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My Battle Cry

Bobby Whittenberg-James

2011

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I write today in unprecedented times. As we speak, the fetters that have bound us for the last 10,000–12,000 years are being rattled and shaken. The existing order is crumbling. For so long we have been robbed of our dignity, robbed of our humanity, robbed of our knowledge of how to even be human. The dam is cracking, the prison walls are beginning to shake. We, as humans, have become a domesticated species, but even the most docile domesticated dog will strike back when beaten and cornered long enough.

All over, we see evidence of people and the earth revolting. Between the increase of “natural disasters” (many if not most of which are a result of our Earth Mother seeking to restore balance, countering destructive activities) and political uprisings the evidence is mounting that the existing order, the leviathan, civilization is in its death throes. There is a pervasive darkness that has overcome us all in these days. Many of us are reacting differently, the reactions of a domesticated species striking out in the best ways we see fit. Demonstrations, sabotage, hacking, occupations, these are all results of a people who have had enough, a people seeking nothing more than to be able to live as humans.

When we look around, we see only the false existence we have created for ourselves. “Nature” or “the environment,” names we have given to our home to make it seem like something separate from ourselves has been relegated to city parks, state parks, national parks, and nature preserves. We have created a synthetic environment of concrete, plastic, steel, and social networking. Where there were once forests, deserts, jungles, and prairies, there are now malls, factories, stadiums, cell phone towers, car dealerships, and factory farms.

In our attempt to control everything we come into contact with, to codify, homogenize, and linearize, through domesticating everything around us, we have domesticated ourselves. We have constructed the prison in which we are now prisoners. We have built the plantation upon which we are slaves. We have designed and completed the concentration camps in which we engage in our own genocide.

The Left tells us that if only the prisoners ran the prison, if only the slaves ran the plantation, if only those to be exterminated ran the concentration camp, that this would solve all of our problems. But, they say, we are never to question the existence of or seek to dismantle the prison, the plantation, or the concentration camp themselves, because without them we would surely die. And so we stay in our prisons, on our plantations, in our concentration camps. Since the dawn of civilization, the civilized have been told that life outside the prison, the plantation, the concentration camp is harsh, brutal, dangerous, and scary, that only within the walls can we find security. Where though, is the security in a way of life that is based upon taking more, far more than it ever gives back? Where is the safety in a suicide mission?

We are born into a safe, sterile environment, placed in little rows in a nursery, taken home to a manufactured domicile, surrounded by plastic, processed wood, concrete, and more plastic. Our food is grown in rows, sprayed with chemicals, genetically modified and pumped full of preservatives and other chemicals, pickled, pack-

my battle cry. If it is yours as well, then let us go about creating the world we want to live in.

Until the Earth is Wild Again,
Bobby Whittenberg-James

aged, preserved, and stocked in little rows on shelves in grocery stores. We are sent to school to have our imaginations strangled out of us, robbed of our childhoods, as we spend 8 hours a day for twelve years regurgitating facts, our lives and our experiences homogenized, manufactured, and produced for us. “Raise your hand to talk.” “Do what you’re told.” “Sit down.” “Shut up.” We learn to only ask safe, non-challenging questions, we learn that the things we love, our gifts, our talents, are best put to use for an employer, or for employing others. When we are done with school, it’s off to the workforce, where we are to sit down, shut up and do what we’re told. Some of us go off into the military where we are told to line up in little rows, shut up and kill, occupy, brutalize whomever we are told. Then after that’s all over, we are placed in a box, and one more time, placed in little rows with just a stone to tell the world that another little drone was once here. Is this the world we want to live in? Are these the lives we want to live? Is this really all we are?

Regardless of one’s political stripe, gender, class, race, or nationality, we all have quite a few things in common. Included among these things are the fact that we all need nutritious food to eat, clean water to drink, and uncontaminated air to breathe. We all need to live in healthy communities where we are able to live in a way that benefits us and those around us, human and non-human alike. We can not achieve this through one or the other political ideology, organization, party, program, or platform.

Many of us, particular those of us in the United States have been told that there are easy answers for everything, that we don’t have to put in the blood, sweat, and effort, to achieve what we want or need, but that some external entity will provide that for us. We are taught that if we just pressure our government enough, if we just “vote with our dollars” and buy the right products, if our protests are peaceful enough, if we have enough people at our marches, if we just allow the system to work, if we just do what we’re told and follow the rules, then everything will turn out right. We are

told that if we want to change things, we are to build organizations, unions, parties, movements, etc. However, such institutions are merely a shifting of the details of the current order and do nothing to strike at the root of the challenges that we face.

However, a system based on a path of infinite growth on a finite planet, of ever increasing complexity necessarily ends in a collapse of that system. This, we are told, is something we must ignore, that the cornucopia is truly endless. There are endless “resources” to be extracted, manufactured, and produced. Despite this utopian fantasy, every day we are finding out that the ecological destruction is “worse than anyone thought.” We are told that the problems brought about by politics can be solved with more politics, that the problems brought about by economics can be solved with more economics, that the problems brought about by domestication can be solved with more domestication, that the problems brought about by technology can be solved by more technology. We are force fed the disempowering myth that human experience is linear beginning with a primitive existence, and going on to something that looks like Star Trek or the Jetsons, and that we have no control over what is commonly referred to as progress, that we are just along for the ride, and the best we can do is to continue this destruction in the safest way possible.

Search as we may within these constructs, however, there is no savior. We have traded our freedom, our humanity, and our connection to the world around us, we have traded our spirits, our essence for video games, for Starbucks, for McDonald’s, for gasoline, for cell phones, and for Facebook. There is no one but us that can save us from this. Capitalism will not save us. Fascism will not save us. Socialism will not save us. Social democracy will not save us. Another revolution will not save us. Only we can save us. If we are to change the existing paradigm, to bring about new ways of being, new ways of living, there is no shortcut we can take, no ideology that we can map out, no blueprint we can follow, no party we can join, no protest we can orchestrate. We must go about the

creation of our own communities, the birthing of our own, new, wild and wonderful ways of living.

I don’t have all the answers. I may have some of the answers. I may just have a few good suggestions or questions, but I know this:

I am not a “consumer” or a “citizen” or a “man.” I do not want to press 0 to speak to a customer service representative. I do not want to open a can, a box, a wrapper, or go through a drive through to eat. I do not want to find my “community” behind a screen. I do not want to stay off the grass. I do not want to fill out and return this form. I do not want my ethnicity to be used as a weapon. I do not want my water to come from a bottle or a faucet. I do not want my understanding of the world to come from what someone inside a box or wearing a lab coat tells me. I do not want to do what I’m told. I do not want to live in a way that kills everything around me. I do not want to wipe my ass with the rainforest. I do not want to live among that which is produced and consumed. I want to hug you. I want you and I to be able to love one another without fear, reservation, or pretense. I want to eat food directly from the earth and act directly from my heart. I want to live and laugh and cry and love in a community the way our ancestors did for millions of years. I want you to be there with me. I want us to stop destroying everything. I need you. You need me. We don’t need any of the rest of this shit that we manufacture, and produce, and throw away. Beneath the concrete, and alcohol, and uppers, and downers, and anti-depressants, beneath the fashion trends, and social networks, and cell phones, and TV shows, and gender roles, and street lights, and gas stations, deep within this cage we call civilization you are still wild. I am still wild. Inside of me beats the feral heart of the animal that I am. I am flesh and bone, blood and spirit, earth and light. I long to be a part of the earth on which I live, to drink from clean rivers, and breathe clean air. I don’t want to be a cog in a machine. I want to dismantle the machine. I am a human being and I want to live as one. As such, civilization is my enemy and this is