our basic needs lie in the hands of large organizations

At first I chose to hobo around the desert because my great grandfather was a prospector who had lived a life full of adventure out there. I had fallen in love with the deep solitude and mystery of the desert landscape. I tramped around living in abandoned mining cabins in those mountains for five months. But I soon realized those cabins were rich with history and it began to feel like I was intruding. I wanted to go somewhere I could build myself a little shack to create my own history in.

I didn’t want to destroy any wilderness by cutting down trees to do it, so I picked a forest that was predominantly douglas fir. The trees here shed their lower branches which make great timber for building. I camped for a week looking for the perfect spot and when I found one close to water, and with a view I thought perfect, I broke ground and began.

**Garden:** Is it true you live in a national park? How does that work? How do you avoid detection and harassment by law enforcement?

**Forest Anon:** I live in a national forest – illegally – on the side of a spur that juts out from the mountains and overlooks the forest and desert. As long as you establish your home deep enough in the forest where there are no trails or human traffic, and as long as it’s reasonably inaccessible to the novice hiker or hunter then you will most likely be safe from any human contact or authorities. But the good thing about living minimal like this is if I were ever discovered it would be easy to just pack up and start again on a new mountain.

**Garden:** Describe a typical day for you, from morning to night.

**Forest Anon:** My daily routine depends on the season, but the birds usually wake me up at 6:00am when they announce their arrival at the feeders. I put on clothes, stuff my sleeping bag in one of my backpacks to keep the mice out, and then I go outside to pour a bucket of water from one of my five gallon jugs. I rinse my face, brush my teeth, sweep the pathway, fill the bird feeders and

Beauty will set us free.  
Nature will set us free.

#### IV. An Interview With Forest Anon

**Brandon "Branwell" Manwell, known by many as "Forest Anon", currently lives completely removed from civilization in a shack built of fallen Douglas Fir limbs in the Mojave Desert National Park, where he has lived alone since 2018. He maintains a strong but sporadic internet presence, giving his viewers the opportunity to share in his adventurous, off-grid lifestyle. He has been the subject of an FBI investigation, and makes his own Douglas Fir wine. He likes living in nature, is happy, and enjoys his life. What follows is an exclusive interview Mr. Manwell agreed to give Garden for this issue. He can be found on instagram @\_\_\_b.well\_\_\_ and on YouTube as "Forest Anon".**

**Garden:** When did you know you wanted to live on your own in the wild? How did your journey begin?

**Forest Anon:** I've always loved the freedom and adventure that wilderness provides. I grew up in a busy suburb that was surrounded by grassy hills and sandstone peaks, and every day in order to escape the city I would go seek out hidden gullies with patches of woods in them where I could read or camp for a few nights. Those places took my mind away from the city and comforted me during rough times. They taught me a lot of what I know about wilderness and wildlife today. But over time as the city kept expanding and developing new housing tracts I began seeing some of my most cherished places either becoming less secluded or entirely excavated and paved into cul-de-sacs. It was an overwhelmingly claustrophobic feeling and I wanted to go somewhere a man could breathe freely and roam around being himself.

and institutions, education no longer prepares individuals for self-sufficiency, but dependency.

The subjects that occupy a student's time—math, science, writing, and technology—are skills valued not for the well-being of the individual but for the needs of the system. The student is often perplexed wondering, "What's the point of learning these things if I'll never use them in my day-to-day life?" The answer? To "to get a well-paying job." Public education only became mandatory with the rise of industrialism, and the two phenomena cannot be divorced. (Dwyer & Peters, 2019).

The education received today is incompatible with an active lifestyle. If a child is constantly engaged in exploration in nature and outdoor activities, how will they have time for what subjects our society considers crucial? In school, a child is given the bare minimum of what is required of outdoor activity, no different from the amount of time allotted to federal prisoners, while free time at home becomes occupied by homework and studying. After primary school, outdoor play is largely reduced so that even more time can be dedicated towards education, and an adolescent's sedentary life is solidified. From the classroom for classwork to the bedroom for homework to the dorm for university studies to the desk for 9-5 salary drudgery. Sitting becomes the mode of Man.

This is in contrast with hunter-gatherer societies. Play-time decreases with age, certainly, but physical and outdoor activity remains part of everyday life.

##### **CHILDREN AS TEACHERS**

Although certain aspects of a hunter-gatherer's upbringing differed across the different cultures and societies, the stages that made up one's childhood followed a similar pattern. Infancy was primarily spent in the camp and in the care of the mother wrapped around the parent receiving attentive care. During early and mid-childhood, children were given freedom to explore outside of the camp, often in peer groups playing and engaging in subsistence

tasks. Many learning experiences took place in this stage. When they reached adolescence, tasks were carried out more seriously with less time towards play. The child would be already fairly independent at this stage, relying on one's own abilities for obtaining resources. Learning came in different forms of teaching across hunter gatherer societies, but practice was almost always active, hands-on, and self-directed. Direct-teaching from adults occurred for certain instances, but was not employed in every facet of learning and still left a lot of room for a child's autonomy. In the modern education system, children are subject to unnatural conditions that diminish their autonomy.

Children have to raise their hands to speak or to get up from their seats and must eat on a schedule. Children also must be at school and in classes at a certain time to avoid tardiness. The increase of insufficient sleep among adolescents has been attributed to the early mandatory start time of institutional schools, homework, and after-school activities. Lack of sleep is tied to poor mental health, including depression, depressive symptoms, and suicidal ideation (Wheaton et al, 2017). The teacher, too, is burdened, but with keeping many children in the classroom cooperative and focused and is also under the authority of the school system. The relationship between the "student" and the "teacher" is much more balanced in hunter-gatherer society, because there is not one adult employed to act as a teacher. Much of the learning for a child is done on their own, making adult interference unnecessary. The mixed-age groups huntergatherer children interacted with also provided easier development of skills since those younger could learn from older children.

Among the Aka of the Congo, direct teaching overall was very short, subtle, and non-verbal. There did not exist a hard-line between "teacher," and "student," as is common in institutionalized education. Aka children had knowledge comparable to that of the adults, and would often hunt cooperatively in multi-age groups using nets (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005). Aka children acted as teachers

made environments. Even though these man-made environments try to replicate properties of nature through various supplementary means- sidewalk trees, manicured lawns, floral wallpaper - it is clear that something essential is missing.

The foundation for our human-made environment long ago ceased to be beauty. Beauty, like nature before it, has for epochs been replaced by functionality, efficiency and cost. Beauty becomes an obstruction to these three pillars. An aberration. A luxury. City-dwellers should just look out the window for proof of this, where gentrification's great copy-paste gray-and-white rectangles give houses all the warmth and vibrance of the reptile storage facilities behind the zoo. Another great example of this is the USSR's brutalist architecture.

What should we do about this? There are two options: either we return to the origin of pure beauty, nature - or we try to model our manmade environment after nature's principles. I can only bring a critique to the second option, which is tantamount to reform.

Civilisation will never be able to replicate nature's simplicity, and in trying to do so it will cut the branch it's staying on, that being the aforementioned leading principles of functionality, efficiency and cost. Putting beauty in front of those will greatly halt mass production and progress, which would send civilisation to its collapse.

Less radical reform wouldn't face such problems, but won't fix anything at all either. Redecorating a few facades and planting some flowers in the local park won't have a serious, long-term and global effect on man's condition. Nature is redecorated every spring, and it never even has to lose its pure essence of beauty to do that.

We call for a return to beauty. For an end to efficiency. An end to modern brutalism. This is our call:

Destroy the ugly.

Return to the beautiful.

Turn the world into the wild.

ners. In this way, beauty, and an appreciation for pattern and form, become a trait necessary for survival. We find comfort in beauty because in it, we find life itself.

But why does this matter? If the sense of beauty is hardwired in us, and we accept that beauty activates the reward mechanisms in us, producing pleasant feelings - the next logical conclusion would be acknowledging the major importance of beauty in our day-to-day life and in our society.

Inasmuch as beauty provokes happiness and comfort, so does the opposite cause man sadness, discomfort, misery. Science can only attest to this. Different experiments and studies examining people's behaviour while perceiving architecture show that not only looking at attractive and dull structures will make us feel bored and uncomfortable - it is also linked to raised hearth rates and stress levels, surely leading to more problems in the long run.

More and more studies have shown that environments which are aesthetically pleasing to us improve our physical and mental wellbeing. An interesting study which looked at the strong impact of beauty was done in a hospital with two wards, one of which was old and dull, and another which was freshly renovated and decorated with art. Recovery factors were examined through interviews and through empiric observations. Not only did the patients of the beautiful ward report a more comfortable and happy stay, they were also, to the researcher's surprise, released on an average of a couple days earlier and requested less pain medication during their hospitalisation. In another study, beauty scored even higher than cleanliness and safety in the factors of a city which affect individual happiness.

Most will agree that people nowadays are on average pretty depressed and unsatisfied. We would not be remiss in wondering if this unhappiness is linked with the scarcity of beauty in our day-to-day life.

Humans have left the natural world—the essence and blueprint for all concepts of beauty and art—behind - and now dwell in man-

themselves for other children, just as much as adults did (Boyette & Hewlett, 2017).

Among the Martu of Australia, children were observed to be very active and independent hunters without the need for direct instruction and supervision from adults. Physical stamina, rather than age, played an important factor in determining how skilled of a hunter one was. Some of the younger hunters were more skilled than the older children. (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005).

Young Hadza children of Tanzania spent the majority of time in camp without adult supervision, spending several hours a day collecting and processing food on their own, as well as moving around in mixedage groups with other children to play or visit water sources (Levy et al, 2021).

Within the Maya of Zinacantan, Children of all ages acted as both the learner and the teacher. Older siblings often taught their younger siblings how to do everyday tasks such as washing and cooking. Children as young as four years old already took on responsibility in initiating learnable situations with younger siblings. Teaching skills developed over time in children, with more verbal use for demonstrations, feedback, and explanations common during midchildhood. Children developing competence in teaching helped their younger siblings increase their participation in culturally important tasks. Because play was multi-aged, older children would show a younger child how to do a certain task so they could participate in the play activities (Maynard, 2002).

Mix-aged playgroups among the Bayaka of the CongoBrazzaville allowed for children to learn gender roles and cultural practices. A younger child may be encouraged to share a food or play item by an older child, and imitate dances (Salali et al. 2019 ). In a society absent of report cards, records, attendance, schedules, and grade levels, a child's education did not require high regulation and tracking as with modern education. Children were able to develop skills in their own time making progress through carrying out ac-

tivities independently, learning from other children and acting as the teacher for other children.

### **CHILDHOOD AUTONOMY**

A society that "frees" its citizens from the burden of daily physical tasks seems to offer a more carefree childhood and lifestyle. One is not made to "grow up too fast" in order to reach an early stage of self-reliance. This has the consequence of holding back one's autonomy. Children are limited in their ability to exercise independence. Control must be continuously exerted over the child up into late adolescence.

Certain "rebellious" tendencies arise when one feels a lack control over their environment or are not given enough opportunity to fulfill important roles alone. Among hunter-gatherer societies, autonomy of children is something that was greatly respected, as it allowed them to reach early independence and encouraged them to become effective and trusted members of the community. The child could deem their actions useful to the group while having the freedom to perform such efforts by themselves. There is great value in this.

For the Inuit of the Hudson Bay, it was believed children developed reason during middle childhood and, out of respect for their personal autonomy, adults often tried not to interfere in their learning development. The role of an adult in a child's education was geared towards encouraging and guiding rather than directly teaching or controlling. Teasing and playing games were commonly used to aid in a child's motivation (Boyette & Hewlett, 2017). They also provided freedom for them to explore their natural environments to the extent of their physical capabilities with little adult interference (Gray, 2009).

Within many of the traditional Native American tribes, non-interference was considered crucial when it came to the learning development of children. Children were believed to be competent enough in making their own decisions, and were allowed freedom to develop in their own time. Training was mostly done through

spent sedentary indoors with computers and papers, developing skills only useful towards future employment. As further advancements are made in our society, more is implemented in education that a child is made to learn.

The mental well-being, physical health and autonomy of children is at great stake today. Without self-dependence, a child's future is being put in the hands of an exploitative system concerned about its own needs.

### **III. On Beauty**

"Beauty will save the world." - Fyodor Dostoevsky

*Progress with its machines has made the world regress to a place where there is no beauty. If beauty is undermined, what will save the world?*

What is beauty? A lot of things can be beautiful and a single definition won't do justice to such an abstract concept, but what we can objectively determine is the simplicity which is the basis for it - that is wild nature.

Beauty has been an inherent need for as long as we can trace back human activity, and even though aesthetic principles have changed throughout history, humans still hold a somewhat unanimous agreement upon what makes something beautiful, with the sense of beauty seemingly being ingrained in human nature as a whole.

The patterns that keep coming up are all rooted in nature. Beauty is the natural order of the world. The naturalistic explanation is quite simple here, so only a general outline of the theory will do the job.

Beauty became part of us because it helped our ancestors survive. Symmetry in nature used to let us know everything is as it should be. Man relied on his aesthetic senses in order to correctly assess everything from edible foods to the weather and mating part-

comes to the lack of activity outside, but one is reminded of the quick loss of enjoyment one feels after engaging with an entertainment media or device after so long. It was only expected that a mobile gaming app like Pokémon GO, which was positively received for getting children out the house, would pass as a fad. Even if the technology used in such a way was continuously updated for the upkeep of a user's stimuli, the connection one develops can hardly be recognized as a connection to nature but towards the technology itself.

### **CONCLUSION**

Motivation towards learning was easier to encourage in hunter gatherer children, because much of what they needed to learn was actively exercised throughout their lifestyle. They were not made to wait while going through years of sedentary education and exams before being given the ability to make use of what they learn. Children also saw how such skills were utilized within their community which they would willingly partake in. There was less studying and more doing. Today the challenges and rewards provided are largely unsatisfactory and meaningless, making one's life understimulating

The Education in hunter gatherer societies bestowed more freedom for children to learn and grow into self-dependent individuals. School-life, Work-like, and play-time were not entirely separate in the life of a hunter gatherer child. One could learn through fulfilling demands within the community, and playing with mixed-age peers which involved practicing important skills that they would later use in life more seriously. Self-sufficiency was highly valued, and adults made sure to not hold back a child's learning and autonomy by allowing them to participate in handling adult tasks while not interfering in many of their activities. Children were never restricted from the outdoors, as nature was an essential part of their lifestyle.

The Education in our progressing technological society restricts a child's ability to become self-dependent, as a student's time is

trial and error with developmental tasks being encouraged and rewarded but not deliberately taught or forced (Newcomb, 2008).

Subsistence tasks were also left for the children to carry out within the Aka Hunter Gatherers. Assignment of commands would appear to be harsh to the majority of modern parents, but this method of teaching still provided room for autonomy as children were never coerced or forced to ensure commands were carried out. Cooperation involved willingness from the individual. This was used as a form of, "demand cooperation," which provided an opportunity for children to "consider the relationship between cooperation and autonomy in specific activity-relationship contexts" (Boyette & Hewlett 2017). A young child could also use adult tools such as a knife on his own to cut up food without the parent taking it away and cutting up the food themselves. Adult interference in such a process only went as far as gestures and moving the child's arm occasionally to give direction (Hewlett & Roulette, 2016).

Today much of a child's environment is considered off-limits with the perceived danger of the things around them, while objects are kept away so as to be out of reach. The rise of industrialism and urbanization have only increased parent's concerns about the safety of their child. When it comes to outdoor activities, many parents worry about cars, street crime, and other dangers. Modern Society has produced the "helicopter parent," as adults feel their role in parenting is the complete protection of their child from anything that might hurt them. Children are forced to heavily rely on adult supervision in order to play outside which then puts responsibility on the parent, who may decide it is easier to have their children inside occupied by electronics where they know their child is safe. This has the unfortunate consequence of keeping a child's time restricted to indoors, and limiting their autonomy. Thus does a parent become a warden and the child an inmate.

Parental supervision in hunter gatherer societies was not obsolete, especially during infancy most children were restricted to the camp, but much leeway was still provided for them to learn

skills autonomously. This required the openness of the parent to allow their children to take risks and not intrude on a lot of their activities.

Adults of the Parakanã of Brazil did not interfere with their children's lives nor offer praise or keep continuous track of their development. Children hardly went to adults asking for help. Boys as young as eight practiced with bow-and-arrows, and girls weaved play baskets for themselves by taking a big knife into the forest to cut green palm leaves (Pellegrini & Smith, 2005)

Children among the Aché of Paraguay already gained a considerable amount of knowledge on subsistence early on in childhood. Such knowledge included identifying edible fruits, stinging plants, animals, and being able to forage on one's own. By the age of eight they learned more difficult skills like tracking, and spent time in the trees collecting fruit for themselves and other adults. At the age of ten, Aché children already started to become highly independent, using hunting tools such as bows and arrows (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005).

Among the Mbendjele of the northern Republic of the Congo, learning tended to be self-motivated and implicit (Boyette & Hewlett, 2017). During middle childhood, they already could forage food for themselves since they had knowledge of what plants were edible, and how to use tools like machetes properly. An adult would not instruct a child on how to use a tool, but instead provided negative feedback if the way they used it posed great interference (Salali et al, 2019).

Young children are hardly looked at as capable participants in industrial societies. Parents will take initiative in the most simplest tasks for children. A comparative study between middle-class LA (Los Angeles) families and two non-industrial societies, the Matsigenka and the Samoans, found that lack of consistency in chore assignments and codependency across practical tasks among the LA families impeded on one's desire to willfully help out. Matsigenka and Samoan children are encouraged to fulfill assignments

2014). There was a lack of many toys among the Siriono of Bolivia. Miniature bows and arrows for boys and spindles for girls were the only items used for such activity (Holmberg, 1969).

Other forms of play among hunter gatherer societies did sometimes involve the participation of adults, such as socializing games among the Inuit. These games were a way to set up problems for the child who is being socialized to solve. This required adults to test them which was done with or without the knowledge of the child. Conflicts or ambiguities would be created to be resolved, testing the limits of things, of people, of situations, and of the children themselves (Briggs, 1991).

As with the Inuit, Mbuti children of the Eastern Congo also engaged in socialization games as a way to learn important values, but with little adult interference. This was done by imitating adult arguments they had seen and attempting to solve them more effectively. If the children found they could not improve upon the argument, then they usually resorted to ridicule until they had fallen into hysterics (Gray, 2009).

It is evident that play is an integral part of childhood and learning development, which also encourages kids to carry out useful tasks. The educational aspect of play among hunter gatherers is notably different from the play involved in drawing a child's attention to schoolwork. The integration of "educational" videos and video games have become further utilized in classroom settings as an attempt to get children interested in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics ) learning. Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality games that serve to immerse one's senses further into virtual platforms are already being encouraged and put to use in some elementary schools (Sobel & Jhee, 2020; "Virtual Reality," 2019). Any skills gained from the virtual media implemented in a child's learning is only towards skills useful to the functioning of our system.

Technology as an attempt to get children enthusiastic about being outdoors seems like a clear solution to some people when it



What essentially sets play among non-industrial societies apart from industrial societies is the performance of real activities and the use of real objects incorporated into play as opposed to imitation items. A 2017 study revealed that a child's preference for pretend play is mostly due to fear of one's incapability to carry out real tasks and lack of permission to. Out of a sample of a hundred children aged three to six, 65% preferred real activities instead of their pretend equivalents. These included activities such as baking cookies, cutting vegetables, feeding babies, and fishing (Lancy, 2020).

Though imitation toys were not entirely absent from a child's play time among Hunter Gatherers, much of the play items could be put to real use, even if not as durable as actual tools. Modern parents spend hundreds on toys each year as their child's boredom from playing with last year's gifts needs to be replenished by the next new thing. Hunter Gatherer children were without the reliance on Santa Claus, Toys R Us, and a lot of commercialized toy products. Instead, hunter gatherer children had put their craft-skills into practice since much of their toys were hand made with only natural material from their environment.

A rope made of twisted fiber could have many uses for a hunter-gather child as a swimming aid, as a lasso for roping practice, a swing at a playground, as a noose to play trapping, or as net material for play hunting. Toy utensils were sometimes carved from small pieces of gourd, and a tiny acorn cup could serve as a drinking cup for a doll. Leaves and grasses were commonly used for play activities such as pretend food, mats for furnishings, as covers for huts, or stuffing dolls (Cunnar & Ember, 2015).

Gikuyu boys from Kenya were found to make axes, spears, slings, and bows and arrows, like their fathers, whereas girls made pottery for use in real and imagined cooking, clay dolls, and baskets of plaited grass (Pellegrini & Smith, 2005).

One anthropologist among the Nayaka never witnessed children play with toys that they had not made themselves (Naveh,

on their own, which gives them freedom for self-reliance as they learn through trial and error towards effectively executing tasks (Ochs & Izquierdo, 2009). As young as six they are already self-sufficient in many subsistence activities, whereas the LA child is cushioned with a lack of real obligations.

Although task assignments can sometimes be unfavorable to children within hunter gatherer societies, they usually would rather carry out necessary demands themselves.

Children among the Runa, forager/farmers in the Ecuadorian Amazon, were observed in how they felt engaging in subsistence activities. Children unanimously emphasized how accomplishing a task felt good. Another boy described how he felt happy to have successfully hunted a tapir because that meant his mother would no longer be hungry; a thirteen year old boy was satisfied with building his first house so that his younger brothers had a place to sleep; a young girl, like Kiwa, declared that she was proud when her manioc beer was served to guests and family members. All these children emphasized the re-relational aspects of their practical self-sufficiency (Mezzenzana, 2020).

For the Hadza, children spent a considerable amount of time and energy at a very young age doing subsistence tasks. Young children also spent more time outside the camp (O'Connell & Hawkes, 1995). They often foraged and collected food for themselves, some as young as three already digging up baobab pods during foraging trips (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005). Despite the high energy cost of participating in foraging expeditions, children were still able to collect enough calories to support their efforts (Hawkes, & O'Connell, 1995). And despite the more laborious activity, children still incorporated a lot of play into their tasks. Work-play was observed to be common among the Hadza children, decreasing as they got older (Levy et al, 2019).

Daily life during childhood for the Baka of Southeast Cameroon was very active and largely devoted to food procurement activities.

Children preferred to act autonomously and garner their own food supply without the reliance on adults (Hagino & Izumi, 2014).

This is in contrast to today, where children fully rely on adults to provide all their food procurement, which is more than likely whatever ultra-processed ready-to-eat junk foods that are becoming increasingly part of the modern child's diet (Wang et al., 2021).

### ***LEARNING THROUGH PLAY***

It is not only education that has become separated from an active lifestyle, but play has also been reduced to sedentary indoor activities. Screen-time surpasses outdoor activity among adolescents, and children from as young as toddler age exceed the recommended amount of screen usage (Barnett et al., 2018; Chaput, 2018). Even seemingly innocent or productive activities such as listening to music, art, chores, and reading are typically spent indoors. A young child's interactions within their play-environment are primarily artificial. Instead of nature as a play device, children are subject to recreational areas, plastic toys, and virtual technologies for entertainment. Exploration in nature has been replaced with exploration online.

The value of play among hunter-gatherers extends far beyond just mere distraction of a child's attention, but includes many activities put towards useful work which allows for an earlier gain of independence.

Spear hunting among the Chabu hunter-gatherers of Ethiopia was a complex skill that involved an adult present on the hunts to act as a teacher. Before such elaborate teaching took place, the child already started learning to spear hunt at around the age of six through seven through play hunting with their peers. This method of learning was encouraged from different figures in the child's life, while also allowing the child to observe the hunts. Role-playing had a positive effect on the transition into the actual learning phase, because in most cases the child was self-motivated to begin learning. The child also had the option to choose who they would like to ac-

company them on the hunts (Dira & Hewlett, 2016). By the age of fifteen they were regular hunters.

Similarly, children in the Agta of the Philippines were also encouraged to engage in play which incorporated skills such as building houses, fishing, foraging, and hunting. They had very little responsibilities and lived a mostly carefree childhood. Around the age of ten they were allowed to join hunting parties if they had an interest in doing so. Foraging usually took place when children accompanied other parties of children and women where they were able to observe and help out in forage procurement. Young children would regularly catch game through shooting small birds with catapults, and fish in rivers as a source of entertainment. Through these activities they were able to progress their abilities while being able to obtain their own resources (Hagen, Minter, & Van Der Ploeg, 2017).

As young as three, Batek children of Malaysia were able to engage in play with other children without direct supervision from adults. Adults did not normally participate in children's play activities, and they were encouraged to go to the forest as much as possible. A child's activities usually included, "chopping trees with bush knives, building fires, pretending to cook or actually cooking small amounts of rice or other food, digging as if digging for tubers, climbing trees, gathering sticks as if they were rattan, 'moving camp,' building miniature shelters, and other activities imitative of the skills they saw performed by adults inside and outside camp" (Endicott & Endicott, 2014)

Herder children among the Maasai communities in Southern Kenya regularly participated in herding games which aided in the development of livestock-related skills. These activities put the children in continuous contact with cattle which allowed them to practice, communicate, and transmit these skills to their peers. There was little adult interference within their play, and the children were able to freely enrich the human and livestock relations of the overall Maasai society (Aumeeruddy-Thomas & Dounias, 2017).