

An Indigenist Perspective

Apocalypse No!

By JUAN SANTOS

From the beginning, this culture-civilization-has been a culture of occupation. -

Derrick Jensen

It's scripted: a tragedy whose end is embedded in its beginnings, an unfolding logic whose conclusion is the inevitable result of its premises.

It's simple. And obvious. We find ourselves in the midst of the most rapid mass extinction in Earth's history; we have the power to all-but end life on Earth. We can do so with nuclear weapons, today, in Iran, or simply by turning the ignition switch on our automobiles and gliding over paved surfaces where nothing can live. A little more carbon dioxide, just a little, will tip the scale - unleashing our potential for matching the greatest mass extinction ever--the one called The Great Dying.

Science has given us until roughly 2012 to take radical action to change the course we're on. In the next six years, they tell us, we will determine the fate of the Earth.

With the US and its white colonial puppet Israel on a nuclear collision course with Iran and Syria, we may have less time than that.

250 million years ago 95% of all species died. Only one large land animal was left. Carbon dioxide and methane--the two most deadly of the greenhouse gases--were responsible. We can do it again. We've followed the script, we know our lines, and we've reached the final scene.

For that reason, this is a most exciting juncture for the Armageddon mongers among us.

That's most of who believe in the colonizer's religion, in the Beast, the Great Tribulation, the Four Horsemen, the Seven Seals, and the other visions of St. John the Apocalyptic, whose hallucinogenic fantasies penetrated clearly into the essence, unveiling the inevitable end, the direction this civilization must head and the end it must reach.

Fundamentalist Christians everywhere are working overtime to "bring it on"; they want to fulfill the conditions for the return of Christ, whose first priority and purpose in action, according to the book of the Revelation, will be the destruction of the Earth.

But first, the fundamentalists believe, they must be certain of two things: the stability and existence of the white colonial settler state of Israel, and that the "gospel" is "preached to every creature" on Earth.

Throughout history the "gospel" has been "preached" through conquest. Otherwise there might not have been a single Christian in the Americas, Africa, or, for that matter, Europe. Christianity spread with the Roman Empire, and, in the midst of the Inquisitions, "spread" to the Americas in the wake of the Conquest, a conquest in which as many as 100 million native people died. It spread to Africa in the late 1800s as Europe divided the continent and colonized it in wars that cost another 50 million lives. It spread like a disease, bringing death to millions as part of the two greatest, most racist Holocausts in the history of "civilization."

A practical interpretation of the fundamentalist perspective might view the matter this way: the fundamentalists believe that they have failed to conquer the world, and Jesus, or the Antichrist (there's little functional difference--both come as Destroyers) will come back and conquer it for them in the battle of Armageddon. For this scenario to unfold requires the existence of Israel, and, at a minimum, that every living human has heard the "good news" of "salvation."

Then, Jesus will come back with a vengeance. Everything will be under control; everything will be dead. And if it's not, then there's always the Last Judgment for backup.

The images of the "end times," the symbols of the Revelation, Armageddon, and the rest are familiar throughout "Christendom"--the lands and peoples conquered by the church and its allies--the people who survived, at least.

For many of us, they serve as a frame of reference that's not only familiar, but normal--images lodged, unquestioned, in the subconscious and that function as a mythic encoded drama--a script about where we come from, where we are, and the nature of our destiny. Like all such encoded dramas this one frames our identity. It's the myth we're living, as Joseph Campbell would have it.

It doesn't matter if you "believe" in it or not.

If you live in a "Christian Nation" and think you're not a "Christian"--if you think you're above all that, put aside the question of "belief" for a moment. Dwell, instead, with the images: The Beast; Armageddon; the Seventh Seal, and watch as their compelling power asserts itself.

A Way of Death

Our current sense of self is no more sustainable than our current use of energy or technology.

- Jensen

Since the dropping of the Bomb on Hiroshima the cultural identity based on these images has been shattering.

No one openly admitted that "success," according to the script, meant success as the total domination and destruction of Life on Earth even though we are on the brink of doing just that - or that the essence of civilization's "meaning" is to be found etched in the shadows burnt by the Bomb's atomic flash into Hiroshima's walls. No teacher openly tells a room full of school children "Success means destruction and meaning, in our culture, means death."

In the US, elements of the sixties generation either clearly understood the matter--beginning with Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* and the onset of the Black movement for freedom--or they were caught up in the mass discontent that spread like a wave from Ground Zero, and from the worldwide anti-colonial uprisings of the post-war era.

The most conscious elements of humanity got the deeper message--often at great personal cost: not only that the Bomb is evil, or that slavery, conquest and genocide are evil, but that this *way* we live is a way of death, in its entirety. Many understood that there must be an alternative, and they were by no means naive or merely "idealistic" in demanding it "NOW."

They were, rather, speaking the language of life, a language most were unable to hear or speak.

This was the impetus behind the great cultural transformations of that time. Much of the exploration, the seeking of *a way out of here*, led toward an embrace of various forms of salvationist ideology and practice--Marxist, Buddhist, Hindu and their thousand and one New Age variations - none of which break the fundamental mold of the civilization that shaped them.

So much has changed for nothing to have changed.

But underlying much of these explorations and permeating the approach of many of the explorers was a "new"--actually ancient, paradigm--one ultimately grounded in the science of ecology and the intuition of ecologists and those close to the Earth--holistic thinking.

This approach to the world has gained a toehold in Western Civilization over the last 35 years or so - just soon enough for many to begin to remember what indigenous peoples have always held close. The Earth is one living being. And now, as a species and as a planet of living beings, we have nothing but a toehold between us and the abyss.

It's not just the bomb, of course, it's the whole thing--the Earth isn't "dying"--we're killing Her. This is the Apocalypse; Mass Extinction, Peak Oil, Agricultural Collapse, Ecosystem Collapse, Nuclear War: the Apocalypse goes by many names. Its most occult name is "Everyday Life."

Our "way of life" has never worked on planet Earth and it never will--every empire in world history has collapsed, every empire overshoot its "resources"--and this empire will be no different.

We've had, as Daniel Quinn has put it, our Great Forgetting of our place on Earth.

Now, we urgently need a Great Remembering.

Resource Wars and Fascism: Babylon's Way Out

Those in power rule by force, and the sooner we break ourselves of illusions to the contrary, the sooner we can at least begin to make reasonable decisions about whether, when, and how we are going to resist.

- Jensen

Cognizant that life itself has but a bare toehold on the planet, the bible thumpers are thumping, the business as usual clock is ticking, and the empire builders are gunning for oil.

They don't think that when it goes down, they'll go down with us. The bible-ists think they'll be "raptured" into "Heaven." The capitalists and super capitalists have their own brand of "rapture." They plan to buy the lifeboats, to live in ease, squeezing the earth for every copper cent and ounce of oil left in Her. And they mean for their progeny to rule what is left after the wall comes tumbling down.

That's what today's massive and deliberate redistribution of wealth and resources toward the rich is about.

They mean to run what's left on "clean nuke," as Bush calls it, even though--like the reserves of coal, oil, and natural gas, uranium will mostly be depleted by 2100.

They plan to control the world's nuclear weaponry, as best they can, and thus what remains of the oil. As the rest of the world sinks into oil starvation, economic depression, and mass starvation, no one--the US imperialists hope - will be able to challenge their dominance of the Earth's "resources."

In the meantime, they mean to overthrow or face down the Big 3, the oil rich 3, the new evil axis of Iraq, Iran, and of course, the newest target--Venezuela. Bolivia will not be far behind; it's also hydrocarbon-rich, and its government is no more "cooperative" than the rest. Mexico, with its stolen elections, and Saudi Arabia, with its bloated royal family, are under control, for the moment, and Bush, the idiot savant, will never let go of Iraq.

The current US/ Israeli assault on Lebanon and Hizbollah is phase two of a plan to gain strategic control over the Middle East. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice calls it a "New Middle East," in the same spirit as the "New World Order" declared by Bush1. Prominent members of the Bush 2 administration, such as Vice President Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and others linked to the "Project for a New American Century", speak openly of a Pax Americana and openly advocate that

the US totally dominate the globe militarily, beginning with the Middle East. The aim is to crush non-state resistance groups like Hamas and Hizbollah, to squeeze Syria, and lay the groundwork for a massive assault on Iran--whose vast reserves of oil and Islamic ideology represent the most formidable block to utter US power over the region and its oil reserves, and thus, over the world. "It is time for a new Middle East, it is time to say to those who do not want a different kind of Middle East that we will prevail; they will not," Rice said in Jerusalem.

The Project for a New American Century says Iran is "rushing to develop ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons as a deterrent to American intervention..."

Even the hint that Iran might--one distant day - combine its vast reserves of hydrocarbons with a nuclear capacity to defend them and thus remove them permanently from the grasp of the American Empire, has unleashed a storm of preparations for a major war - even a nuclear war - one pitting the US, Israel and Turkey against Iran and its ally Syria. Such an aggression could readily draw China, Russia, or even France into the fray in an effort to protect their own stakes in Iran's oil, lighting the fuse of a nuclear Armageddon.

Make no mistake, however--the elites of each of these nations mean to milk Mother Earth of fossil fuels for their *own* benefit--not that of the US, and certainly not in the interest of planetary stability and the sustenance of Life. This is a way of death - rebel state, rogue state and Empire alike. Only Cuba is different at all, and it has no oil.

All civilization is about power and the addiction to power; Euro-American culture is permeated with nothing but power; all the West does is in its pursuit. For now, at least, they're the "experts."

Enter the era of resource wars and fascism.

It's "necessary" if "civilization" and our "way of life" and "standard of living" are continue for even a while--even for the elites.

We are entering the dark tunnel of the new era now. The US's colonial war of occupation in Iraq is a resource war. The overt threats against Iran, the rumblings and assassination plots against Venezuela and the bombing of Lebanon portend more of the same.

As the economy--and thus the civilization--based on oil runs dry, as it can no longer deliver, as it consumes itself in "economic downturns" the powerful will see only one choice. War and mass repression.

As the availability of cheap energy evaporates, as oil production peaks, Third World economies will begin to collapse, even as the Green Revolution--the hydrocarbon based agricultural "miracle" that has led to a doubling of the Earth's population--also begins to collapse.

Starvation, mass rebellion and insurrection will become the order of the day for already impoverished peoples on a global scale. With the onset of increasingly dramatic impacts of global warming and the rapidly escalating depletion of the

world's aquifers much of the Third World may become as desperate and chaotic as sub-Saharan Africa is today.

The Pentagon has developed plans, not only for resource wars, but for dealing with a global and vastly accelerating refugee crisis--their aim is to keep the refugees out of the First World entirely. This is the backdrop for today's targeting and scapegoating of migrant populations within the US and Europe. Under such conditions the ruling elites see migrant peoples as a potential source of acute internal instability.

As the Empire seeks to establish its hegemony over oil and to maintain its hegemony over its Third World puppets while suppressing its colonized and dispossessed populations at "home"; as it is forced to become increasingly brutal to carry out its aims (witness Lebanon) mass discontent and rebellion could erupt, even in the belly of the beast.

It would seem that mass repression - even open fascism - are the only things that might keep the peasants - us--starving in line. Peoples of color within the US will be the first and most visible mass targets. But every targeted group--including women, will be increasingly at risk of overt, violent repression as the State careens toward open fascism.

If the destroyers have their way, there will be no light at the end of the tunnel we are entering, only starvation, limited but ceaseless resource wars, and the thousand year reign of the Anti-Christ - a permanent new Reich.

Their other option is Armageddon.

The City of God

"Hell is empty, all the devils are here."

- William Shakespeare

Even as Israel launched its devastating assault on the Lebanese people, US neo-con darling Newt Gingrich called it the opening phase of World War III, and over 3,000 members of a Christian fundamentalist sect hit Washington DC in a mass lobbying effort to urge that the US attack Iran.

Their leader, the Rev. John Hagee, wants to bring on the apocalypse and believes the Book of Esther predicts that such an attack would set off the "End Times." His followers are not alone. In 2002 a Time/CNN poll held that 59 percent of US citizens believe that the prophecies of the Book of Revelations will come true. Other polls show that roughly 40 percent of people in the US believe that a sequence of events that presage the biblical "End Times" is now under way.

Hagee--a televangelist called "Pastor Strangelove" by some--is the author of *Jerusalem Countdown*, which has sold some half million copies. It was the nation's top "inspirational" book and stayed on best-seller lists for weeks. Hagee holds that

the US and Israel must launch war against Iran to fulfill God's plan--that they must launch the opening salvos of Armageddon.

Such is the wrath of god--or of those who claim to be god's earthly representatives. As portrayed in the book called the Revelation it is a wrath extreme beyond measure. The book's mixed metaphors, messages and morality are equally extreme.

Revelation 11:18 brings the message--and the confusion--home: "It is time," the passage declares, "to destroy those who destroy the Earth."

But that's not what happens. Instead, in his vengeance, the deity--following precisely the logic of Western civilization, destroys the Earth himself. The most generous interpretation that can be offered is that he destroys the village in order to save it.

He then--having destroyed all Life - creates a new, "pure", and patently sexless world to replace it. But really, it's not a world at all; at least there is no description of the "New Earth." It serves only as a backdrop to the "New Jerusalem." It's as if there were nothing but a city, a city with no countryside, no surroundings, no Earth, no sea, no animals, no life--a heavenly place, a place that can at last be ruled with no disorder--with nothing left to destroy.

The creation of this Disney style future is the aim and end result of god's "plan." It's "god's way" out of the conundrum of civilization, the way out the "World" that Christian fundamentalists are taught to "hate," and to destroy even as they replicate it. The "City of God," as Augustine preached, would ultimately triumph.

Babylon System: The City of Man

"The Babylon System is the Vampire"

--Bob Marley

But the real City--i.e. civilization--obviously doesn't work like that. The City, with its concentration of wealth, with its division of labor, with the inability of its population to feed itself, cannot exist without exploiting the Earth and the people that surround it. As its population grows in both size and density, it must expand its control of the surrounding territory in order to access more food and resources. This is the foundation of all Empire and mass enslavement. It is the beginning of genocide. As Daniel Quinn points out, the cultures that stand in the way of the city's territorial expansion must be destroyed, or assimilated, which amounts to the same thing.

To get rid of the city--the "World"--is among the main themes of the Revelation. To do so, before he can create the Disney version, the New Jerusalem, god must rid the Earth of the real city--Babylon. Here's the message: god, like Bush and the fundamentalists, is going to make civilization *work*--or kill us and all life while trying.

The most clear-cut and unequivocal action of the deity of the Revelation is the destruction of the Great Babylon.

Represented metaphorically as a wealthy whore, Babylon is explicitly identified as a city, a global capitol of commerce and corruption with links to craven, lust-filled businessmen in a network that envelops the globe.

The Rastafarians, certainly, have taken this reading straightforwardly and made of it a central image in their eclectic theology of liberation. They're not the first and won't be the last, to turn a repressive ideology on its head and make of it a liberatory one. Nor have they been the first to selectively emphasize biblical passages to fulfill their own cultural purposes--and the cultural purposes and functions of this myth are altogether different in the Euro-American cultural matrix.

While the oppressed--particularly those of African and Indigenous American descent - have made of the bible a "way out" of their oppression at the hands of their Babylonian captors, in a Euro-American framework the Revelation offers a different "way out"--a way to avoid responsibility for the destruction that comes as the climax of their "civilization."

For the oppressed, in their theologies of liberation, apocalypse is *restorative*. It restores the natural order--it is the restoration, as well, of human justice.

In the syncretic Mayan *Book of the Chilam Balam of Chumayal* the sentiment is clear; the return of christ means the end of Spanish rule in Mayan lands. Once the Spanish have been driven out, the rule of Jesus Christ and the Mayan leadership will begin again.

In the most coherent and morally consistent of the indigenous prophecies -- that of the Hopi nation--it is said that during the Time of Purification a brave person will stand up and demand of the rulers, "You profit at the expense of all life. Come here and pay your debt."

It is that payment--the moral and practical responsibility for the debt of destruction - that the Euro-American script encoded in the Revelation means to avoid.

Those who take refuge in god's "rescue" and god's "plan" fail to realize that we live in Babylon as if it were the New Jerusalem, and that there is no essential difference between them.

It is the emotional, psychological, cultural and economic compulsion to ignore the reality of that which surrounds the City and its elites that makes Babylon and the ecological destruction and human and animal oppression it represents possible.

The New Jerusalem, the "City of God," is only an idealized projection of the same dynamic--except that in the "heavenly" case it's projected that there is no real Earth surrounding the City--it has been and can be destroyed. Even under such conditions, the City--civilization - can, must and will live on. The triumph of will, the dominance of the City of God, *is* the triumph of Babylon, and both are predicated on omnicide - the destruction of Life on Earth. The so-called New Earth, in this scenario, is, apparently unworthy even of description in the Book of Revelation. It has no reality.

The Destroyer

"We also have to work the dark side, if you will."

- US Vice President Dick Cheney

"In terms of the despiritualization of the universe, the mental process works so that it becomes virtuous to destroy the planet."

--Russell Means

The distinction between a Hitler and a "Good German" is a distinction without a difference.

Those who are not outright death mongers--which is to say those unconscious of the implications of the script, don't get off the hook. If they don't know, the chances are they don't want to know.

The Euro-American rendering of the tale of the apocalypse nonetheless provides an inoculation against any real awareness of the reality of our global situation and against taking responsibility for its consequences.

In the US, the middle class is as addicted to power and to things--junk--as are the elites. The main difference is that they can only access smaller doses of these pain killers.

The addiction to power and to things leaves us, like any addiction, psychologically and emotionally "invulnerable." That's the whole idea; someone gets hurt, but it's not us. We *have ours*. We don't sympathize.

Hierarchical civilization is based on just this, something so simple; hurt, power, the repression of meaning and the evasion of consequences. The Latin root of "evade" means to "walk out" on.

The meaning of the myth of the apocalypse in its Euro-American context can't be abstracted from these fundamental dynamics.

The Revelation story means that the destroyers of the Earth who "believe" in Jesus will be whisked away on god's great broom in a moment akin to emotional/ mystical/ sexual "rapture." The believer / destroyers get off the hook, and leave the "sinners" behind to suffer the final destruction of the Earth.

They "evade"--they walk out on--the consequences.

They are, after all, the "elect."

We all know them; smug, fearful, arrogant: they all but identify themselves to us at a glance. They consider themselves superior, if not supreme, beings.

They "have theirs"--their small power, their willingness to hurt those "beneath" them, and a veiled fear of the consequences. They are the "civilized" ones. They keep the rest of us in line.

The script that underlies the Revelation has a message for them; it tells them this:

"You need not--dare not--think about or authentically acknowledge news about the impending death of the planet. You need not act. It's in god's hands--where all "spooky" things, all "ghostly" and frightening things belong. The signs of doom are not for you. This is god's plan. It is not we but he who will destroy the Earth, in his just wrath against evil.

"But remember, you are not "of" this World--you do not belong here. The world is evil; you are to hate it as you love god. God himself hates it and that is why he destroys it. That is why he saves you because you hate the Earth as he does."

Such is the madness of god's wrath. Such is the "secret" evil and madness of his followers.

Having then, destroyed the Earth, god replaces it. But this is no Garden of Eden--he's not making that "mistake" again. There will be no innocence and no fall--those are no longer options. He replaces the Garden with the City State--the shining New Jerusalem. He replaces natural freedom in nature with civilized "security."

There are angels at every gate. Watching. God can't escape civilization. The story, the script, can't escape its own premises. He re-enacts the inherent logic of destruction embedded in civilization by re-establishing the City State. He re-establishes the disease, the City that cannot live without destroying the Earth. This time, civilization is an act of god; god the Destroyer; god the Evader.

The Garden is gone. Forever. There is nowhere left to turn, no way out. There is a guard at every gate.

He hasn't learned the most fundamental lesson: that life is vulnerability; that power--this kind of power - is death.

Is it any wonder the Christian fascists resonate with this tale?

Turning Point

"The time of warnings, passive resistance and conformity is already passed. All of us are now confronted with an enormous challenge: SURVIVAL"

- Council of Indigenous Elders and Priests of the Americas

"A growing body of western scientific evidence now suggests what Indigenous Peoples have expressed for a long time: life as we know it is in danger."

- THE ALBUQUERQUE DECLARATION

We live in the most critical moment in the history of humanity on Earth, and at one of the three most critical junctures in the record of life on this Earth.

Hiding under our desks will not--no matter what they told us as children--stop nuclear war. It will not stop Peak Oil, the collapse of the Green Revolution in agriculture, the collapse of civilization or of life on the planet. Neither will huddling behind the bible.

We urgently need a different script, a different vision. It is time for a different kind of reckoning, a new Judgment. We need it now.

The possibility of global nuclear war is upon us in the Middle East. The window of opportunity to avert the most horrendous impacts of global warming is rapidly closing. By 2012 it will be too late. Some scientists, like James Lovelock, originator of the Gaia theory, say that it is already too late.

We need a new script--one that will tell us how we might save life on Earth, how we might survive what the scientists and indigenous elders alike tell us is coming. A script that will ensure we never make the same mistakes again--if we survive.

Those of us who sought--inspired by the upsurges of the 60's--to re-evaluate all values, were right. Those who sought to counter the dominant culture, to decolonize, to seek more ancient and deep rooted spiritual, cultural and political values were right.

Some intuited what indigenous cultures have always known; the need to place our focus in beauty, balance, and the renewal of the world: to protect land and life.

Many intuited the bottom line: that we are responsible.

This attitude of rectitude and reckoning is inherent in indigenous cultures--which are, by definition, identified with the land, who are identified with all the power and personality of Place, and who experience themselves as an inseparable part of the web of life particular to that place.

Indigenous peoples want no escape.

They belong.

They know that to separate from the web of life is to destroy it; and the very heart of their spiritual and ritual lives is to maintain the balance between humans, Earth and Life in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual respect.

It's been written of one indigenous elder, for example, that he "carries with him a little pouch filled with cornmeal whenever he takes anything he needs from Mother Earth, he puts or sprinkles a little pinch of cornmeal at that place. By this gesture he pays homage to the Source of all life and survival."

From the depths of this simple respect and from the understanding of the implications of separation from the web of Life, has arisen a kind of prophecy that, in its moral consistency and practical clarity is the antithesis of the Revelation. Among them are the prophecies of the Hopi, the Kogi, the Lakota and the Maya. There are many others. Perhaps some who are interested in a different vision or a different script might look there. My purpose is not to proselytize. No one needs to be "saved" or changed into anything they are not.

We've already been "saved" and "changed" to the point that many of us are out of our bodies and minds. We can, must, will and do find our own way.

Our task, if anything, is to cast aside the script we've been handed--to cast aside our colonization and "salvation"; to reckon simply, intimately and directly with our life - and death--situation, and with what we, personally, are going to do about it.

Perhaps we will be so fortunate as to learn that to know ourselves once again is to know the power of place and our relationship to it, to regain our role as caretakers of the land, and to find our place, once more, as part of the Living Earth. Perhaps we will be so fortunate as to survive.

Acceptance

"We need to take a close look at this and then really come to terms with ourselves. To move ahead into the next 500 years we must leave some things behind or they will contaminate or even eliminate the future. We cannot go forward if we keep destroying the earth. But we must also ask, what is good and healthy and helpful? Those good things can be part of our foundation, part of our pathway into the next 500 years."

- Navajo Elder Leon Secatero

The forces arrayed against us are immense, so immense that, even were the world to suddenly awaken to the depths of the danger--even if the rulers and the fundamentalists themselves were to awaken - the sheer inertia, the momentum toward destruction, might still carry us over the edge.

But in the US some 60 million people say they are gravely concerned about global warming. The war for control of the Middle East, and the moves toward fascism in the US, have made George W. Bush the most unpopular president of our time.

If--and it is a huge if--we were to wake up--to understand the utter magnitude of the threat posed by the US empire to the world and to all life *on every front*, then the possibility of an effective movement spurred by a tremendous and urgent energy might develop in time to make a difference.

It does no good, however, to note the slim odds--because if we don't act in just this way, the odds of survival for most of the Earth's species--ourselves included, drop precipitously.

For all that the Third World is destined to suffer the harshest of the coming blows, it may well be in the non-industrialized areas that any non-fascistic reorganization of society is possible. Cuba's response to its national peak oil crisis is a case in point. Not only are the Third World nations more susceptible to peoples' struggles, but the fragmentation they will undergo under the conditions on the horizon, combined with the relative closeness of the peasantry to the land in those places, lends itself more readily to the kind of small, local, sustainable solutions that appear to be the only solutions that will be possible or desirable.

That is, if we manage, somehow, to avoid a nuclear World War III, if global warming and desertification don't turn the land into an oven, if local ecosystems can be sustained, or only partially collapse; if the aquifers aren't depleted; and if the rivers and lakes don't disappear with the glaciers

First World conditions are more likely to develop in a fascistic direction. Going "back to the land" as a survival matter may not make any more sense for tomorrow's survivors than it did for David Koresh to hold up in his compound in Waco.

Those best positioned and prepared to survive independently will be the remnants of the Native American nations, who have a recognized land base, and, in most cases, at least fragmentary living traditions and lore for living directly in tune with the land.

But there are no guarantees at all. The same ecological issues will confront First Worlders as Third Worlders who join in local efforts at sustainable communities.

How can we stop this? How can we survive if we cannot stop it?

The mind rebels.

Having spent thousands of years developing the tools of prediction and control, civilization has now brought us to a juncture in which war, water, weather, food, shelter and our very social structure will be less predictable than they were when we rebelled against maintaining our lives as hunters and gatherers, taking up instead what Quinn calls totalitarian agriculture--the "Agricultural Revolution" - in order to ensure a predictable survival. Our survival, human survival and advantage came first; no matter what the cost to the animal and plant life around us, no matter the cost to our fellow human beings who may find themselves socially "beneath" us and no matter what cost we might pay in our own tortured psyches.

We live--very truly--in a state the Hopi call *Koyannisqatsi--life disintegrating; life out of balance; a way of life that calls for another way of living.*

In 1980, Russell Means gave his most famous speech, called "For America to Live Europe Must Die." In it, he points to another way of living. Means said:

"There is another way. There is the traditional Lakota way and the ways of the other American Indian peoples. It is the way that knows that humans do not have the right to degrade Mother Earth, that there are forces beyond anything the European mind has conceived, that humans must be in harmony with all relations or the relations will eventually eliminate the disharmony. A lopsided emphasis on humans by humans - the European's arrogance of acting as though they were beyond the nature of all related things - can only result in a total disharmony and a readjustment which cuts arrogant humans down to size, gives them a taste of that reality beyond their grasp or control and restores the harmony. There is no need for a revolutionary theory to

bring this about; it's beyond human control. The nature peoples of this planet know this and so they do not theorize about it. Theory is an abstract; our knowledge is real.

"American Indians have been trying to explain this to Europeans for centuries. But, as I said earlier, Europeans have proven themselves unable to hear. The natural order will win out, and the offenders will die out, the way deer die when they offend the harmony by over-populating a given region. It's only a matter of time until what Europeans call "a major catastrophe of global proportions" will occur. It is the role of American Indian peoples, the role of all natural beings, to survive. A part of our survival is to resist. We resist not to overthrow a government or to take political power, but because it is natural to resist extermination, to survive. We don't want power over white institutions; we want white institutions to disappear. That's revolution.

"American Indians are still in touch with these realities - the prophecies, the traditions of our ancestors. We learn from the elders, from nature, from the powers. And when the catastrophe is over, we American Indian people will survive; harmony will be reestablished. That's revolution."

With this understanding, we are free.

We have the freedom of truly having nothing to lose.

We are free to break down into madness, or into sanity. We are free to rediscover, to nurture our role as human beings--as caretakers of the Earth.

It is totally in our hands, and totally out of our hands.

We are free to break down, tune in and stop living as madmen bent on destruction. Free to give up our paranoia, our massive obsession with prediction and control, free, sooner than later, of the cult of everyday life.

We are free to, as the Elder Leon Secatero said, to leave some things behind. Free to trust, once again, our intuition, our bodies, our own thoughts, and to trust the rivers, the animals and our dreams. To be part of the world again. To belong here.

Even to die here, just as it is. Knowing our Place.

As John Lennon once put it in another context, the dream is over. A door is opening to the end of this madness.

We are free to walk through it.

Together.

Wherever it leads.

To life, or to death.

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