Anonymous
Radical Anthropology

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have lived, do live, and can live one day. It does not have to be a professional endeavor. It can be done by anyone, anywhere. Looking at our past, speaking to others from different cultures, practicing an alternative way of living — its all anthropology. Because we become the students of humans, that means that anthropology is inherently trying to teach us something about the way we are living. Its up to us to listen.

The Destruction of Anthropology

Anthropology's roots are bloody, smeared with colonialism, racism, war, and nationalism. It is a product of civilization. All specializations are. We must recognize and critique this, even as we practice anthropology. Radical anthropology flips this type of anthropology on its head. It is a new anthropology which seeks not only to understand alternative worlds, but to help create one.

Specialization is a sign and symptom of civilization. Its where we cease to be organic, fully participating humans. Its also where the balance of power becomes unequal. A specialization such as anthropology usually denotes a market economy that requires people to take up certain disciplines in order to earn a living. Thus we have capitalism and the sale of one's soul on the invisible market scale.

We must realize that any attempts to establish an organic human society will most likely mean that anthropology as a field becomes inexistent. Instead, what is normally seen as anthropology — understanding of the past, interaction with other cultures — will be melded in with daily life and be for everyone to pursue.

We are for the destruction of anthropology because that signifies the creation of a society without specialists: a free, autonomous, organic society of human beings living in balance with the Earth and all her creatures.

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the pillars of civilization stand and destroy our world. We must be creative in our actions. As to what to do, that's up to you.

We recognize that the goal of anthropology is a liberatory one, and so we will fight for anarchy, not anarchism. The information that anthropology has gathered on societies around the world is priceless. From this, we can see ways in which society can and cannot be lived. We see that the relationships embodied in primitive groups were the most organic and beneficial relationships, and thus we should include this in any vision for an alternative society. We are not seeking to go back, but to use the history of our species to push forward, and soon, in order for the humans and nature to survive.

Ivory Tower

However, we are not the elite of social understanding. We do not, nor do we want to, possess the blueprints for a new society. New ways of living must be created organically and autonomously. We can only tell ourselves how to live, and show people how others lived.

Because we are not the elite, we are the antithesis to the ivory tower, an oppressive institution which seeks to dominate knowledge. The ivory tower is a symbol and reinforcer of the status quo. It is one means of control by which civilization facilitates our split in consciousness between organic ("primitive" lifeways) and inorganic (destructive and civilized lifeways). It is just one of the institutions we seek to destroy, whether undermining it from the inside or creating alternatives on the outside.

The Nature of Anthropology

Anthropology is the study of humanity. We are students of humans. Anthropology should not exist to study culture for culture's sake, but to study humans to see the ways in which we

Intervention

Do we have the right to interfere? Aren't we just pushing western beliefs and values on non-western cultures, just as people before us have? These are important questions to wrestle with. We have no answer, however, we there are some things to think about.

We are all human beings, connected all to the same planet, and have always influenced each other throughout time. Shouldn't we keep this in mind while we are "destroying" the totality of civilization?

We could argue that there are two cultures, each with its own variation: the takers (civilization) and the leavers (gatherer-hunters, some horticulturalists). Since we are part of the taker culture, we do have the "right" to interfere and seek radical and permanent change. This is perhaps the best way to look at it.

Do we push anarchy on other societies? Educate them on anarchism? Fuel armed struggle? Our goal isn't anarchism, its anarchy, and this must be done through an organic process. Imposing anarchy is not anarchy — it is authoritarian and domineering.

Indigenous Solidarity

We must work with and struggle with indigenous communities that are being destroyed by civilization's battles. These battles often have the objective of forcing corporations off of sacred land, rejecting the arbitrarily imposed laws and ordinances of the State, and ending industrial developments which threaten the well-being of humans, animals, and the Earth.

Praxis

Action must be taken. Not only action on behalf of the societies we learn from, but in our own society. We must not let

Where is Radical Anthropology?

Radical Anthropology was an individual attempt to create a new and important way of thinking within current anthropology and the radical milieu. It failed. While the attempt failed, it is important to recognize that there *is* a radical anthropology — one that is radical in theory and praxis. I have put together the following, as an introduction to radical/anarchist anthropology. It is by no means a static or solid view, and should be seen as personal ideas that need to be scrutinized closely. If you are skeptical of any of the statements I made, please browse this site, especially the writings section, for more information on this mode of though. Please feel free to email me [at wildresistance@riseup.net] to discuss these ideas at any time.

Notes on Radical Anthropology

Anarchy

Without rule; Against domination; the ultimate liberatory experience.

Anthropology

The study of human beings throughout time and space. The notion that we are looking at other forms of human societies, and we are seeing other people as equals, part of one species, and all sharing the Earth.

Radical and Anarchist Anthropology

What is the difference between anarchist and radical anthropology? For the most part, the two terms can be used synonymously. However, anarchist anthropology refers more to a specific mode of thinking within anthropology; radical anthropology refers more to that mode in action — radical praxis.

Theoretical Frameworks

Anarchist anthropology posits a new and radical theoretical and practical framework, however, this does not mean it is a rigid ideology that certain anthropologists can fit into. Looking at ecology, subsistence, history, means and modes of production, gender, etc. are still important to anarchist anthropology, however it also takes this one step further and looks at power, authority, and domination. It is not a rigid framework in which data must fit, but rather a mode of investigation that should create more questions than answers.

Power and Authority

Power exists, and it will always exist, whether it be the power of the despot or self-empowerment. It's important to look at the distribution and usurpation of power in society. The consolidation of power is important to understand overt and covert domination. Those in power diminish the freedom and autonomy of all other individuals. They will also keep their power by any means necessary, including violence.

The State

The State is a relatively recent conception. It is consolidated power that exists in many forms. Its goal is to control its population in order to replicate itself, and thus recreate power. It is a monopoly of violence, force, and control, over a certain area. Since its conception, inequality, slavery, war, poverty, capitalism, and environmental destruction have ensued. The State, however, did not arise within a vacuum.

Civilization

"Civilization begins with conquest abroad and repression at home" (Stanley Diamond). Civilization marks the period in

which a split in human consciousness occurred, around 10,000 years ago; physically marked by the creation of agriculture. More specifically, civilization comes about through domestication — the destruction, manipulation, and control of a species' inherent nature. It is the first type of totalitarian relationship with Earth, and the catalyst for all of the current ills we see today (including those of the State discussed above). We see that civilization is one form of social organization, which destroys all other alternative possibilities. It is a world-wide phenomenon, but not a cultural universal.

As opposed to civilization, we recognize a period before that collectively called the "primitive" period — meaning the period in which the primary human life ways were practiced. This period is characterized mostly by gatherer-hunters who lived in acephalous societies. They were egalitarian, peaceful, healthy societies with little to no division of labor, and a balance with the natural environment which gave back as much as it took.

Relativism

Cultural relativism is important only up to a degree. It is important to respect human diversity in customs, traditions, and other practices, in that they are understood in the culture's context. However, cultural relativism is often taken to its extreme: ethical relativism. Ethical relativism should not exist. The domination of humans, animals, and the Earth cannot be looked at relatively. Anything that diminishes human, animal, and environmental freedom — it's inherent nature — is a destructive force in the world that must be destroyed itself. Civilization, the State, patriarchy, domestication, technology — these are such destructive forces.