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I do not accept the concept of an essential "human nature" — of any essential feature that unifies all humans and separates "us" from other creatures. However, I do think that for humans, the full enjoyment of life depends upon creative activity and experimentation by which we transform our environment. We lack speed innate weapons like claws, fangs and horns, etc., but we have a brain capable of imagining amazing things. Clearly the greatest enjoyment in life for the human individual can be found in the least restricted, most open experimentation with one's creative urges.

Unfortunately, much of the anti-technology, anti-civilization tendency has gotten itself entangled in an environmentalist/radical ecologist ideology that condemns the free expression of our creative and experimental urges. In light of the disastrous effects of the technological system, this is an understandable reaction, but that's all it is — a reaction — not an intelligent response. This wedding of anti-civilization theory to radical environmentalist ideology has nearly drowned the possibility of making this theory intelligently in a quagmire of moralism and self-sacrifice. Our creative

and experimental urges are to be suppressed and subjected to "Nature" — that metaphysical and very civilized conception we have of that which exists outside of civilization. According to this morality, "natural" is good and "artificial" is evil, and the artificiality of this dichotomy is completely missed. But is our urge to create and experiment to blame for this mess we call civilization? Or is it a victim of constraints that have chained us to a system of authority that suppresses all creativity that it cannot channel into social reproduction?

When self-created interactions between individuals are displaced by social relationships based upon roles which designate functions within a society, it seems inevitable that certain roles would take on increasing responsibility for, and so greater control over, social reproduction. In other words, authority develops. It may well be that authority develops precisely because unconstrained expressions of the urge to create and experiment threaten social stability. In any case, creative energy, though continuing to reside in the individual, no longer belongs to the individual, but rather belongs to society — which, in practise, means the authorities who control that society, who direct this energy, this urge, toward social reproduction.

Technology is a huge system, an entire social landscape, which constrains the creative urge of individuals keeping it in rein. The urge to experiment moves individuals to create tools and methods that allow them to get what they want with the greatest ease or pleasure, but such tools and methods do not make a technological system, because they are in the service of the individual. Within a social context, tools and methods will develop that have nothing to do with fulfilling the wants of individuals as such, but rather serve to reproduce the social context. In order to serve this purpose, they coalesce into a system of interactive and mutually dependent tools and methods. It is this system and its products that can rightly be called technology. Although this system does not exist in order to fulfill the needs of individuals, it does create a dependence within

its technology into ruins, must grasp this urge, this energy, as our own, possibly our most essential weapon in the war against society. Unconstrained creative activity and experimentation in the hands of individuals, used for their own pleasure, does not need to be feared. Such activity did not create the present civilization and will not create any future civilizations. And the destruction of civilization, this system of social control that is smothering the planet, and the creation of our lives and interactions as so completely our own that they cannot be socialized, systematized or otherwise alienated from us will require explorations and experimentations with the possible that go far beyond anything we have yet tried.

individuals upon it for survival, because this is necessary to keep individuals in thrall to social reproduction. And this survival becomes separated from and ultimately opposed to intense and enjoyable living. (Agriculture doubled the time which had to be dedicated to production of basic needs and put these activities on a strict seasonal time schedule, making them unquestionably work. The industrial revolution drastically increased work time and intensified the rigidity of its schedule.) The tedium produced by this system, which begins by constraining creative energy, finally suppresses it, transforming it into mere productivity. Technology and civilization do not have their origin in the urge to create and experiment, but rather in the need of the authorities to constrain this urge in order to maintain social reproduction and control.

But the civilized social order with its technological material basis cannot completely suppress this experimental, creative urge both because it needs domesticated, channeled creativity in order to reproduce and expand itself, and because some individuals simply do not let their creative urges be completely suppressed. As civilization has expanded into a globally dominant totality, it has become necessary to find a place for these individuals. Art was originally a technology — an integrated system of tools and methods used in the process of social reproduction. It was mostly used in ritual and political propaganda. In the early modern era (the 16th and 17 th centuries), the function of art began to change. Though artists continue, even now, to create works to order for churches and political institutions, as well as for those with the wealth to buy their skill and creativity, art is now generally viewed as area for individual creative expression. Artists imagine that their creative urge has been liberated from its subjection to social reproduction. But this " liberated activity" is only permitted within to exist in a separated, specialized realm, a realm apart from daily life. In their daily lives, artists continue using money, paying rent, usually holding down "straight jobs" — living as assimilated members of society. And what of this separated realm, art? Artists (including poets and

musicians) generally view themselves as a creative elite, exhibiting a sense of self-importance that can make them unbearable. This is not just a personality quirk. It goes with the social role of "artist", for although its function has changed, art remains an activity of social reproduction. It maintains creative activity as a realm of specialists — other people may dabble in it as a hobby, but only the "truly creative" few can actually be artists. Thus art produces a tendency in most people to suppress their own creativity as inadequate or to channel it into the production of irrelevant artifacts for passive consumption by the "talentless".

The alienation of individuals from their creative urges that is necessary for the rise and maintenance of civilization has another manifestation. The creative energy that is suppressed comes to be attributed to a "higher realm". Within the context of society as we know it, this energy only seems to express it self very occasionally and in very directed ways. The myriads of tiny, daily expressions of creativity by which we all take back as many moments of our lives as we can are not recognized as creative because they are not separated from life. So it is very easy to attribute creative energy to inspiration, to supposed revelation from a spiritual realm. It is this realm, under the title "god" that is credited as creator — the source of all creation. Our creative, experimental urges are not our own, but allegedly a gift from god to be used in accordance with his/her/its will. Experimentation outside the divinely determined parameters is hubris, arrogance, sin or diabolical crime. Religion (including "spirituality," religion's hipper, mellower face) developed as a means for enforcing the constraints necessary for social reproduction. Within any given social context, what "god" allows will be what is deemed necessary for or helpful to the reproduction of that social context. So, for example, many christians see nuclear weapons as a gift from god, but consider creative methods of theft or unusual sexual practices to be sinful and arrogant. Many radical environmentalists are also religious, embracing neo-pagan or animistic belief systems. In their belief systems, "god" becomes "nature". Hubris consists of creating "against nature". For the followers of these nature religions, much is forbidden that is not forbidden in mainstream religions and vice versa, but both agree that creative energy does not belong to the individual to use as she chooses, but is to be exercised only in service to the deity.

In order to claim that it is possible to use the creative urge "against nature", the radical environmentalist must turn "nature" into a metaphysical entity that we can defy. But "nature" is just a convenient shorthand for the sum of the beings, actions and interactions that make up this world. Therefore, civilization and its technology are not "unnatural". The problem with civilization and the technological system is that they exist only by suppressing the individual urge to create and experiment, forcing it into the narrow conduit of social reproduction. The civilized social system has always been a detriment to the full development of individuals as creators of their own lives and interactions — it has in fact always suppressed this development through a combination of vicious attacks and subtle but thorough manipulation. But now it has reached the point where civilization threatens our health and our very existence and is robbing us quickly of an amazing wealth of diverse interactions by turning the world into a homogenous machine — a machine that may soon have no need for actual creativity at all, but may be able to let it be subsumed completely into productivity and commodity consumption.

The urge to create, explore and experiment most certainly exists in all humans and in many other mammals. It may exist in every living being on some level. Yet many human societies never developed into civilizations with complex technological systems. No other mammal has ever developed such a monstrosity. This shows that the creative urge can be exercised in ways that do not produce such systems. In fact, those of us who want to be able to fully create our lives and interactions as our own, who do not want to spend our lives as cogs in a social machine, and who, therefore, want to destroy this machine in its totality, turning civilization and