

Interviews with Kevin Tucker

Kevin Tucker

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**Wild Times Ahead: Waiting for the End
of Civilization with Anarcho-Primitivist
Kevin Tucker**

By Bill O'Driscoll (2006)

On a Sunday afternoon in Frick Park, Kevin Tucker abandons the trail. He lopes across a trickle of a creek and climbs a scantily wooded hillside, searching for a spot he knows. He crouches beside a rotting log, tipping it to look for the kind of food he hopes to survive on someday.

The lion's mane mushroom can grow bigger than a human head, but what's memorable is its texture: spongy and moist, its fibers oozing with rich golden jelly. Tucker touches it. "It feels weird," he muses. "It feels like some kind of Hostess thing."

Tucker edits *Species Traitor: An Insurrectionary Anarcho-Primitivist Journal*, whose goal is to predict, and promote, the imminent collapse of civilization. Anarcho-primitivism holds that we should respond to that collapse by becoming nomadic hunter-gatherers ... the way of life that defined human history until the (relatively recent) advent of agriculture.

Species Traitor advocates that we simultaneously resist civilization and "rewild" ourselves: It reflects both Tucker's prediction that civilization will soon collapse ... preferably by choice of the civilized, but otherwise of its own rotten weight ... and his zeal for shedding the domesticity of civilized life to reclaim our feral natures. The zine's mix of societal critique, environmental doomsaying and quasi-religious fervor is alternately terrifying, mad and enthralling. Perhaps not surprisingly, anarcho-primitivism is minimally popular even among anarchists. But its followers are scattered widely, and the soft-spoken Tucker, who's 26 and lives near Greensburg, is himself an increasingly prominent writer and speaker.

One way to rewild is to forage for wild foods, and Tucker calls himself a "mushroom addict." He haunts the woods, hunting edible specimens, which he extols for their nutritional, medicinal and environmental benefits: "The strength of a forest can be judged by the kind of mushrooms that grow there."

Crouching by the lion's mane, Tucker smiles. His waist-length dark-brown dreadlocks obscure the photo on the front of his black T-shirt, of a tribal South American boy drawing the string of a bow. "We have seen the world we want to live in," it reads, "and we will fight for it." Tucker designed and screen-printed the shirt, whose back depicts power lines dense against the sky. "The war of wildness awaits us ... After the lights go out, no war but primal war."

Nearby in the trampled vegetation sit a chunk of asphalt, a brown beer bottle, a chainsawed hunk of log. Barks sound from the nearby dog run. Tucker plucks the lion's mane from the log to examine it, then replaces it. It will grow back, he says. "The spores are there. That's what matters."

Walking through Frick Park with a primitivist is a weird, if agreeable, exercise in double-consciousness. We traverse the dirt path very slowly. As hikers, joggers and dog-walkers hustle past, we stop every few yards, scanning the foliage for mushrooms and other edible plants. They're everywhere. Tucker finds mustard garlic, which tastes like it sounds, and wood sorrel, which resembles clover but with a tiny yellow flower, and a lemony flavor.

Like everyone else on this Sunday in May, we are enjoying the warm, sunny weather.

Unlike everyone else, we are preparing for the end of civilization.

Tucker's partner, a young woman named Yank, is fair-skinned, with an oval face. Like Tucker's, Yank's nose is adorned with an omega-shaped septum piercing. She wears camo sweatpants and an elastic headband, and carries a digital camera. Her arm tattoos ... of a human skeleton and tribally stylized fish and lizards ... complement Tucker's inkings, which include the motto "We are the weeds in the sidewalk" set against a backdrop of eerie skyscrapers.

Tucker, in jeans and sneaks, carries his field guides in two shoulder bags he made, one from an old bearskin a friend gave him, the other a rigid container of tulip bark, with a strap of knotted milkweed.

“Rewilding is part of the resistance,” he says. “It’s the active part you can get involved with.” Cars hum past on Forbes, visible 50 yards away through the trees. “It’s about understanding that wildness exists inside everything.”

Civilization, primitivists argue, germinates all our ills: government, which is necessarily repressive; private property, and thus crime; war; social, economic and sexual inequality; environmental degradation; and endless, numbing work routines. Progress is a myth, they contend: We’ve lost more than we’ve gained. Modern technology promises fulfillment but delivers isolation, cocooning us from each other, from nature, from the consequences of our destructive, unsustainable ways.

Tucker and Yank don’t know any other primitivists in the Pittsburgh area. Those they do know ... including a young primitivist couple from Australia who visited them in June ... they mostly contact via Internet. But they belong to a loose national, even international network whose heart is in the Pacific Northwest. Writer John Zerzan, widely regarded as the godfather of primitivism and a good friend of Tucker’s, lives in Eugene, Ore., where he co-edits *Green Anarchy* magazine (circulation: 8,000). This past April, Zerzan joined Tucker and Derrick Jensen, a prominent Northern California-based anti-civilization writer, on a speaking tour that included Wilson College, in Chambersburg, Pa., and Erie’s Mercyhurst College.

Tucker also wrote the preface to the new edition of Zerzan’s keynote anthology, *Against Civilization*. “Overcoming domestication is a massive undertaking,” his essay declares, “but our souls and our lives are at stake.”

Tucker grew up in suburban St. Louis, watching sprawl devour the woods. He got into activism at age 12, working on causes from animal rights to protesting Shell Oil’s incursions upon Nigerian tribal lands. Anarcho-syndicalism ... which advocates worker control of society ... attracted him early, but the doctrine’s inherent industrialism never fit with his radical environmental concerns. “I started wondering where things *started* going wrong,” he says.

Something that cemented him in anarcho-primitivism was life on a farm. It was an animal refuge where he worked with Yank, a few years after they had met, in 1998, as teen-agers at a punk-rock show in Columbus, Ohio. Tucker watched the farm’s handful of cows trample a stream into a muddy gutter ... domestication destroying wildness. Out in the barnyard, some rescued chickens roosted calmly in trees. But confined in a pen (to protect them from foxes) they went berserk, bloodying each other.

“It’s like cities,” he says of the chicken pen. “It’s just like us.”

Tucker subsequently studied anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh, graduating in 2004. While he can be thoroughly analytical about civilization’s failings, he describes his relationship with nature as spiritual. He feels a particular kinship with morels. “Morels not Morals,” reads one of his T-shirt designs. (Another deadpan, “Will Hunt and Gather for Food.”) Morels turn up in the oddest places. “They do whatever they want,” says Tucker. “Nothing always applies all the time.” They are an anarchist’s kind of shroom.

We spend a couple hours in Frick, identifying, photographing and collecting plants and mushrooms. Back at the trailhead, we stop behind the charred shell of the park’s Environmental Center, which burned a few years back.

“We’ve got so much of our lives taken from us. It’s powerlessness,” Tucker says. “The idea that you can go out and do something on your own ... it’s empowering.”

Yank surveys the grounds teeming with green. “A lot of plants are good for cancers, a lot of wild plants,” she says. She recalls from childhood seeing an old man in her backyard, gathering dandelion to treat his cancer. She thought he was crazy.

“Now we’re the wingnuts!” says Tucker.

Tucker regards conservation and alternative energy as false paths, insufficient to save a civilization not worth saving anyway. Civilization’s collapse, he says, will have many causes, and it’ll be gradual, a drawn-out process: “It’s not like you’re going to wake up one day and the power grid will be off.”

“I *wish*,” mutters Yank.

To most, calling for civilization’s collapse is like demanding to repeal gravity. But radical critiques of civilization, its ideology of ceaseless labor and material excess, boast a long intellectual heritage.

In the 1850s, for instance, Thoreau lived simply for his 26 months at Walden; he mocked the telegraph and proclaimed, “The most alive is the wildest.” Subsequent “rebels against the future” (as one of them, neo-Luddite Kirkpatrick Sale, put it) included Lewis Mumford (*The Myth of the Machine*), Ivan Illich (*Toward a History of Needs*) and Theodore Roszak (*Where the Wasteland Ends*).

Looming over such discussions are two opposing views of humankind. In his 17th-century classic *Leviathan*, British philosopher Thomas Hobbes famously argued that life in a state of nature was “nasty, brutish and short,” and that we require authorities to rein us in and ensure humanity’s progress. In the 18th century, French thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau espoused the ideal of the noble savage. “The example of Savages ... seems to confirm that the human Race was made to remain in it, the state of Nature, always,” he wrote. “[F]or the philosopher it is iron and wheat which have Civilized men and ruined the human race.”

Hobbes won. Or at least, while many still romanticize the noble savage, it’s agreed that this is the age of the policeman, the CEO and the IT guy.

But in recent years, primitivism has found an unlikely ally: modern science.

In 1968, anthropologist Marshall Sahlins presented a paper titled “The Original Affluent Society.” Drawing on recent field research among surviving hunter-gatherers including the !Kung Bushmen of South Africa’s Kalahari Desert, Sahlins proposed that foraging was in fact a rather attractive way to live.

The !Kung inhabited marginal lands ... the most fruitful real estate having been seized by agriculturalists ... and lacked electricity, metal tools and permanent homes. But Sahlins argued that they were affluent because all their needs were met. The !Kung spent only a few hours each day gathering food. The rest of the time they played, socialized or slept.

“The research suggests that the more complex socially organized society you live in, the more you have to work,” says Pitt anthropology professor Richard Scaglione, who in the 1970s spent a year-and-a-half living among the Abelam people of the New Guinea highlands.

Scaglione says the Abelam have a pretty sweet life. They’re not pure foragers, practicing slash-and-burn horticulture and living alongside free-roaming, semi-domesticated pigs. They also have some (imported) metal tools, including machetes. Yet the Abelam have little sense of time and don’t distinguish between work and play. They just live. Their health is good and their life expectancy comparable to ours ... minus, of course, artificial life support.

“There’s not a heckuva lot that they have, but there’s not a heckuva lot that they need,” Scaglione says. And best of all, “It was really nice to live in a truly egalitarian society. ... There’s nobody who can tell you what to do.”

At its simplest level, primitivism merely touts the life for which we evolved: in open air, moving around a lot, eating wild foods. “The healthiest quality of food we’ve ever known is probably Stone Age food,” says Mark Nathan Cohen, an anthropologist at State University of New York. Foragers have none of the maladies we associate with poverty or “primitive” lifestyles; those ailments in fact result from urban slum life, starchy modern diets or proximity to domesticated animals. According to research by Cohen and others, farmers and city folk were shorter and sicker than foragers well into the 19th century (at least).

In a 1987 article in *Discover* magazine, Jared Diamond ... later a Pulitzer Prize-winner for *Guns, Germs and Steel* ... called agriculture “the worst mistake in human history.” For the first million or two years humans and their ancestors walked earth, “Hunter-gatherers practiced the most successful and longest-lasting life style in human history. In contrast, we’re still struggling with the mess into which agriculture has tumbled us, and it’s unclear whether we can solve it.”

Of course, foragers too consume resources, multiply and spread out. That fact likely explains the invention of farming: Eventually people could feed their growing numbers only by cultivating crops which ... despite their inferior nutritional value ... supplied more calories with less land. It was quality for quantity.

And contemporary Stone Age living isn’t perfect, either. Among the Abelam, reports Scaglione, problems included endemic malaria, troubles with ringworm, and high mortality from accidents, especially among the young. Moreover, contend skeptics of the noble-savage idea, there’s historic evidence of serious warfare between foragers.

But primitivists say the “primitive” people indicted for warfare and ecological ruin are actually horticulturalists ... subsistence gardeners, like the Abelam ... or agriculturalists. Nature, they contend, could easily fix whatever damage foragers might do with stone tools, low numbers and nomadic feet. Even Harvard archaeologist Steven LeBlanc, author of 2002’s *Constant Battles: The Myth of the Noble Savage*, acknowledges that war and environmental degradation got much worse with the advent of settled, complex, hierarchical societies.

And if the primitivist worldview is part prescription for the good life, it’s also part prediction ... a forecast supported, once again, by history and science. Diamond’s 2005 book *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, for instance, offers case studies ranging from the Maya to modern Rwanda, each demonstrating how societies can doom themselves by living beyond the means their environment can support.

Modern societies face problems including global warming, the end of cheap oil and shortages of drinkable water. If we don’t address them, writes Diamond, such problems might get resolved, as they have before: with “warfare, genocide, starvation, disease epidemics and collapses of societies.”

Diamond is skeptical about technology, which in attempting to solve old problems tends to create new ones. He thinks we have “a few decades” before a reckoning. In other words, a Pulitzer-winning scholar’s concerns echo those of primitivism.

Collapse joins a recent spate of books sounding similar alarms. *The Party’s Over*, by Richard Heinberg, cites our utter dependence on fossil fuels and focuses on “peak oil,” the idea that the time of maximum world petroleum production is imminent. It’s not just a matter of running out of oil: As energy becomes harder to find, it gets more expensive, and competition for it intensifies.

And as large, less developed countries such as India and China industrialize, demand will only accelerate.

If civilization stops growing, primitivists point out, it dies. But if it keeps growing, it kills ... plants, animals, entire ecosystems and less powerful people

Yet modern consumers must be kept in a constant state of desire, and deterred from considering consequences. Those consequences, to paraphrase Al Gore, are an inconvenient truth. In terms of sheer energy consumption, North Americans are the richest and most wasteful people ever. But our consumer society is only a few generations old, a tiny fraction of a much poorer world. Petroleum has been history's greatest inheritance, and for 150 years we've been spending it like Paris Hilton on a Rodeo Drive shopping spree. Still, we keep thinking it'll last forever.

Some argue that surely we'll keep the party going. Surely we'll find ... or invent ... new sources of energy. Optimists cite the "Green Revolution" in agriculture: In the face of warnings about overpopulation, new technologies enabled the global head-count to double from three billion to six billion, between 1960 and 2000. But what enabled such growth was the chemically dependent modern agriculture that has meant soil depletion, runoff that poisons and clogs waterways, and the plowing under of wild lands ... not to mention oceans of fuel for shipping crops across hemispheres. New solutions always have new costs.

In *The Party's Over*, Heinberg writes, "There are now somewhere between two and five billion humans who probably would not exist but for fossil fuels." A post-fossil-fuel future suggests large population drops. For a world of hunter-gatherers, the earth's "carrying capacity" ... the number of people the environment can support ... would be much smaller. And quality of life would depend on keeping those numbers low. In forager societies, pregnancies are more widely spaced, and some foragers have also practiced infanticide.

Given the body count we now accept as the price of civilization, Tucker, for one, is OK with that. "I don't think every child born should live," he says.

If everyone were a forager, Tucker estimates, 500 million people could survive. That's probably wildly optimistic: The last time world population was that low, it was the late Middle Ages, with most people already living off agriculture.

Tucker and Yank live in a small duplex in a dog-eared residential community outside Greensburg. In the tiled foyer, a deerskin stripped from a roadkill carcass, scraped of flesh and fur, leans stiffly against one wall awaiting tanning, preferably with the brains of another roadkill deer. The adjoining kitchen is airy and spotless, with a small gate to keep their two big dogs, a rot mix and a pit-bull mix, off the living room's pristine white carpet. (When I ask Yank how she spends her days, she answers, "I clean.") Full-color posters of edible plants and mushrooms are stapled to the walls. In the living room, a computer table holds a monitor and keyboard.

Tucker's second-floor study is lined with hundreds of books: *The Foraging Spectrum*, *The Coming Plague*, *John Henry*. But this morning, because I had asked him to demonstrate primitive skills, Tucker is sitting outside on his kitchen steps, trying to make fire with a bow drill.

Under one foot he clamps a large wood chip with a divot for an upright cedar dowel that's looped crosswise by a synthetic orange cord attached to a bow. With one hand, he anchors the dowel-top with a folded butterfly knife; with the other, he saws the bow, spinning the dowel for friction.

Tucker's *Species Traitor* ... the latest issue is a handsomely bound softcover ... includes carefully worded articles (both credited to "MaCro Magnon") describing the successful disabling of electrical substations and the vulnerability to sabotage of railroad lines. The zine (www.primalwar.org)

also features Tucker's account of his correspondence with Ted Kaczynski, now serving life for the Unabomber crimes committed in the 1980s and '90s during his solitary campaign against modern technology. I ask Tucker about the articles describing sabotage.

"It's not rhetoric at all. I want civilization to be taken down as soon as possible," he says, working the bow drill. "A small group of people can really get things going, if they're so inclined."

"By physically targeting that infrastructure," he continues, "the intent is to ..."

"Did you feed the dog this morning?" Yank yells from the kitchen.

"Yeah ... destabilize that and show how unstable it is."

Tucker and Yank believe they're watched by the government as part of the "Green Scare" crackdown on sabotage conducted in the name of animal liberation and environmentalism. In January, the FBI's Operation Backfire resulted in federal indictments for 11 people allegedly acting on behalf of the Animal Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Front. The accused were charged in connection with 17 attacks out West dating to 1996, including the burning of a Colorado ski lodge and the destruction of a high-power line in Oregon.

It was the latest in a series of arrests for what the FBI calls "domestic terrorism." But some radical activists say it's not terrorism if you hit only property, as Tucker claims the ALF and ELF have. "Our targets aren't people," he says. "It's political power and the whole society. You don't have to kill people to take that out."

"There's a question whether ELF arsons are even effective," he adds.

"Yeah, they are," says Yank, who's listening in. "Just more people need to start doing it."

I ask Tucker if he's ever committed sabotage. He invokes activist "security culture" boilerplate: "If it were true, I couldn't answer you honestly."

Meanwhile, he's not having much luck with the fire. He knows people who can spin the piston between their palms and get sparks in seconds. Tucker likes the hands-only method. "I prefer it to the bow drill just because it's simpler," he says. Doing it by hand, he adds, "doesn't require as many parts. But it's harder."

Yearning for the Stone Age, but born into the Microchip Age, Tucker knows his life bulges with paradox. He works full time, pushing an ink squeegee over hats and T-shirts at a Murrysville screen-printer's; he drives there in a Mazda mini-van, which he and Yank have lived in briefly from time to time, and which is useful for transporting their dogs or cartons of *Species Traitor*.

"I'd love to be a hunter-gatherer," says Tucker. "I don't want to go to work every day. It's just a necessity. Especially if you want to get the word out."

Indeed, even to study primitive skills these days takes a lot of driving. So when I invite Tucker to an afternoon of spear-throwing, we spend half the day in our cars, getting to and from the Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Museum of Rural Life. Located an hour west of Pittsburgh, the Avella site played host to the World Atlatl Association one weekend in June.

The atlatl is Stone Age technology that functions as an extension of the human arm. It's made of wood or bone, with one end notched to hold a long slender dart and throw it at wild game. Tucker already owns one.

He, Yank and I take turns hurling darts at a paper target pinned to a bale of hay. The bull's-eye circles a squirrel the size of a dishwasher. The darts are 7 feet long, and most are made of aluminum, with copper heads and plastic guide-feathers. From 15 meters out, we throw dozens of times each before we graze the bale.

"We can't even hit the prehistoric squirrel," I say.

"I can't aim right. That's my problem with everything," says Yank. "I bowl like that, too."

“I see why these things are used for massive mammals,” says Tucker. “You can get like 20 squirrels an hour with traps.”

“Imagine an auto-load atlatl,” says Yank. “K-p-*chew!*”

“You miss the point,” says Tucker.

One of the dozen or so atlatl enthusiasts offers some tips and shows us his club’s photo album. Above a picture of a man hurling a dart there’s a motto, presumably inspirational, reading, “One cannot change the past, but one can ruin the present by worrying over the future.” We’re told that one participant, a wiry silver-haired guy in a red ball cap, once killed a wild boar with an atlatl.

“I used to practice bow and atlatl every day, but the police put an end to that pretty quick,” Tucker tells me.

“It was a little park,” says Yank. “We used to skin animals out there.”

The first animal Tucker ever skinned was a roadkill fox, behind a Giant Eagle. “I learned a lot,” he says, adding that the process was instinctive. Though roadkill infuriates them, Tucker and Yank scavenge it, for meat and hide. Still, he prefers peacefully tracking animals through the woods, trying to learn what they eat and how they see the world.

He also dabbles in flint-knapping ... manually flaking stone for spear points and blades. “I suck at it,” he says, as we peruse a display of hobbyist-knapped points. “Whenever I do it, it actually dulls it down.”

Tucker has considered going off to live in the woods somewhere ... the option Yank prefers ... but for now he’s committed to spreading the primitivist word. He’s found a kindred spirit in Cathy Pedler, a former archaeologist who heads the office of sustainability at Mercyhurst College. Pedler booked April’s talks by Tucker, Zerzan and Jensen at Mercyhurst and Wilson College. The crowds of 100 people each included students who didn’t know they were in for anti-civilization depth charges. “It was really stimulating for them ... almost in a traumatic way,” says Pedler, 40, who also identifies herself as an anarcho-primitivist.

At Mercyhurst, Tucker met a guy who was creating biodiesel out of sewage waste. “I said, ‘Yeah, I hope there’s no sewage system in a hundred years,’” Tucker recalls. “It was kind of uncomfortable because I was staying at his house.”

Most primitivists scorn mainstream environmentalists as “reformists”: people who think wind turbines, hybrid cars and recycling will save us. And Tucker says many of his listeners share his concerns. They tell him, “I agree with you, I just don’t agree with where you take it.” (Yank’s relatives in Greensburg are an exception. “Her family is rednecks,” says Tucker. “They’re really supportive and respectful of everything we do.”)

Visits to primitive-skills gatherings, and to a Wisconsin primitive-skills school called Teaching Drum, have honed Tucker’s understanding of what distinguishes tools from technology. Once discarded, a Stone Age tool can sift back into nature; technology, however, transforms a natural material irreversibly ... changing ore into metal, say. Technology also requires division of labor, which primitivists consider as bad as agriculture. The test, Tucker says, is “Can you do it yourself or do you need a whole society? If you lost it, could you do it again?”

I ask Tucker what separates anarcho-primitivists from survivalists ... the right-wing-identifying guys holed up in the hollers with bear traps and cases of ammo. “People go to survivalism for the same reason people go to this,” he says. “They’re looking for something.”

Finished atlatling, we wander to Meadowcroft’s famous Rockshelter, where archaeological evidence suggests human presence dating back 16,000 years. A tour ends, and the guide joins Tucker,

Yank and I by Cross Creek, which runs past the rockshelter. The guide says a big blacksnake hangs out here. He adds that he doesn't like snakes.

"They're awesome creatures," Yank responds quickly.

"They're needed," the guide admits. "I tell them, 'Go, make my garden good.' I just don't like to be surprised. But they probably don't like to be surprised, either."

"Then we have something in common," says Tucker.

The big post-collapse die-off idea is a big turn-off to primitivism's critics ... who include, it's fair to say, almost everyone who hears of anarcho-primitivism. Even other anarchists scoff.

"It's a perverse pessimism, that we're doomed, that most of humanity will perish," says Alex Bradley, a local political activist and anarchist. "*Mad Max* was a really great movie, but I don't want to base my future on it."

Tucker contends that history's only viable anarchistic society has been Stone Age life; he rejects revolution, which would just put different people in charge of the same lousy system. Meanwhile though, most anarchists hate capitalism, they appreciate modern technology and believe it can be made to serve human needs rather than corporate profits. Moreover, Bradley won't underestimate the system he abhors: Echoing the belief that we can invent our way out of trouble, he says, "I don't think that capitalism or the state will allow itself to be destroyed."

Bradley, a member of the Pittsburgh Organizing Group, agrees that many anarchists share primitivists' environmental concerns. But with their collapse scenarios, he says, "I think [primitivists] share a lot with religious fundamentalists: 'You're doomed anyway, and this is your only solution.'"

Primitivism does unavoidably suggest a near-remake of the Bible. It has its own Eden, its Fall (perhaps after eating the fruit of Technology) and its End Time (starring civilization as the Whore of Babylon), followed by return to a flowering paradise. And as countless books and disaster movies attest, eco-pocalypse is as irresistible as it is terrifying. Since we are all complicit, a Big Do-Over feels like both a deserved comeuppance and a rebirth. Forced by eco-pocalypse to live differently, perhaps we'd *be* different.

But eco-pocalypse is based on more than reading tea leaves in Revelation. Rain forests and polar ice caps really *are* vanishing. Fisheries and petroleum reserves really *are* drying up, while sea levels and environmental toxins rise. Of the hottest 20 years on record globally, 19 have come since 1980. The Worldwatch Institute estimates that to protect the environment and promote economic equity, rich nations "may need to cut their use of materials by as much as 90 percent over few decades." *The Party's Over* author Richard Heinberg suggests that to stave off the worst of coming cataclysms we should adopt small, radically decentralized, semi-autonomous communities living off sustainable energy.

And even if warnings of eco-pocalypse sound religious in tone, isn't that just the flip side to the faith that technology will fix the problems technology created in the first place?

Tucker says primitivism is not an ideology, let alone a creed; he calls it "a critique with implications." While he was raised Jewish, he and Yank eschew religion.

"A lot of people who believe in God, they really don't care," says Yank. "They just care about God and going to heaven."

"No allegiance to this planet," says Tucker.

One on level, what's unnerving about primitivism is the suggestion that once we literally planted the seed of civilization, most everything since ... all we value about it, right along with

all we loathe ... has only taken us further along that same disastrous path. But Tucker views it positively: What humans built, they can unbuild.

A return to foraging, he acknowledges, might not come to pass until generations after the collapse. "I have a lot of faith in humans," he says. "We'll see more reasons to work with each other than to kill each other."

"You can't run away from civilization," Tucker said during our visit to Frick Park. "I can't run away from the fact that this forest is going through the same struggles I am."

"This isn't some martyristic thing," he says later. "I just feel a personal obligation." He just wants to spread the word ... "while I still have time."

Interview with Peregrine (Kevin Tucker)

1. Tell us about your name. Why Peregrine? And tell us as well about your activities as a band, do you have similar interests, do you work as a collective, are you involved with any other activities besides the band?

The name comes from the Peregrine falcon. It has no connection with a character from Lord of the Rings nor a bike company; as I've had some metal heads (seemingly rightfully for the genre) assume.

I've had a long standing obsession with birds of prey. I think it's a fairly common thing, but I'm just mesmerized by them. Peregrines in particular stand out to me, for whatever reason, but they're the fastest animal in the world, they've rebounded from near extinction as a result of DDT, they are one of the most wide spread birds in the world. The Latin-derived name also means 'wanderer'. It just seems to embody so much about wildness and its resilience.

The band right now is resituating after I took it with me back up to Pennsylvania. The intent with the new line up is to be more than a band and not just have some metal dudes filling in, as it pretty much was before with the exception of Clem (who I started Peregrine with in Georgia). So things are changing and it's very much intentional to have it so no one is yawning or irritated when I talk about anything real between songs at shows.

2. What has been the acceptance to your ideas and music in the so called punk hardcore scene...?

The hardcore scene is the hardest to break. There's a lot of scene shit going on and I'm not that interested in getting into that. I'm just way over it. I avoided the punk scene for so long after the serious political basis seemed to have dropped out. It's gotten to be way more about the scene itself and an insular sense of building up some liberalized sense of community instead of being angry and pro-active about what is going on in the world.

I think punk has a lot farther to go in really pushing the forefront on ideas anymore and it's pretty pathetic. I think punk got caught up in this very crimethinc-ish mentality and people are too afraid of criticism to go out on a limb and say what they think or challenge other people when they regurgitate the same old, stuck-in-the-left ideals. There's just nothing engaging about it anymore and there's little room left for that.

I do think the words are getting out there. I think green anarchism and anarcho-primitivism have moved into the vocabulary and, to some extent, the ideals of most anarchist punks, but the scene is really just to populist to welcome the divisions that the anarchist scene has.

I'm hardly an 'all for one' kind of person. I know the differences between anarcho-primitivism and anarcho-syndicalism are massive. I am explicitly against civilization and I have no interest in reform, be it a political system or an industrial one. And it's outside of punk and hardcore that you really see the surprises. The collapse of civilization is so apparent that we barely have to point it out anymore. It's the top stories on the news everyday and people can't ignore it anymore. They don't use the same terminology or have the same perspective, but people aren't dumb; they can smell the rotting corpse in the room, but it's a fear issue when it comes to trying to understand what it means or what to do about it.

So when I'm putting it out there as honestly as I can and trying to add perspective and some context to what we're all feeling, it's the people with no stake in leftist ideology who are more willing to give up on blind faith and want to hear more. The punks try to write shit off cause they've got so much at stake in trying to maintain some semblance of their punk 'way of life' now into some anarcho-utopia, but it's just not possible. There'd be some shitty shows that we'd

get stuck on in Georgia and I just didn't feel like bothering to talk about the songs cause of the atmosphere, but it was normal folks that'd come up to me and ask me why I didn't say anything.

3. A logical one: how do you manage to reconcile your primitivist ideals and ethics with your present reality (I mean in terms of a band using highly technological equipment and touring in gas consuming machines while spreading primitivist ideals...)? Are these the necessary contradiction of this era? Your views on that...?

Any contradiction at this point is necessary. I think people get hung up on this all around, but there's no way out. I see a major driving force behind my existence right now as spreading these ideas, this context for what is going on around us.

I feel a tremendous amount of guilt for being a part of this civilization that is innately ecocidal. That as I am sitting on this computer to write this, mountains are being destroyed for coal, I live five miles from a nuclear/coal power plant and every single thing we do here, from breathing forced air indoors to touring on the road, is ecocidal as it is a part of this system. It's easy to point to the hypocrisy of contributing to all this and saying the things we do, but it's easy to use that as a way to write this off. Civilization is dying and it is killing the planet. People need to hear this. I've tried lecturing through smoke signals, and it just doesn't translate at all. The only way these ideas are going to spread is through the system that we're fighting against.

To be honest, I'd feel more guilt for not at least trying to spread these ideas. The ideological grasp that the domestication has on the mind, body and soul is so totalistic, that it needs any glimpse of light to let people know that it has fatal flaws. There's so much of me that wants to try and live a nomadic gatherer-hunter lifestyle now. It'd be really hard and it can last only as long as you can evade pretty much anyone else, but it is possible. I hope people try that, but for me, it's a compulsive feeling to try and get this out there as much as I can.

But realistically, we're all hypocrites. It's just easier to point to the primitivists because there's a knee jerk reaction when someone questions the most basic principles about the way we all live and the machines that keep us going this way. Communists sell papers with the cash of capitalism, right now the free market system is getting an injection from the capitalist state. Ideals are ideals until they are lived, and until then, we're all going to be hypocrites. I guess there's just a point where you have to get over it and go on with what needs to be done.

4. Like many others, most of you seemed to have been through a long and gradual ideological metamorphosis from punk rockers to political vegan straightedgers and into primitivist minded people, how do you envision this progression? Do you see in them a logical of continuity with next step closer to your end? How do you feel about all those phases and the importance or not that they had in your own personal agenda?

I have to state from the outset here that Peregrine was never a vegan straightedge band and that most of the folks in it before and probably the future haven't necessarily ever been. The new line up shares that background, like I do, but not entirely.

However, I got into anarchism and punk about the same time, and I think there's a clear line that can be drawn in the development on my ideas going back through my sixteen years as an anarchist. I've done the demos, the protests, made thousands of fliers, I still write, edit and promote magazines, books and pamphlets, and so on. I was an anarcho-syndicalist for the first five or six years and came into primitivism as I realized my own understandings of indigenous, earth and animal liberation didn't really mesh with my cautious ideas of worker solidarity. For example, I could never sit well with the idea that Crass did their last show as a benefit for striking

miners. How could you decry the destruction of the Earth and then support the miners? It just shows the bankruptcy of punk ideals and ability to challenge the 'all for one' mentality.

But that was just a part of it. I think there are a lot of good ideas that can either serve to expand your understanding of the world through experience, or they can turn ideological. I've been straight edge for about fifteen years now, but it was never an ideological thing. In fact, I've come up with the concept of 'feraledge' as a half joking evolution of the idea because I hate the pompous, douche baggery that sours so much of straightedge. I'm really against drugs and anything that dulls the blunt smash to the face that civilization and domestication impact on our lives. Alcohol and consciousness altering plants only come into the picture after nomadic bands of gatherer hunters settled into sedentary ones (by 'choice' or coercion, as is so often the case). The drug trade is riddled with communist militants suppressing indigenous peoples worldwide and it's the global disaffected that get the repercussions.

I despise the whole cycle, but I understand why people need that break from reality and I understand it's a self-serving cycle. I've lost people very close to me to overdose and I despise the straightedge naivety that it's simply a matter of self-accountability. This way of life sucks horribly, but getting violently enraged at people for drinking or doing drugs is just naïve. The system as a whole needs to be understood and targeted for what it is: another element of domestication.

And on the flipside, I'm glad I was vegan for so many years. The toll it's taken on my body could be done without, but I was vegan because the systemic exploitation of animals, not simply because I thought killing is wrong. But, even as early as the late 90s, being vegan was a lot harder than it is now. It forced you to really look at things and have to cook for yourself and look more carefully at the foods you were eating. It's not that hard now and I don't think it's as likely to shape anyone's relationship with foods the way it did in the past. Most vegan foods are labeled as such, so people don't even need to see the gnarly shit that still goes into the ingredients and the purely synthetic additives and 'nutrients' that saturate it. So people really don't have to think about it and it gets easier to just solidify an ideology because it just doesn't take much thought.

The evolution of my understanding came by trying to come to terms with the origins of oppression; political, social, psychological, whatever form it may take. That started with an understanding how governments oppress and expanded into a search for the origins of racism, sexism, and this innately separated and destructive view and the Earth and all other life. Through my experiences, my research, everything, it just all came down to civilization, and went even further into domestication. In hindsight, it's like dominos falling down, but it's been a long path and the simplicity of our primal anarchy, our primal nature continues to set me back. Things really are simpler than they seem and it's amazing how much of civilization is really just smoke and mirrors. That isn't to negate the insanity and scope of its destructiveness, but just to show how tied it all is to domestication: how the subjugation of our primal selves demands a response. The cage needs to be continually modified to fit a cast ideology of what being human means. The cage and the electronic leash are both crumbling; but being free is a going to be a lot more instinctual than we've let ourselves believe.

I'd say I've come a long way from where I was when I initially became 'aware'. I've seen in myself and a handful of close friends that there was a progression and a progressiveness to what was going on within punk and hardcore and anarchism ten years ago that we got so much more out of it. But things are different now. The internet has really changed things and a lot of great ideas just get blogged away as snippets of information that don't take much thought from the writer or the reader. There are message boards and back and forth kinds of arguments, but the

whole process of taking an idea and putting it out there, in a zine, a book, a record, whatever, that's just gone now, and the response is to treat it like that.

I'm not sure how to respond to it. I'll continue to put things out there the same way I've always done it, but how do you combat the lethargy and sheer laziness that keeps ideas and momentums from evolving, or even just for people to take things seriously and really put some thought into what they say and feel instead of offer lip service to the 'all for one' ideals that have get passed around punk and hardcore?

5. How do you envision an ideal society? Or ideal situation for human beings, is there any past or present tribe or time when this was in practice?

For 99.9% of human history, we've lived in nomadic bands of gatherer-hunters. That is small bands of egalitarian peoples living without any kind of social or political power with larger affiliations between those living anywhere near. It was and is rooted in a pure sense of adaptivity and a flowing sense of ecological ties.

That is what shaped us as human beings. Our sense of sight and memory are rooted in our connection with the land and our senses are tied to take in thousands of stimuli coming in from the movement of plants, the tracks and signs of animals and the changing weather. That's what formed our primal anarchy, our human nature. It's a way of life that addresses the issues that will invariably rise when we live in close contact with our communities.

I fully believe that this is how we are meant to live.

The common misconception is that there was some choice made at some point to settle, or some total turn in history when people stopped living this way. Reality is quite the opposite. I can't say for sure why it happened, but domestication is a slowly creeping marriage to power. And that started to come into the picture about 10–13 thousand years ago with the settling of the nomads around storable grains and proteins.

What followed is that one problem leads to a solution that becomes another problem almost immediately. Sedentary life runs counter to our gut reactions on how to respond to any crisis that may arise. And so you have the birth of political power, a new sense of self and a defined idea of tribe and property (nomadic bands are marked by their ever-changing membership and ties to a land base are far looser and defined by a central point rather than a border, all things that help make war impossible), a rising sense of sex-based identity and values which is almost entirely rooted in a rising and detached religious core, and you have warfare, chiefs, storage, and all the vestiges which make inegalitarian life possible and likely. And this pattern bred the conditions that make civilization possible.

But I don't want to give the impression that any of this happened quickly and it's not until relatively recently that many of the decisions were made with their eventual repercussions in mind. We're talking about 6 thousand years before the first consequential settling of nomads until the origins of the first cities. It's more like an oddity of history that civilization was born, rather than the Progress oriented wonder that it took 'so long'.

The spread of civilization is the history of force and occupation. More domesticated societies have failed than have 'succeeded', but all share the same fate in time. It is a predatory and self-consuming state that cannot ever be sustained. When this civilization inevitably meets its end, as they all have; outside of the wreckage and fallout that remains, that nomadic gatherer-hunter mind, body, and spirit remain.

My hopes are to one day live this way again. I can't say that it's possible, but I know this civilization will meet its end very soon. We're not seeing the peak, we're seeing the decline and

it is happening even faster than I might have envisioned. I like to think in terms of generations. I'd like to think that we're not as selfish as we've become and are interested in the survival and health of the planet and those who will be living wild again, our grandchildren and theirs, and that we'll base our actions now on how to contain the damage for them.

6. I know that some of you decided to in line with your ideas to stop being vegan and focusing on those issues. What is your current opinion on veganism, do you find it a natural and possible diet in a tribal primitivist realm? Do you see it solely as the product of green capitalism in the era? Your views...

Veganism, as an ideology, is, in my opinion, completely antithetical to wildness. I think it's based off of some 'enlightened' moralistic fear of getting your hands dirty and is rooted entirely in the separation we all have been our lives and our subsistence. It's bred in an unnatural aversion to death that comes with depressive, meaningless lives we live as civilized peoples.

More to the point, wildness is about cycles of life and death, without the one, you can't have the other. Decay becomes top soil and the 'food chain' is far from a line. I think that fear is what leads people to believe that we can live without animal products or that we should. And it leads people to find alternatives that are synthetic or ecologically insane. Soy is one of the largest cash crops in the world because it's so cheap and it's filler (like grains), not because it's good for us. It's simply an economic issue that it's so pervasive.

But all modern nutrition is based off of supplements, so it's no surprise when people talk about how you can live well off a vegan diet when all the food is synthesized shit. I have no beef with vegans though. I've got bigger problems than the diets of individuals; it really doesn't matter to me. It's the ideologies that get me. I've always been against animal rights. That's simply an anarchist argument; I don't believe the State should determine worth. It's not going to happen and it's just an attempt to amend the level of suffering that animals are subjected to. When you see domestication as a humiliating condition, then it doesn't make sense to justify adding another link in the leash.

It comes back to civilization. Animal liberation, in any true sense of the word, demands the collapse of this domesticating force. It means dropping a sense of value that was created by civilized humans and breaking the iron grip of dependency.

I can understand veganism though as a response, I felt that way long enough. I think it's been manipulated as a 'compassionate' choice by green capitalists. No consumption is cruelty free, ever. I'm appalled by the conditions of animals in factory farms and ones that are called free range because there are no cages. I don't want to contribute to that any more than die hard vegans do. And you don't have to. I eat primarily wild meat or animals that are totally pastured. There's a huge movement now towards pastured meats and I think it's a more justifiable option to have animals living in a near wild state and eat them than depend on soy and synthetics shipped from around the world.

Essentially, I'm bashing ideology more than people's choices. I'll state my own, but I'm not passing judgment. I just think people need to separate issues with eating animals and issues with domesticating them. Separate animal liberation from animal rights.

7. Your opinions on freeganism and urban resistance?

Freeganism has never been a concern of mine. Eating garbage is great if you're down. I'd rather nothing be bought or sold, so living off the excesses makes perfect sense. I was never freegan myself, I had no interest in eating animal products at all, till I ate meat, but I still care a lot about

what I eat. I have enough health problems that I don't need to add rotted, factory farmed meat or processed crap into my diet. But that's just my personal opinion.

The only real problem I have with freeganism is when people think it's a solution. That's just hilarious. It's so clearly tied to an excessive system that I shouldn't have to elaborate on that.

Urban resistance? That can be pretty huge. I know mass protests aren't going to solve anything, but I know that I like seeing people at least making a physical manifestation of their rage. Let the fuckers know you're angry. I guess urban anything is always going to be limited. I'm far from being an urban person myself and I just feel like the cities are a trap. Cameras on every corner and light, cops patrolling, too many eyes, and too many variables; I'm just a leery person I guess!

I won't say I'm opposed to anything like that, especially when it can mean so many things. But I'm not a revolutionary and I'm not the literary tooth-fairy of revolution either, an insurrectionalist; there's simply nothing, in my eyes, to be gained from engaging the state directly. The State is far too strong militaristically to even think about it. Like I said, I love seeing people act out their rage, but the real problem isn't the power the State wields, but the existence of power itself. If you want to make change, there's much simpler ways of targeting that source of power itself: the grid.

8. You seem to base at least some of your perspectives in John Zerzan's writings? Is there any other writers contemporary or dead and gone that you look for inspiration?

John is a really good friend of mine. He's been writing about these issues for 30 years from an anarchist perspective and he's still going strong. When I was undergoing a lot of questions about the inconsistencies of my critiques with anarcho-sindicalism and started looking at technology and agriculture, I found John's work and it all just clicked. A lot doors opened and my own work, based primarily on expanding a critique of domestication and looking more closely at the anthropological works to see how our human nature is targeted by the domesticators and how they adapt.

John and I have our differences in our critiques and how we see things going, but they're more in the direction we're coming and going. We've done speaking tours together, work together often and will continue that. I always encourage people to pick up his books. And an aspect of his writing that I'll always appreciate is to have confidence in people being intelligent and capable. Way too much anarchist writing is based on this dumb-it-down deal and I think it's patronizing and weakens all around.

There have been a lot of other writers out there though that have been really influential for me and I could go on. I'll go for the run down; Paul Shepard – ecologist that really understood the role of our primal anarchy in shaping human nature and how bastardizing domestication has been. Fredy Perlman – late anarchist writer who really internalized the struggle of the wild and laid waste to Progress-based thinking and could just shred any aspect of civilization. Lewis Mumford – historian that cut technology down to shreds from the start and laid to waste the mechanics of civilization. Marvin Harris – anthropologist and founder of cultural materialism, very accessible. James Woodburn – anthropologist, blew open gatherer-hunter studies and brought my thinking to a whole new level. R. Brian Ferguson – anthropologist, cultural materialist; shreds faces in regards to the origin of war. William Catton – ecologist, his book 'Overshoot' will make you shit your pants, and he can totally say "I told you so".

I could go on...

9. Tell us a bit about the Hadza and the benefit in question...

The Hadza are a band of nomadic gatherer-hunters living in Tanzania. They suffer all the problems that existing gatherer-hunters do, but they've got less attention than some of the others. And the entire situation is just pathetic. All across the world, you have this suicidal culture pushing into every last place and telling the people who live there (if they don't just kill them outright) that their way of life is outdated. All the while we're there mining, drilling, and fencing off the last resources to prolong the electronic death rattle of civilization! It's simply disgusting imperial garbage.

These societies live in a way that goes back to the Paleolithic. They've survived incursions from neighboring farmers, past colonialists, and everything we're doing to this earth, and right on the brink of the collapse of this civilization, they face the extinction of their life way and their own existence.

I think it's hard for civilized folk to really understand what the land and culture mean to those living a rooted existence. It's everything. I spent years trying to understand why native resistance was always so much more solid than anything revolutionaries had taken part in, and it's simple: they're not fighting for ideals, they're not hoping for some magical outcome, they simply know and feel what it is they want. They don't need to have some utopian vision or naivety, they know what they are, and they know what they want. And they will fight for it.

I've come to understand it myself as I've come to understand and submerge myself into wildness. It's something different than what I'd know before because it's not an ideal. It's something real, something that is always present and always there.

As people living in civilization, peoples perpetuating the system that is wiping out systematically those who continue to live with the earth, I feel the need to talk about this, to show my anger and acknowledge that we are linked. These people need to know that the missionaries are bullshit, that the N.G.O.'s are spreading the myths of Progress, and that this civilization will end. I'm not entirely sure what that entails, but raising money and awareness remains a part of it.

The Hadza have faced a particularly ironic situation. They're not being booted from their land solely for mining or anything like that. The affluent domesticators want to keep the 'Wild Africa' of our origins as their own playground. The land the Hadza are on has been turned into a wildlife reserve where subsistence hunting is outlawed and rich assholes fly in to trophy hunt from vehicles with high powered rifles. Directly mocking the situation and the life way that is being stolen from the Hadza! And they get missionaries, alcohol, day labor, and berated for being 'savage'. Fuck that.

The benefit in question is a little iffy. It was supposed to be a split with killtheslavemaster, but that may or may not happen. Whether KTSM end up recording again goes back and forth, but I'd still love to do a benefit for the Hadza regardless, and it might possibly be with some new band from some of the same folks. We'll have to see.

10. Pro-Collapse, ok, Collapse and then what??? Your post-cataclysmic visions please?

I'm always leery about playing this out too much. I have my visions, I have my nightmares, but we'll never know.

What I do know is that the Mad Max vision is a Hollywood thing. I have faith in human nature and less faith in the myths of the domesticators. We've been taught to fear each other, to fear ourselves, and to fear wildness. They profit from that fear and the uncertainty they place in our heads about what will happen. But when the electricity is gone, and they can't remind us daily about the 'necessity' of domestication, then what? It all falls to pieces. Slowly but surely, it withers away.

Like I said earlier, I like to think in terms of generations. Civilizations have collapsed before. Even horticultural societies have lapsed before. There is a precedent here, but we're looking at a monumental scale. It's hard to say how things will go down, but, in the end, we've been so arrogant about the strength of this civilization that we've just wiped out any possibility for 'stepping back' to some earlier agrarian form. We don't have that knowledge, and frankly, it's far more counterintuitive than hunting and gathering. Our minds and body are meant for that way of life. As things wither away, I think that is where we eventually end up again.

I'm not sure where we end up, but I know that as things continue to fall apart, I'll constantly put my emphasis on showing where we've come from and the depths of domestication; on adding some context to all this. The myths of Progress have been so ingrained in us and they need torn apart. They don't hold much ground, but if we don't have some other idea floating around, then what else would people believe? Pushing these ideas, chiseling away at the grid, all these things just decrease the down time between the fall out and living a way of life again that is fulfilling.

11. Any other bands you know that share the same views and perspectives?

We just did a split CD with Auryn, also from Pittsburgh. That's a Green Scare benefit for folks who've been caught in the current round up of the state of earth and animal liberation sympathizers and 'activists' (for lack of a better word). That's something really important to me as well as the folks in Auryn and I can say they're definitely down. killtheslavemaster are fellow anarcho-savagists and down for the feral edge. Undying, Rally the Fray, write back soon, Gather, Ictus are all GA bands. I'm going to kick myself immediately after I send this for forgetting lots of others!

There's a lot that have pushed the ideas without the labels. There have been a lot of punks bashing at Progress for years, but I'm not sure if any of them would self identify as green anarchists, or even anarchists. Who knows, maybe more will start popping up!

take care and congratulations for the band!

Thank you!

**Interview: Peregrine's Kevin Tucker by
Rhys Williams**

Some listeners may be somewhat hesitant to approach the band because of their hardliner stance on the misunderstood philosophy of anarcho-primitivism, which holds that the only way for human to survive is to “rewild”, or forgo the stresses of civilization for a less technological, more natural society, more in line with hunter-gathering than anything we’re used to. Not exactly a philosophy that is currently in vogue, but then, metal always tends to be ahead of its time, and frankly, as metalheads, we should be proud of our forward-thinking nature. Likewise, Peregrine are always moving forward even as they propose to move back, so to speak, making them one of the most consistently interesting groups of the past five years. Mixing blackened death metal a la Behemoth with ’90s crust of the His Hero is Gone breed, Peregrine are never ones to avoid challenges or expanding their sound. I spoke with Peregrine frontman and philosopher Kevin Tucker (himself a renowned theorist on primitivist theory) about the band, their beliefs, their future, and their past, and his responses were as surprising to me as they were enlightening.

— Rhys Williams

...

[Editor’s Note: I highly respect Mr. Tucker and his various philosophies, and can say, from what little experience I have had in contact with him, that he is a very dignified, thoughtful man. That said, he is quite passionate about views that most people would call VERY radical, and I will admit that there are many things he believes that I do not agree with. However, as with all philosophies, there are doubtless some things which one agrees with and some things which one doesn’t: It is up to the discerning reader to choose which is which. Thus, keep an attitude of open-mindedness while reading this interview.]

First of all, this may be a question with an obvious answer, but you guys are playing metal music, which is a post-industrial musical genre reliant upon electric instruments—hell, the name of the genre is “metal”, which is about as non-organic as one can get. How, then, do you reconcile your chosen art form with the fairly radical brand of anarcho-primitivism you subscribe to? What is it about metal that appeals to the primitive ideal?

There’s a clear gap between the world as it is and the world as it has been and will be.

To put it simply, anarcho-primitivism is a response, a reaction. A central aspect of AP revolves around the idea that nomadic gatherer-hunter societies and some horticultural societies embody the reality of “primal anarchy”. That isn’t an ideology, but a situation which is lived, not prescribed. So you wouldn’t come across nomadic gatherer-hunters who were self-described anarchists or anarcho-primitivists. To be an anarcho-primitivist almost necessarily implies a juxtaposition between where things are and where you’d like them to be.

It’d be easy to say that we’re hypocrites, yet that’s missing the point. This isn’t just some notion about how I’d like to live my life. It’s not some solitary ideal based on being pissed about not being a gatherer-hunter myself, but a statement about the impacts of civilization. It’s all a reaction and a response.

I wouldn’t try to argue that there’s something that’s innate about death metal to a gatherer-hunter’s existence. Indigenous societies the world over are all fond of singing, but I think you’ll rarely find a blast beat or growl. It’s preference and obviously has to do with culture, but within civilization you have so much anger and frustration. And it has its place. We’re living in this completely disconnected society, built upon subjugating the wildness that surrounds us and drives

us. All of our needs for community and movement are crushed by economics, politics, and religion, and then we've got this constant overload of technological garbage, gadgets, and "social networks", and it just leads to overload.

What has drawn me to death metal is the aggression, the immediacy, and the power of it. You can feel it. Obviously it's not for everyone, but the impulse has more to do with being thrown into a powerless situation and just having so much disgust for the "air-conditioned nightmare". In a way, that's channeling the primitive ideal of addressing your reality through music, but also that underlying want to just be able to get up and move on, to get on with things. But the problem is still there. Civilization is still there.

I'm not saying the AP critique is all just about anger, but it's there and needs to be heard.

So, in turn, do you feel that, through death metal, one is able to obtain a small portion of the primal truth through musical aesthetic? When I listen to Peregrine, I hear lots of parts with heavy tom usage and lots of pounding fills, somewhat reminiscent of tribal drums. Is at least part of the appeal of death metal the fact that death metal vocals sound like the grunts of a wild beast or, in particular, a rewilded human? Do you often connect this vocal presence to this concept of a greater, primal state of being accessed through the violent passion of death metal?

I don't want to pretend that there's some form within death metal that's innately more "primitive". I really do think it has more to do with the aggression resulting from civilization. In a sense, we're making the noises of an irate, captive animal because that's exactly what we are as individuals caught in the domestication cycle. It has to do with circumstance.

The anthropologist Colin Turnbull was extremely interested in music and gatherer-hunters. As a part of his work with the Mbuti, he did some analysis about the nature of their songs and found that they were tonally and structurally more complex than music in increasingly domesticated societies. That is until you have extremely stratified societies with entire classes of experts, at which point it becomes a science more than a passion. If we're going to make a stretch, you could say that maybe death metal's structural complexity is channeling an innate form of expression, but it'd be a stretch at best. It's a lot more honest of me to just take the "violent passion" at face value.

Death metal is always presented as an intrinsically destructive force, and Peregrine does seem to be heavy on the destruction of civilization. However, in primitivism there's the idea of a rebirth of the world after civilization falls, a new growth of nature and wilderness. Do you feel your music communicates this birth, and if so, why does the quintessentially destructive death metal subgenre work so well for what is essentially a philosophy of life and vigor? Does the death metal sound always work for what you wish to convey, or do you sometimes wish to switch things up a bit? What do you want people to hear in the music of Peregrine?

I don't want to sound too grandiose about it, but while I hope that there is a bit more than just the destructive aspect, I know that's where the music really stems from. The other side is there, but I'm not sure if I'm a skilled enough musician to really convey it. The music, in my eyes, comes from the gut. I don't use traditional song structures for Peregrine and part of that is that I want the song to have a kind of arc to it that is like a little story. I'm not sure how well that really translates for anyone who is just listening to it, but all the emotion that extends beyond the anger really just goes into the lyrics. It's not based on a rigid structure that allows for a chorus or set verse or something like that. For what I'm doing, repetition generally just doesn't work in a typical manner.

However, it really depends on the song. Something like “Starvation’s Servants” (which is about the religious justifications in the domesticating process, i.e. “work for your rewards”) is pretty straightforward, but a song like “Reduced To Ashes” (which is about resisting domestication through physical acts) or “The Final Act” (which is about being unable to live in the world civilization has created) have a totally different narrative, and I think the song fits the arc there. I feel like Peregrine is meant to be kind of blunt and straightforward. I know a lot of somewhat-similar bands will feel the need to move on, to have clean vocal parts, or some kind of acoustic, folksy element. I don’t judge them for it or anything, I just don’t really see it as a part of what I’m doing with the band. And if there is some kind of interlude on an album (which there currently isn’t), it’s meant to convey a particular point.

So while it’s not a matter of disrespect or disinterest, there’s not going to be some huge surprise album down the line that is all folksy and really dramatic in the classical sense, because I feel like those emotions aren’t being represented in the death metal side. If I’m inclined to do something which isn’t in line with Peregrine stuff, I’d just do it under another name. If the nature of the music is leaving a particular aspect out, I just have to work harder to push that through the lyrics, booklets, talking between songs, etc.

On a less theoretical level, I personally hear lots of Behemoth and His Hero is Gone in your sound; are there any other musical (not abstract, so to speak) influences that you consider unique and/or integral to the Peregrine sound?

Unique, probably not quite, but definitely Behemoth and His Hero is Gone are both huge influences. Napalm Death are a huge influence, early and recent stuff really. I’d say that I wouldn’t be playing death metal if it weren’t for them, but would any of us? Misery Index are another one and I’m always stoked to see another band like that keep it political and real. From Ashes Rise might be up there above His Hero is Gone in my book and I’m really excited that Brad Boatright from FAR is going to be mixing, mastering and doing some guest vocals on our side of the upcoming split 7-inch with the mighty Masakari. I think a lot of the influences come through in little ways here and there, but for the most part it’s pretty straightforward; mix crust, death metal, and a touch of black metal and there you have it.

I’d agree with the straightforward nature of the Peregrine sound, and also with the overarching Napalm Death influence. (I’d even go so far to say that, if you’ve been playing extreme metal since 1987, you have been in some way influenced by either Napalm Death or Repulsion.) Speaking to the musical side of the band, who in Peregrine writes the music and/or lyrics? Is it an entirely collective effort, or do you, as the band’s philosophical center, generally have the largest role in guiding its aesthetic direction?

I’ve always written all the lyrics for Peregrine. There are and have been other members on the same level, but it’s just something I’ve always done. I originally started the band with Clem [Adams, guitars/vocals] who was on the Agrarian Curse and Green Scare benefit split and now does Savagist (with former Peregrine bassist, Daniel Shroyer, as well). We started coming up with some riffs that set the tone for Peregrine and some of those were on the Agrarian Curse, but I’ve written all of the music. Whoever is drumming usually plays a big role in how the writing process goes. For the most part, writing the music is kind of a solitary thing for me. It helps to have a drummer there and everyone’s input, but for the most part I write alone.

How has the metal community as a whole and the death metal community in particular reacted to your existence? I am most interested in the death metal scene’s response because so many death metal scenes are ultra-orthodox (read: reactionary) and/or intensely apoliti-

cal. Do you get positive feedback about the band's politics when playing shows, or does the philosophical aspect often go secondary to the music? Have you ever faced outright hostility?

It's been a mix. How many people listen to us for music or for the lyrics? I really don't know. The surprising thing is that I came up from crust punk and grindcore. To me they were always just innately political or anarchist genres and I expected to have a bit more traction there, but it's just not like that anymore. So much of what's going on in music is just like background noise for having a good time. I'm not saying that's always a horrible thing, but it's just become totally one-sided. I remember that you could see crusties somewhere and just know, off the bat, that they'd be anarchists, anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobe, etc., but those times are gone. No more assumptions.

There are still good folks there, but when I talk between songs or something at a crusty kind of show it's just like this irritating thing. Not in the sense that they've heard it all before, just that they don't want to hear it. Like being punk as fuck is enough. And it's bullshit. I'm not sure what happened or where, maybe it's just part of getting older, but I remember when you'd see a band and they had substance. You can look at those bands now and see that it was a phase for them, but why let it slide? Keep it angry!

Outright hostility? Surprisingly not. Some homophobe was spouting off outside a show once and that was ended, but it was more or less unrelated to what we were saying or doing. Most of that shit is on the internet. Just like 99% of shit talking that goes on now, it's all just hype. A lot of the hardcore scene has been hostile towards Peregrine because I'm a former vegan. Never mind what we stand for, it just comes down to that a lot. We played the Day of Suffering reunion show and I expected at least someone would say something, but, again, all internerd hype. The response that we got was really positive. A lot of hardcore kids have shown a lot of support and really get it. It's great when they come to shows, and I almost feel bad when they have to wait so long for such short breakdowns! The metal scene has been the most surprising. There's no real expectation for metal when it comes to some real issue banter between songs. There's not much precedent for it, so it's never really seen as a cliché thing, and the response has been better because of it.

In terms of anarchist based scenes, anarcho-primitivism still has been a peripheral idea. You have tons of bands pushing on it without really knowing or acknowledging it, especially crust bands bashing notions of "Progress", but the wording isn't there. So the fall-back is the old IWW/Syndicalist, tired thing. That's where Profane Existence left it and, at best, that's kind of where it remains. So, while the notions aren't always there, the banter is. The Syndicalists hate anarcho-primitivism. And it's easy to see why; it's the antithesis of their anachronistic ideas about industrialism and production. So if, and I really mean if, there's some direct blow back when I'm talking about the philosophical underpinnings, it's usually knee jerk reactions and they never follow through with it. I try, but they just back off it.

The metal world has its anarchist roots, but they're not so clear. What would we have without Napalm Death, Carcass, At The Gates, and all those bands? But when you see them, it's not really in your face, so it's not expected. The ideas behind AP are very real things. Domestication isn't some vague concept; it's a daily reality check that we face through religion, work, politics, and in the city or on farms. We can all feel that there's something horribly wrong about this civilization, regardless of our ability to pinpoint or articulate its source.

I honestly find that it's at metal shows where there's more reaction because there are more people who care enough to listen. We've played bar shows before where it's a bunch of rowdy

drunks and we'd just play and I wouldn't talk as much. It's not often, but it's just inevitable when you're in a band. There was one show where some relatively sober folks in the back approached me after we played and were seriously bummed that I didn't get into it and just lay it out there. That really said a lot to me. I honestly don't even find the shows as interesting if I don't get that out there. It's like neutering the music. The music and the message go hand-in-hand. I can't do the fake crowd rallying. I'm not really a front man in that regard. If I'm not doing it honestly, then it's not worth doing.

You mentioned that you started out as a crust punk. How did you get into metal in the first place? Was it a leap in faith from the often cynical crust scene, or a logical progression?

I was into metal when I was really young, but when I got into anarchism I got into punk and that whole scene. Back then all the crust stuff was really tied to direct action in terms of protest, actions, boycotts, and the like. I don't think there was always a huge depth to it, but people were trying. Bands were touring with book distros all the time, talking between songs, lengthy lyric books, the whole deal. Like I said before, the sad part is that it obviously didn't go deep enough. All the CrimethInc stuff seemed to take over, and it became about this personal stuff more than overarching ideas and action. Everything just fell by the wayside.

I don't know if I would have said the crust scene was entirely cynical in the '90s. Obviously you had the junkies and that kind of stuff there, but it was really charged at the time. It had energy and anger. It's hard to tell now because back then it was horribly recorded demos and 7-inches, so it doesn't really stand up, but it was pissed. The punk stuff was always more cynical, but I wasn't really that stoked on it. Metal came back into play really quickly. I was always more drawn to grind. Bands like Extreme Noise Terror and Disrupt just bridge the gap, but then it's right into Napalm Death, Terrorizer, Carcass, Nasum, Hellnation, and so on. I don't think it's a matter of being a logical progression, just personal preference really. There's definitely a metal side to crust, but it's not really a place where there's total crossover.

Again though, listening to crust or hardcore at the time generally seemed easy and the metal world was a lot more complicated. There are a ton of racists, misogynists, homophobes, etc, so it's always a pain in the ass trying to filter out the fucked up bands. But in the crust and hardcore world there was a scene element and when someone was fucked up, you'd hear about it and then it became a huge thing. Unfortunately it's not like that anymore and there's a ton of sleaze in the crust world, some of it even facilitated by CrimethInc. It's actually pretty disgusting how bad things have gotten. After we did the Green Scare benefit split with Auryn, we found out that their singer was totally using the band to sleaze with young girls in really sketchy ways. Everyone from Auryn called him out and dissolved in response to it, but he went on tour with From The Depths (a CrimethInc band through and through) immediately after. Even worse, the CI high-uppers tried attacking anyone who called this dude out even though he was knowingly using the politics to spread STDs. It's pathetic, but that's where things are now. The politics, for the most part, are gone. Or at the very least they're not a given within genres.

I don't want to give the impression that it's all gone. Ictus, Marytröd, Masakari; just to name a few, are openly green anarchist crust/hardcore bands, but you have metal bands like Misery Index, Arch Enemy (even if it's a bit cheesy), and, of course, Napalm Death that are all still really political. It's easy to blame CrimethInc for sinking the politics and anger in crust and hardcore. To a degree that's true, but it's got more to do with society at large and the changing nature of technology. Everything is just so fast now, and changes come and go so quickly that the attention span is too short to stay pissed. People aren't reading much and a blog has about as much credentials

as a researched book or some completely inane tweet. I don't know how to change that. It's a huge question, but it's rarely being asked and it's a serious problem. It really just comes back to keeping it out there and pressing on everything. It's another part of the domestication process and it should be fought like any other

On a similar note, what bands are you listening to of late? In terms of anarcho-primitivist music, the only other metal band besides Peregrine I've heard of in that realm is Seeds In Barren Fields, who Peregrine did a split with last year. What are some other worthwhile primitivist bands (or even bands who are able to evoke the aural image of primitivism while not having any stated agenda)? Is there a community of sorts, and if so, how much diversity is present within this community?

This question is always a little harder than I'd like it to be. Again, I think anarchist ideas within the music realm generally stay pretty stagnant. There were a lot of older crust bands that really toyed with AP ideas; bashing the notions of Progress, the merit of civilization, technology, etc. For the most part though, it was kind of a separate thing and you didn't have the divides that you see within more explicitly anarchist circles because anarcho-punk was enough of an identity to cover a lot of contradicting ideas. So you have bands like Amebix, Neurosis, Nausea, His Hero is Gone, Dropdead, Doom, Disrupt; all these crust bands that bashed in the right direction, but didn't use the wording. Some were really on point; Initial State/.Fuckincom, Sedition (they had Survival International pamphlets in the "earthbeat" LP), Anti-Product, Appalachian Terror Unit, Axiom, Black Kronstadt, and so on, but very few self identifying AP bands. So there's a lot of musically oriented stuff in the AP world, but it's not attached to punk or metal or anything like that the way anarcho-punk is. Any bands picking it up have been kind of peripheral in the development of AP ideas, action, or whatever else. There are some there, but it's not as easy to pinpoint. So the list is kind of underwhelming, but that's not to understate their quality.

A few easy bands to mention are ex-Peregrine bands: Savagist, Barren Scepter (ex-Auryn as well), plus Tim, our current drummer and drummer on the Green Scare split, has an excellent AP blackened death band called Woccon. Seeds in Barren Fields are another one. Killtheslavemaster probably merit the title of the first explicitly AP band. Burning Empires (ex-KTSM plus past/current members of Misery Signals) are a bit more in the hardcore realm, but fully AP. As a whole, I wish my list had dozens of AP metal bands, but it's just not out there in the metal world the way that it is with the more crust/punk/hardcore elements. Misery Index are definitely heading in the GA direction, but I'm not sure if they're identifying that way or not. Heirs to Thievery toy with a lot of really AP leaning topics. Heaven Shall Burn, where hardcore and death metal meet, have some amazing stuff. If Peregrine did the 'Endzeit' video, I'd be in jail right now.

Green anarchist bands are a little easier to pinpoint; Undying, Lockstep, Gather, Martyrdöd, Ictus, Resistant Culture ... I'm not sure if Masakari would identify as GA or not, but they're amazing regardless. And Corubo offer up some amazing indigenous black metal. I imagine that somewhere in this list there's probably an expectation for Cascadian black metal and the red and black metal stuff. There's a lot going on there, and I'm sure that there are some bands in there that identify as AP or green anarchist, but I don't easily put those bands in the AP/GA category.

For the most part, I've been really disappointed with bands like Wolves in the Throne Room. I get that black metal is supposed to have this mystique to it, but it gets so irritating seeing people peddle this pagan identity as some inherently eco-radical persona because that's not the case. The pagans were colonizers. They weren't worshipping the earth when they were attempting to conquer Arctic gatherer-hunter societies with their gods and agriculture. If it's a rejection of

Christianity, well, it just doesn't go deep enough. It's only through Christian eyes that Viking culture looks earth-bound.

Now I know a lot of the Cascadian BM scene looks at it differently and for the most part, I don't care. If you think you can find some positive, eco-light in the pagan stuff, I hope it's a stepping stone for you. But it becomes entrapped in all this identity games and I just wish every single time I see some mysteriously short interview with those bands that they'd just step the fuck up and make a statement about what they stand for. I'm not into the artsy shit and just dancing around the edges of this historically racist milieu and playing with who owns what. If someone is asking you questions about race, the answers are black and white. You don't need to justify playing black metal if you aren't racist. Just take your stance. It might make you look a little less eerie, but that's better than looking Aryan right? It's a little harsh to make a tirade before some ritual set, but I don't care. I'll give credit to Austin of Seidr/Panopticon for putting it out there: anarchist, anti-racist, etc. I don't agree about the pagan stuff, but it's that easy to take a stand.

What happens instead is all these bands playing with the imagery, wearing Thor's hammer necklaces, and all that shit, and then suddenly Burzum is just scary music about gnomes and wizards. Yeah, fuck that, it's about crazy ass, racist bullshit. Or, just the same, I get furious about people pretending that shitty ass Darkthrone being racist was just a thing of the past. They put out racist press releases at the same time that anarchist bands were getting fucked with for suspected links to the ALF/ELF. Darkthrone is the same dudes, same band. Why do they get a free pass? If you want to put on jewelry and try to look evil, cool, but when you come around looking like a Neo-Nazi, expect to get treated like one. The RABM stuff has attracted some decent stuff, but I generally feel like it's a lot more forgiving towards Communism than AP. It's been a path for some to find out about more and even better for getting some of the Cascadian BM bands to stand up as anarchists, but kind of equally estranged when it comes to more GA/AP leaning bands.

The point is, if you're reading this and playing metal, don't be afraid to let it out.

It's funny you mention the attempts to disconnect art and artist. A few months ago, I wrote an article on whether or not it is possible to separate the two (for example, whether one can listen to Burzum and not feel culpable on account of enjoying the music alone, not Varg's politics, and how this becomes sketchy when you encounter more problematic bands like Arghoslent). With this in mind, is the philosophical content of Peregrine so inextricably linked with the music that separating art from artist becomes impossible or an untenable position? Would you even want someone to be able to justify this separation, or would you rather the listener either absorb the complete package or avoid it entirely?

I've been a musician just barely longer than I've been an anarchist, but I consider my views central to everything else that I do. You cannot separate Peregrine from anarcho-primitivist ideas. This is my band and that is the message that drives it. The same goes for Burzum: you cannot separate Varg's ideas and his music. Obviously that sounds like a slippery slope. Do I need to philosophically justify everything I listen to? No. I'm not saying that I'll only listen to anarchist or anarcho-primitivist music, but there are definite lines that I draw. I don't listen to misogynist, racist, nationalist, or homophobic bands. Period. There's enough bands out there that I don't feel tethered to any particular group. If I know some serious shit about a band or band member, I just can't get past it, and I'm fine with that. And we don't even have to get into Burzum on this. I used to love Phobia, but then I found out about Shane beating his partner at Maryland Death Fest and that's it. Done.

I'm familiar with this argument; that certain ideas override their maker, and I think that can have some truth to it, but when it comes to art and music, I don't see it the same. John Zerzan [<http://www.johnzerzan.net/>], a fellow anarcho-primitivist writer and friend, cites Heidegger pretty often and gets a good amount of flak for it. It's no secret that during World War II Heidegger aligned with the Nazis. When it comes to writing, there's a context that's more intent and deliberate. You can lay it out; you can pull apart arguments and deal with ideas in a different way. If it comes down to ideas and arguments, you can just lay it open and tear it apart. It's all contextual and it's not like if John was trying to cover a "Heidegger song" because it influenced him in some way.

But music is different. It's not meant to be torn apart and examined in that way or picked over and chosen from. I'm not going to say that I listen to some band because of a tiny element from some songs, but because it's a package that I can listen to and like hearing. It's a package deal. And that package comes out of the persons who create it. If those people are racists, then it's a part of that music. If it's angry music written by drunk/junked up misogynists, then it's a part of that music. I can't make the distinction and I don't see a reason to.

I look at it from both sides. I can't listen to that shit and I don't want some racist, sexist asshole listening to Peregrine. I edit an anarcho-primitivist journal, *Species Traitor* [<http://www.facebook.com/speciestraitor>]. Years ago, some nationalist anarchist had his profile picture on his MySpace page of him wearing a *Species Traitor* shirt. I gave that dude shit constantly. I wanted that dude to know, as the writer and editor of that journal, that I thought [he was] a fucking piece of shit. It's just pretty straightforward in my eyes. I'm not into any of this for popularity or to try and sneak these ideas in to some racist shitbag's itunes list. It's all upfront. And that's how I want it to be.

So, as far as the question of whether the music or the message comes first? For me it's the message. I think a lot of people probably feel that way, but it's hard to say. More often than not, a song comes from a message that I want to convey, and I try to tailor the music to that to a certain degree. The entire Green Scare benefit split is an example of that. I can't make people read the lyrics or follow up on any of it. But I can definitely keep it in their faces.

I'm with you for the most part on that. I used to be on the "art, not artist" side of things, but lately I've come to realize that the two are often inseparable. On a differing note, for those who haven't heard of you guys before, could you explain the origins of the name Peregrine? At first glance it doesn't seem to be a particularly "metal" name, yet from my understanding it has much relevance as to the band's lyrical content.

Personally speaking, I just have a really deep love for birds and birds of prey in particular. The name comes from the Peregrine falcon. I've had people who thought it was from an old BMX company or Peregrine Took from *Lord of the Rings*, but it's neither of those.

I really just think the Peregrine is an amazing bird; its resilience in particular is significant. Peregrines were almost completely wiped out because of DDT but have been making a comeback. They can survive in any number of situations and circumstances. I've just always felt like they're adapting and waiting, a sign that wildness can't be eliminated and that it lurks everywhere: on farms, in cities, in the forest, waiting for this nightmare to end so they can reclaim what domestication has tried taking away.

We spoke a little before about where you see Peregrine going aesthetically as a band. Where do you see Peregrine going from a political or existential point of view? Do you wish for a day when the Collapse will occur to the point that you no longer need to spread your message

musically? If you ever do find yourself successfully rewilded, would you still have the urge to make and consume metal music (or music at all, for that matter), or would you be at enough internal peace to concentrate on other endeavours?

I'd like to think there'd be an end point in rewilding, but really it's just a process. It's an undoing of the domestication process. The flip side of it is wildness, but that's not an end point. To really live wild, to really re-enter the world as it isn't just a step or check list; it's a constant. Rewilding is about relearning and learning the essential skill set that life amongst the wildness requires, but it's more than that. It's not about a survivalistic sense of perseverance, it's about living. There's not a point at which you find yourself at peace with the world and know everything around you.

I think of rewilding as a process of radical humility; basically undoing all the fuddled garbage that a scientific rationality imposes on our experiences and encounters with the world. We carry this horribly unfortunate sense of economy where we have to weigh the merit and value of beings or objects. The bind of domesticity is seeing the world as a resource. To undo that process isn't about chemistry or biology, it's about breaking down this abstract, destructive methodology of reducing everything into consumable pieces so that we can learn about them through with the colonizer's bravado.

The beauty of wildness comes in its simplicity. There's a lot to learn, but it's so easy to over analyze everything and to jump back to the books to try and understand why an insect does something, what relationship two animals might have. I'm not saying there's no merit in field guides and books, far from it, but really it comes down to opening yourself to experience. At the end of the day, after all the dirt time in the world, you just kind of have to get over your ego and realize that the view you brought into the forest with you might not be right. There's all kinds of moments where the connections in life just kind of line up and it's this huge relief to just say; "wow, it's that clear".

Ecology, wildness; it's all about cycles and interconnectedness. I think the world that Reason has brought us has all just been a justification for why we want to believe we're not animals. But that's wrong. We're wild animals. We're just like the monkeys at the zoo who go insane and start throwing shit at each other, getting really violent or just lost in trying to understand our surroundings. This isn't what we were meant for. Fortunately, one of our biggest hurdles is just accepting that: realizing that we are animals, that we need each other, that we need community, that we need clean air and water, that our minds and bodies are the same as our nomadic gatherer-hunter ancestors and cousins.

My message and my purpose is rewilding. And I hope, more than anything, that I can one day live without civilization. I dream about that moment when the machines finally stop for the last time and it all goes silent: no more machines running, no more cars driving, no more planes in the sky, no worries about paying rent and bills, no worries about what will happen when the next hydrofracking site goes up, no more worrying about how I'm going to eat without demolishing forests on another part of the world or contributing to deep ocean wells that are just pouring out toxins into the sea. It goes on and on. The collapse won't be an event. It isn't now and it won't be. Just like domestication, it's a process, it's an ongoing thing. And it began the second that cheap oil peaked.

We don't have back-up plans, we don't have some looming technology that will take the place of cheap oil. What we're seeing happening all around us; wars over oil supplies, more dangerous and costly methods of energy production (hydrofracking for natural gas or deep sea oil deposits, mountaintop removal, tar sands, just to name a few), increasing dependence of psychoactive

drugs (legal or not), rapidly worsening occurrences of massive violence (school/mall/social shootings), a massive influx towards alternate techno-personas, everything that is happening around us is a symptom of overshoot.

This civilization, spread across the Earth and reaching beyond, is tied to its technologically routed logistics in order to do even the most minute processing. It's completely dependent upon circumstance and control, yet every day, every minute, we're seeing that illusion of control fade. We put our faith in technology, we put our faith in governments, corporations and religion, but they're no more in control with this civilization than they were in Rome, Easter Island, Cahokia, Mesopotamia, and on, and on. This civilization will collapse just as its predecessors, but this civilization is on a global scale with no recourse for a draw down.

In all of our arrogance and pride, we tossed aside the knowledge that allowed this cancer to spread even a decade or two ago. The industrial farmer has no idea of how to grow acres of corn without petrochemicals. The tween has no idea how to do math without a calculator. My job is working at an organic, Amish farmer's co-op, but if the internet goes down, we've got nothing. The power goes out and everything that the legacy of Progress has produced becomes a useless, toxic artifact. And that is the back-drop. It's not a matter of religious or political belief, by using limited resources, we are ultimately bringing about the demise of civilization. I see hope in that. I feel some sense of gratitude that this can't go on forever, and, in my opinion, it won't even go on much longer. The purpose can be summed up as this: the sooner, the better; the more that change is based on choice, the better.

I think about that non-stop. And I know that indigenous societies are notorious for singing, but when you think about it, it makes sense. We spend so much time trying to cover our bases with money because we're powerless. We have to find a way to get money to buy food and have little to no control over the system that brings it to the stores or restaurants where we work. We spend so much time, typically twice as much time at our jobs than what a hunter-gatherer spends taking care of their basic needs, just trying to work for money to spend and cover the debt required just to function in this society. And if we don't, then we end up in one institution or another, but it's a dead end and there's no certainty. We're sold the imagery of upward mobility in a stagnant environment, but we don't have control over the environment or even the economy. So when we sing, it's anger or escapism or longing. When rooted peoples sing, it's reverence to what they know. Music is expression and that will always be there.

So when and if I'm living without the burdens of civilization, it won't stop me from a little blast or double bass tapping, but it just might mean changing the medium of expression, not getting rid of it. I truly enjoy playing the guitar and the collapse of civilization won't make the millions that exist vanish, but even if it did, I'd say it's worth it

I leave the last words to your discretion.

Thank you for the discussion, as always, it's appreciated when the message is acknowledged as more than just background noise. My purpose is never to tell people what to think. I'm not a part of a party selling newspapers or anything like that; I think the ideas stand on their own, and I'll stand behind them. The consequences of civilization are very real, and it's reach is always further than we would like to believe. I hope folks are interested enough to look into it.

That said, nearly everything Peregrine has ever done or will do has tried to raise money, even though the amounts are pretty meager, and nearly all of that has always gone to the folks who've been wrapped up in the Green Scare round ups and Survival International. Sadly the number of people facing time as "terrorists" despite only attacking property, not people, has constantly

risen throughout the duration of Peregrine's existence. Even more sadly, a number of those folks have turned to snitching which drives the years up for everyone else who held true. Those folks deserve support. Even if you don't agree with their actions, it's pretty clear that there's a vast difference between targeting property and killing people, that getting 8, 10, or 22 years in isolation, is insane. Look into it. Survival International [<http://www.survivalinternational.org/>] is the one organization that I feel has truly worked to make immediate improvements and draw attention to the plight of indigenous peoples worldwide. They're not the only one, but they might be the only ones to do it with full respect for the wants of the indigenous societies: to be left alone and be able to live as they have for thousands of years. Everything we buy, everything we do within civilization has global ramifications. It's the epitome of irony that this fleeting civilization, even as it faces its inevitable conclusion, will go to such ridiculous extremes to exterminate those whose continued perseverance shines a light on our ability to outlive our Frankenstein.

So if you're looking for some places to put support, those are two of the best that I can point towards. Outside of that, wildness exists. It's not a place or thing, but a part of our being and the underlying context for all life. It's not an ideology or platform, it just is. And when the lights ultimately go out, that's what we have left. And I don't think that's a bad place to be.

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