a heartbeat: the a city and in the city, a ghetto and in the ghetto, a prison and in the and in the child, a heart and in the heart, a child a mother and in the mother, In the dawn, there is a wasteland and in the wasteland, in the cell, and a cell prison,

as the air in your lungs and the song on your tongue surface-to-air missive to the new generation 4TH COMMUNIQUÉ

A RANSOM NOTE REGARDING YOUR LIFE

COURTESY OF THE CRIMETHINC.
SECRET
SERVICE



you noticed exhortations to indulge urself are always followed by

yourself are always followed by suggestions? Adherents of doctrines seek footholds to claim territory within you, salesmen grasp for handles to jerk you around . . . from new-age prophets to advertisers, from pornographers to radicals, everyone exhorts you to "pursue your desires," but the question remains: which ones? The "real" ones? Who decides which those are?

This just makes it clear what's going on: a war for your soul on every front. And those much talked-about desires are all constructed, anyway—they change, they're dependent on external factors, culture, the whole context and history of our society. We "like" fast food because we have to hurry back to work, because processed supermarket food doesn't taste much better, because the nuclear family-for those who still have even that-is too small and stressed to sustain much festivity in cooking and eating. We "have to" check our email because the dissolution of community has taken our friends and kindred far away, because our bosses would rather not have to talk to us, because "timesaving" technology has claimed the hours once used to write letters—and killed all the passenger pigeons, besides. We "want" to go to work because in this society no one looks out for those who don't, because it's hard to imagine more pleasurable ways to spend our time when everything around us is designed for commerce and consumption. Every craving we feel, every conception we form, is framed in the language of the civilization that creates us.

Does this mean we would want differently in a different world? Yes, but not because we would be free to feel our "natural" desires—no such things exist. Beyond the life you live, you have no "true" self—you are precisely what you do and think and feel. That's

U n t i l our most fantastic demands are met, fantasy will always be at war with reality.

It hijacks history classes and funerals, waylays secretaries on the way to the coffee machine, turns rails into slides and shopping malls to playgrounds—it sends lives spinning out of control. Movie directors endeavor to harness it, travel agents to peddle it, political parties to enlist it; but fantasy, like the one who pursues it in earnest, can serve no employer.

Now that every continent has been conquered and every countryside explored, nothing is more precious than passages to new worlds. Massmanufactured faiths are haunted by a thousand dreams of escape—and fancy weaves better wings for flighty youth than pragmatism ever fashioned our forebears.

As revolutionaries, of course we are fighting for our daydreams! When we cannot stomach another hour of this, we side with those moments we surprise ourselves, flashes in which anything feels possible, peak experiences that may last only instants—and therefore with every inhibited impulse, forbidden pleasure, unexploded dream, all the stifled songs which, unleashed, could create an upheaval like no one has ever seen. And when the dust settles afterwards, we will side with them again.

Call this escapist—perhaps it is; but what class of people is most disturbed by the idea of escape? Jailers. Right or wrong, selfless or selfish, possible or impossible, we're getting out of here.

They were shooting off fireworks through the tear gas down on the waterfront, the sky exploding in grenades of color. Whatever it is that pulls the pin, that hurls you past the boundaries of your own life into a brief and total beauty, it is enough.



"You can see the whole wide world from up here."

"Yes—and others, as well."

The invitation to a new world may take a lifetime or more to extend; self-imposed outcast status may be established in order to receive the transmissions, to give the seeds soil in which to grow. The one who does this is not jettisoning herself from "life" after all, but providing its first port of entry—metabolizing, invisibly, the garbage of the old world into the new one, just as other "parasites" do.

a new dawn

AND UNDERMINE.

the real tragedy about the life of the man who spends it talking on his cell phone and attending business seminars and fidgeting with the remote control: it's not that he denies himself his dreams, necessarily, but that he makes them answer to reality rather than attempting the opposite. The accountant regarded with such pity by runaway teenage lovers may in fact be "happy"—but it is a different happiness than the one they experience on the lam.

If our desires are constructs, if we are indeed the products of our environment, then our freedom is measured by how much control of these environments we have. It's nonsense to say a woman is free to feel however she wants about her body when she grows up surrounded by diet advertisements and posters of anorexic models. It's nonsense to say a man is free when everything he needs to do to get food, shelter, success, and companionship is already established by his society, and all that remains is for him to choose between established options (bureaucrat or technician? bourgeois or bohemian? Democrat or Republican?). We must make our freedom by cutting holes in the fabric of this reality, by forging new realities which will, in turn, fashion us. Putting yourself in new situations constantly is the only way to ensure that you make your decisions unencumbered by the inertia of habit, custom, law, or prejudice—and it is up to you to create these situations. Freedom only exists in the moment of revolution.

And those moments are not as rare as you think. Change, revolutionary change, is going on constantly and everywhere—and everyone plays a part in it, consciously or not. "To be radical is

simply to keep abreast of reality," in the words of the old expatriate. The question is simply whether you take responsibility for your part in the ongoing transformation of the cosmos, acting deliberately and with a sense of your own power—or frame your actions as reactions, participating in unfolding events accidentally, randomly, involuntarily, as if you were purely a victim of circumstance.

If, as idealists like us insist, we can indeed create whatever world we want, then perhaps it's true that we can adapt to any world, too. But the former is infinitely preferable. Choosing to spend your life in reaction and adaptation, hurrying to catch up to whatever is already happening, means being perpetually at the mercy of everything. That's no way to go about pursuing your desires, whichever ones you choose.

So forget about whether "the" revolution will ever happen—the best reason to be a revolutionary is simply that it is a better way to live. It offers you a chance to lead a life that matters, gives you a relationship to injustice so you don't have to deny your own grief and outrage, keeps you conscious of the give and take always going on between individual and institution, self and community, one and all. No institution can offer you freedom—but you can experience it in challenging and reinventing institutions. When school children make up their own words to the songs they are taught, when people show up by the tens of thousands to interfere with a closeddoor meeting of expert economists discussing their lives, that's what they're up to: rediscovering that self-determination, like power, belongs only to the ones who exercise it.

Shout it over the rooftops: *Culture* can belong to us. We can make our own music, mythology, science, technology, tradition, psychology, literature, history, ethics, political power. Until we do, we're stuck buying mass-produced movies and compact discs made by corporate mercenaries, sitting faceless and immobilized at arena rock performances and sports events, struggling with other people's inventions and programs and theories that make less sense to us than sorcery did to our ancestors, shamefacedly accepting the judgments of priests and agony columnists and radio talk show hosts, berating ourselves for not living up to the standards set by college entrance exams and glamour magazines, listening to parents and counselors and psychiatrists and managers tell us we are the ones with the problems, buying our whole lives from the same specialists and entrepreneurs we sell them to—and gnashing our teeth in secret fury as they cut down the last trees and heroes with the cash and authority we give them. These things aren't inevitable, inescapable tragedies—they're consequences of the passivity to which we have relegated ourselves. In the checkout lines of supermarkets, on the dialing and receiving ends of 900 numbers, in the locker rooms before gym classes and cafeteria shifts, we long to be protagonists in our own epics, masters of our own fate.

If we are to transform ourselves, we must transform the world—but to begin reconstructing the world, we must reconstruct ourselves. Today all of us are *occupied territory*. Our appetites and attitudes and roles have all been molded by this world that turns us against ourselves and each other. How can we take and share control of our lives, and neither fear nor falter, when we've spent those lives being

conditioned to do the opposite? Whatever you do, don't blame yourself for the fragments of the old order that remain within you. You can't sever yourself from the chain of cause and effect that produced you not with any amount of willpower. The trick is to find ways to indulge your programming that simultaneously subvert it-that create, in the process of satisfying those desires, conditions which foster new ones. If you need to follow leaders, find leaders who will depose themselves from the thrones in your head; if you need to "lead" others, find equals who will help you dethrone yourself; if you have to fight against others, find wars you can wage for everyone's benefit. When it comes to dodging the imperatives of your conditioning, you'll find that indulge and undermine is a far more effective program than the old heritage of "renounce and struggle" passed down from a humorless Christi-

To return, finally, to the original question—yes, we too are making suggestions about which desires you pursue. We would be scoundrels to deny that! But we would be scoundrels not to make these suggestions, not to extol freedom and self-determination in a world that discourages them. Exhorting others to "think for themselves" is ironic—but today, refusing to oppose the propaganda of the missionaries and entrepreneurs and politicians simply means abandoning our society and species to their control. There's no purity in silence. And liberty does not simply exist in the absence of control—it is something we have to make together. Taking responsibility for our part in the ongoing metamorphoses of the world means not being afraid to take part in the making of our society, influencing and being influenced as we do.

We make suggestions, we spread this *propaganda of desire*, because we hope by doing so to indulge our own programmed passion for propaganda in a way that undermines an order that discourages all of us from *playing* with our passions—and so to enter a world of total liberty and diversity, where propaganda and power struggles alike are obsolete. See you on the other side.

"Just like every coddled middle class liberal, when it comes down to it he'll just run back home." "Those lifestyle anarchists don't care about anything but themselves. Don't they understand if everyone lived like them, there would be no system to leech off?" "If they're not going to abide by the decisions of the spokescouncil, they shouldn't be here at all. I'd rather they were at home doing nothing than messing up our protest like this!" "How can you expect to _ without _____? If you really cared about ____, you'd _! (like me)" "I don't want to be an activist or an anarchist or a part of this at all if it means I have to . . . "

infighting the good fight:



rest of us labor to make

something actually hap-

ing accepts that there

is no "the" reality, and

infers that any "objec-

tive" reality must simply

be one subjective real-

ity institutionalized as

Truth by those in pow-

er. Subjectivity thinking

recognizes that people

have arrived at their

particular beliefs and

behaviors as a result

of their individual life

experiences. This has

an important bearing

on how we interact with

each other, especially in

our efforts to change the

are going to have dif-

Different people

necessarily think differently than you do because

they are not as smart or experienced or percep-

regards, but come to different conclusions based

on different evidence from their own lives. Respect

this, while offering whatever perspectives you can

yourself—keeping in mind that the less you have in

common, the more you would do well to *listen* rather

than speak. When hearing a person's position on an

issue, you don't have to immediately begin debating

you could undertake together that would further the

interests you have in common. Whatever ideologi-

cal issues need to be worked out can be worked out

in practice, if they can be worked out at all—they

certainly will not be resolved by another contest of

the words of the divine Marquis: "if you can speak

for others as well"). This may be seen as legislating,

by those who believe there is only one right way; but

tive or analysis on the grounds that it doesn't apply to

them (or isn't relevant to *all* people, starving mothers

in Somalia, the transgendered community, etc.) are

sion you make, you make for *yourself alone*. The

scarcity-thinkers will attack you as if you are deciding

ing by arguing for your own methods and ideas as

universals. Simply point out that you act according

to your own conscience, and hope to integrate your

³ In "taking sides" against others, you can forget that

fying themselves with that side exclusively

everyone's positions are fluid—and forcing someone to

act as a partisan of one "side" can trap them into identi-

for everyone—don't fall into the trap of their think-

Remember—every value you hold, every deci-

still working within the scarcity model

Obviously, it's impossible for anyone to legislate

egos disguised as a debate about theory³.

for everyone else, since

every life experience is

unique—nevertheless,

you *can* offer your own

experiences and conclu-

sions, for others to do

with what they will (in

tive as you—they may be your equals in all these

Subjectivity think-

The Scarcity Economy of Self In a world where free, creative action is hard to to establish ourselves, we see selfhood as some-

of cause and effect—that can and must be altered.

This is a starting place to consider what the chal-

lenges are in undertaking this, and why we've had

the experiences and sensations we know should be of being radical as a war—hence the more wars we ours. We compensate as best we can, and often this compensation "With a little hard work, you serves only to preserve our destican make yourself feel

get away with, we all feel impoverished, cheated of thing that is obtained by fighting. We come to think

society, though it refers to a

mythical world.

alienated by anything.

tution. We seek status in wealth, power, strength, beauty, reputation, anything to soften the blows of wasted days. We compensate b seeking another kind of status, too: feelings of superiority, a status in our own heads.

such a hard time to date.

Why We Can't All

be decided by the answer.

Can we get along? Even for those of

There is no shortcut around this dilemma.

us who would prefer to be hermits, there is

no question today more important than this

one—the fate of our species and planet will

Any kind of capital-R Revolution, any redistribu-

simply which you foster in your own life.

tion of wealth and power, will be short-lived and

Just Get Along

We live in a society that teaches there is not enough of any valuable resource to go around, including selfhood. People on television or in books
Justice and Judgment are held up as more important, more noble, more movies and music, because it is so important to them common with him. that they have "refined" tastes; they don't realize that

one has lost more than they. If you're going to get anything out of currency in this post-Christian any movie or song or interaction (so as not to have simply wasted time!), you have to take responsibility for finding ways to enjoy

and benefit from it. seeking can combine with a spectator mentality: from forgiveness, to trust that he is interested in coma distance, the critic passively votes for or against municating with you; this makes it easier for him to the efforts of others, unable to discern that such drop his defenses and acknowledge what you have things as art, activism, community are entirely what to say. This is *not* to say that we shouldn't defend he makes of them—and that he *must* make some- ourselves whenever we have to, and by any means thing of them himself in order to get anything out of necessary—but let's do this for practical reasons, them. This spectatorship reinforces the sense that not to serve a lust for revenge and superiority. everything everyone else is doing is uninteresting or unintelligent, and thus the feeling of superiority the **Objectivity vs. Subjectivity** spectator so desperately needs. You rarely encounter a genuinely active, involved person who feels the need to proclaim her actions superior to others'; but in the spectator's scarcity economy of self, any expression of selfhood, even the most generous and positive, can be interpreted as an encroachment, an attack¹. Every achievement is something to rebel against, assail, deride—as if we don't all feel worthless, abused, hunted enough already!

¹ The other expression of this same affliction is hero worship, in which one projects all the qualities one finds admirable onto others. This is similarly crippling, of course, and inevitably leads back to the same hostility or groups you have put on a pedestal is knock them off.

wonder we end up fighting among ourselves.

in unlearning its conditioning. Many of us

have come to this resistance from a place of conflict

and struggle, and this sense of struggle is still im-

printed upon the way we approach all our activities.

Having been abused, neglected, harassed, having

had to fight peers, parents, teachers, bosses, police

fight, the more

radical we must

be. We profess

intentions to cre-

ate peace, but

the only tools

we possess are

weapons. Small

Scarcity thinking and the destructive insecurity attractive than the rest of us. We grow up in house- it fosters have played a large part in shaping our holds where our parents don't have enough time notions of justice². Passing judgment can be the for us; we are sent to schools that employ a grading ultimate compensation for one's own shortcomings. system that permits only a handful to excel, and are It's easy to get self-righteous about someone else's discharged into a market that enriches a few of us mistakes, flaws, inconsistencies . . . for we all have while exploiting or discarding the rest. We internalize them, and the more focused we are on the shortthe values of this system. We become used to judg- comings of others, the less we have to think about ing our value by what we are "better than." We rush our own. Witch-hunters who believe that they have to despise others, their plans and ideas and habits found a real live criminal (or racist, lifestyle anarchist, and beliefs, in order to reassure ourselves that we class traitor, etc.), just like the ones in the movies, have worth of our own. When we should be looking can reassure themselves that they have isolated the for what is positive in everything, we denounce and contagion and need look no further—and the more criticize instead—just to reassure ourselves! The vitriolic their denunciations of the enemy, the more most insecure among us are not even able to enjoy afraid everyone else is to admit what they have in

Once again—we live in a violent world. It's as when they succeed in failing to enjoy something, no sensible to blame any one of us for being colonized "Righteousness is a premium

by this violence as it is to blame the oceans for being polluted. The question should not be whether an individual is guilty-we all are, at least of complicity but rather how to enable all individuals to confront and transform the violence

and ignorance within themselves. Often nothing In its advanced stages, such hypercritical status- can help a person to do this more than to offer him

Objectivity thinking, on which our scarcity-oriented, authoritarian civilization is based, posits that there is only one truth. According to this school of reasoning, those who want to explain human behavior or overthrow capitalism should make different propositions re-

² The self-righteous activist's sense of justice is derived from the same origins as the "justice system" which feeds today's prison-industrial complex: a Christianity that emphasized "individual responsibility" over the cause and effect of social conditions, in order to invent advertise, and sell the ultimate scarce commodity—salvation. In a state of truly mutually-beneficial social relations, such threats as incarceration and hellfire would be and scorn—for the only thing you can do with individuals unnecessary—the threat of expulsion from the community would be dismaying enough.

approach into those of others—just as it is up to others to do with you.

The Capitalism of Ideas

Those who still hold that there is such a thing as "objective" truth generally feel a compulsion to persuade others of their truths. This is the selfperpetuating consequence of the power struggles that go on in the market of ideas; as in any economy based on scarcity, this market is characterized by competition between capitalists who strive to preserve and increase their power over others.

In our society, ideas function as capital in much the same way money does4. Individuals who can get others to "buy in" to their ideas obtain a disproportionate amount of control over their surroundings; large conglomerates (the Catholic Church, the Communist Party) can come to rule large parts of the world this way, just as corporations do—indeed, there can be no entrenched political or financial power without bate them until ideological capital to back it up. Little "start-up comthe "correct" one is panies" of competing ideas enter the market to conselected. And so, in the test such monopolies, and sometimes one unseats ivory towers, intellectuals the reigning creed to become the new dominant paraand armchair revolutionaries debate digm; but, as in any capitalist system, power tends incessantly, coming no closer to consensus, devel- to flow upward to the top of a hierarchy, from which oping more and more exclusive jargon, while the the masters, the ones qualified to employ it, decide

When it comes to "under-represented"

perspectives, remember—it's not *your* role to

"represent" them, as the politicians "represent"

us. Better to do your best to represent yourself,

and encourage others to do the same . . . for

example, by listening to those who already are.

Some people may dismiss your perspective (as

"middle class," "reformist," "extremist," etc.),

but there is no such thing as an illegitimate

perspective—it is only illegitimate to act as if

any perspective is not legitimate. A lot of this

goes on, often perpetrated in the name of the

under-represented (an easy trick!) by those

who aren't necessarily under-represented

themselves. Don't be intimidated—you can be

sure that if you are feeling something, someone

else is feeling it, too, and needs to know she is

"Ideology=I.D.ology"

matters for everyone else . . and just as in financial capitalism, ultimately it is not even the ruling class but competition itself that is in control. In this environment, anyone with a value or viewpoint has to rush to sell it to others before being run out of business.

It's hard to imagine (for money, power, selfsome ways of conceptu-

always accompany and enable them⁵.

Considering the numbers of public relations agents, televangelists, self-help gurus, and other assorted fanatics and salesmen competing to convert them, the hesitance "the masses" show to get involved in any kind of social movement is actually a healthy self-defense mechanism. Thus the biggest challenge for those who would find common cause with others to make revolutionary change is how to avoid making them defensive.

Radical politics does make people feel defensive in the West today—this is a greater obstacle to social transformation than any corporate control or

government repression And this is due in large part to the attitudes of the activists themselves: many activists have invested in their activist identities as an act of compensation at

least as much as out of a genuine desire to make things happen—for them, honestly for yourself, you will find you have spoken activism serves the same function that machismo, fashion, popularity serve for others. Activists who are still serving the imperatives of insecurity tend those who attack you for offering your own perspecto alienate others—they may even unconsciously want to alienate others, so they can stand alone as the virtuous vanguard. Seeing such activists in action, people who don't have the same insecurities to placate assume that activism has nothing to do with

> Whenever you have an idea for a "revolutionary" project—you should ask yourself: Are you certain of

Ideas, like other forms of capital, are considered private property, and protected by law—in the cases of plagiarism and copyright infringement, for example.

⁵ This statement, paradoxically, rests on ideological assumptions of its own—but perhaps this kind of self-contradiction is the first, necessary step in the disarmament

quantifiable!)—still seeking power and revenge in the guise of liberation? People can tell when you are alienate others—even and especially prolording yourself over them or playing a role, just as claimed activists (though, really, the they can sense when you are acting out of honesty last people any given approach and joy. They're much more likely to respond to *that*, needs to reach or please

have the most in common, are the ones to whom our

perspectives can be most useful⁶. Second, we can

find people already active in communities other than

ours with whom we share values and goals, and work

with them—this is vastly preferable to entering oth-

ers' communities and attempting to "organize" them

according to the doctrines of outsiders7. Third, we

can endeavor to defend others from the encroach-

ments of power and ideology—and extend to them

whatever tools we have developed in our own

struggles, to apply as they see fit outside

theft, vandalism and graffiti, "laziness,"

our agendas8. Finally, we can find

common cause with people on the

grounds of the "antisocial" things

they are already doing and feeling:

ers and anarchists,

the instinctive sus-

picion with which

they approach all

totalitarian sys-

tems—a resistance

can be established

that proceeds from

the individual moti-

vations and stand-

points of all those

who comprise it.

rather than the de-

Not Unity,

But Harmony

power and authoritarian ideology.

Any kind of "resistance move-

ment" is going to develop conflicts

over strategy ("violent" vs. "non-vi-

olent," etc.), as different individuals

construct their own analyses and

test them out in practice. To contest

this diversity rather than seeking to

benefit from it—to snatch defeat

from the jaws of victory by turn-

ing chances to address important

issues into squabbles—is to wish

everyone had the same life history

and perspective. Teenage hoodlums are not going

to find the same things liberating as middle-aged

librarians do; but both have a stake in liberation, and

must be a part of any struggle for it. Those who

would set rules for the unruly and regulations for

"Anyone who isn't on both sides

of the issue is obviously against

me from some direction."

petition of who is most oppressed (as if suffering was blame—but this accomplishes nothing.

playing and rivalry.

to establish your

status as a revo-

lutionary/leader/in-

tellectual theorist,

to claim the moral

high ground, to win

at the childish com-

from here what a world free would be like. Obviously, it would have to be a world free from analogous wars hood), too, for it's foolish to insist that "one can think however one wants" when alizing the cosmos are punished by exclusion or embargo. Those of us who fight for freedom from the

ferent beliefs, tactics, goals. Accept this. They don't power of gods and masters would do well to contest the dictatorships of ideology—any ideology—which

Why People Don't Want to

"Join the Movement" which of you is right. Instead, try to think of projects

Others are always going to have different approaches and goals than you

the irregular would

deny the complexity

not only of human

beings but also of

the revolution we

have to make.

do; the challenge is not to convert them to your own strategy (for who knows could it be they actually know better than you what is good for them?), but rather to find ways to integrate divergent methods into a

"When the locals began joining in the streetfighting, we showed them how to make their shirts into masks so the police couldn't identify them, and how to use lime juice to protect themselves from the tear gas—that's anarchist leadership in action, or what we have in place of it: sharing our skills with others, spreading power, instead of concentrating it."

"I grew up as a middle class rebel, a

punk rocker. When I gave up trying to

push reforms through the established

channels and began to practice direct

action with others from my subculture,

I realized what a vast, untapped force

this demographic has to offer."

one neighborhood over there was a

group in the Hispanic community try-

ing to do similar things, using differ-

ent words for the same ideas. When

became clear to us how much more

we could be doing."

your motivations? Will your words and deeds mobilize mutually beneficial whole. Like it or not, if you feel jective than any unity enforced by standardization. and enable, or immobilize and discourage? Are you that another's tactics are ineffective or counterpro-

trying to create a spectacle of your freedom/com- ductive, it is up to you to find and add the missing **Working in Collectives**

ingredient that can make Just as a band needs musicians who play differthem effective—otherwise, all ent instruments, healthy associations don't restrict the energy they put into their the participants with "compromises" that force them efforts is not only wasted, to limit themselves to the things they have in combut turned against them and mon, but instead integrate their dissimilarities into a everyone else. Under such whole greater than the sum of its parts. Working and circumstances it will be much living in such arrangements, in which every person is easier to point fingers and lay conscious that she is responsible for making the projects and relationships work, helps one learn to see Approaches that speak clearly to some people may oneself as a part of the web of human

relations, rather than as an automaton against the world. Under since their lives are already filled with enough role- are people who are already radical-We would do better to abandon the crusade to ized). In these "convert the masses," with all its patronizing implicacases, it's tions that others are lazy, blind, weak, victimized, in important need of guidance. Instead—first, we ought to reach not to out to those who are in situations similar to ours, or feel ones we have been in; these people, with whom we too This is the real significance of the "glorification" of shoplifting, adultery, etc. that some radical propaganda indulges in: *not* to argue that shoplifting itself is revolution in action (or for that matter that shoplift to be radical—as if revolution was accept vecton establish connective conomy, only available asstablish connections. who are not yet acting out of an articulated desire for threatrevolution. The radical significance of a statement is ened, in the effects of making it, not in whether or not it is since you may not actually On the grounds of the private longings and frus- be—and to keep in trations people feel—their hatred for busywork, the mind that with the vast joy in transgression they find they share with teenag- diversity of lives on this planet,

we'll need an equally diverse arsenal of outreaches. In other cases, approaches that seem to contradict each other may actually form a perfect symbiosis: as in the relationship between masked rioters and well-behaved, well-spoken proponents of social change. No one in power would take heed of the latter without the former behind them (imagine Martin Luther King's nonviolence without the implicit threat of Malcolm X's confrontational stance),

parties and dogmas. This is the only kind of resis-insurgents can easily be marginalized and destroyed. tance that can rescue us from both authoritarian In these situations, all parties should remember that others may even have to publicly disavow

their tactics in order to continue playing their part effectively9; when this happens, "We were thrilled to discover that just

hard feelings. Certainly it can be difficult to work alongside people who profess beliefs entirely we sat in on one of their meetings, it different from yours and you should never work with others you fear will betray you or hijack your efforts to

serve their own ends. But, again, ask yourself: are your positions significant to you as positions—possessions, status symbols, badges of identity—or as have generalizations that exist to help you create more fulfilling moments of life? It's common sense to integrate the differing tactics of those who share a com- War,

> mon goal; it's more challenging, but equally important, to put aside your compulsion to persuade everyone else of your opinions, and work to create harmony between individuals who live in totally different worlds. That harmony might never be complete—but it's a nobler ob-⁹ As the black-masked corporate

> window-smasher yelled at the lawabiding liberal protester who tried to restrain her: "It's not your job to stop me from 'making your cause look bad,' but to distance yourself from my actions as much as you have to to keep the respect of the demographic

to you in the fucking first place!'

low an individual to be a more complete person, bourgeois activists how they were alienating them, as her companions can represent parts of herself even when the latter did not at first know how to lisfor her that she would not otherwise express. This ten; to the women who not only demanded men recmakes sense, for everyone is ultimately a product ognize the existence and effects of their sexism, but of the same world—we are all interconnected, each also acknowledged the fears and anxieties *men* feel; manifesting different aspects of the same interplay to the survivors of abuse who went on to give counof forces. Without this insight, cooperation and com-seling to both abused and abusers. Without them, we

ing communally, it becomes possible to regard the entire cosmos as one vast, albeit dysfunctional, collective; the problem is simply how to make its workings more to one's liking. This is not to say the fascists, sexists, etc. can go about their merry business the least predictable forms and from the most and be "part of our collecunexpected sources. Often it takes a person tive"—they'd be the first ones who has suffered something similar to be able

there should be no

or Revolution? Smash Fascism, Destroy

the success in our efforts it

you're trying to reach! It's my job to make something happen here so they'll have to listen

munity can only be incidental and haphazard. Eventually, for the individual experienced in liv-ready. It's frightening to let your guard down, it's hard do is be there for others, help them believe in themselves, offer real compassion—not the condescension of charity—when it is needed. But there is no formula for this; mercy comes in

to deny that, and follow it up with proof! But remember. the chief argument of fascism and reactionary thinking has always been that cooperation and autonomy are mutually exclusive, that people have to be ordered and controlled or else they will do nothing but be lazy and kill each other. The more we can demonstrate that this is untrue, the less appeal their claims will

We would-be revolutionaries so frequently frame our project in martial terms: we set out to Fight Racism,

Capitalism, Eat the Rich. This enables us to see ourselves as noble crusaders—and more importantly, to have adversaries, which reassures us of our own righteousness. This reassurance is apparently more precious than

replaces and prevents—at least, it is so long as one ones around you. Revolution may involve learning to hasn't yet tasted that success. We have to remember live and act cooperatively, but it doesn't mean everyone in every instant that our enemies are *not* human be-

ings: our enemies are the conditions that make us

Perhaps a world entirely without enemies is not possible, or even desirable—but understand, war is business as usual for capitalist society: Exxon vs. Shell, U.S.A. vs. Iraq, Communists vs. Anarchists, lover against lover and parent against child. Even if we could kill every last rapist, C.E.O., head of state, police officer, and housemate who won't do the dishes, that violence would remain in the world as the venom and fury of those who survived them (not to mention the ways those murders would leave their mark on us)—that's karma for you. Revolution is what happens when you create situations that make the old conflicts—all that inertia of resentment and insecurity and antagonism—irrelevant.

Of course warfare is necessary sometimes—we have to fight all efforts to keep us at war with each other, and for some of us this will mean violence. But, as the venerable sage once pointed out, "if it's you against the world, bet on the world." So many of us alienate ourselves so needlessly from others, eventually relying on some abstraction ("the working class," "the imminent insurrection") for camaraderie once every companion of flesh and blood is gone, or,

worse, concluding that cooperation is simply impossible—when history shows that it is possible, just not for you, until you're ready to be more patient, considerate, humble, forgiving.

When you can be generous enough not to blame another for her incoherence. selfishness, mistakes, bad ideas, even acts of violence, you can discern what she does have to offer. When you can put into practice a form of justice that takes responsibility for setting things aright, you can heal, rather than impotently dispensing guilt and glory. When you can be patient with impatience, when you can resist contemptation, when you can refrain from being self-righteous even and especially with the self-righteous, you can do your part to liberate all of us prisoners of war. Doing things you *enjoy* will help you

not to take your frustrations out on others—as will working with people you like, whenever it's possible¹⁰. There's nothing noble or revolutionary about "sacrificing yourself for the cause," especially when it makes you impossible to be around. At the same time, it won't—and shouldn't—always be possible to surround yourself with people who see things the way you do: be ready to leave your comfort zone, and bring a generous heart when you

This is dedicated to all those who have done so over the years, who have taken it for granted that for desires all their clumsiness, people from other backgrounds must be taken and advocates of other tactics really did want to coexas seriously as one's ist and cooperate with them: to the men and women own—and this can actually al- of the working class who took the time to explain to would assuredly have torn each other to pieces al-

or struggling. That's another reason why it is

good that we have all chosen different paths

and suffered different things, even things that

seemed to isolate us—why there is a place even

for spoiled rich kids and homeless drug addicts

and lovers who have lied and betrayed in this

struggle: for who else could relate to others in

those difficult situations, offer them guidance

and hope? When you recognize how your own

tribulations have prepared you to help others,

it can make sense of experiences that seemed

unjustifiable; at the same time, this may help you

to see the importance of others who previously

our own pain, too consumed by bitterness and

confusion to be able to offer others anything,

least of all mercy. This means it is all the more

critical that we not miss the opportunities we do

get to be good to others-whether or not they

have "earned" it, whether or not we understand

them, whether or not we think it will make a

Often we have our hands full dealing with

appeared without worth.

to swallow your pride (even when clinging Perhaps the most important thing you can to it means betraying yourself)—but this is the only way to help others do the same Until they can, we will live in a barren world of shields and swords, each of us a city-state unto her self. Some anarchy. to offer real succor to one who is suffering

Don't be intimidat ed by the colossal challenge of "saving the world"; there are as many worlds as there are people save yours, the one made up of the life you share with everyone around you. Where one flower can bloom, a million more will follow.

Consensus-based organizing can sometimes create unneces sary conflict and interference. Organizing autonomously-and trying another free association whenever one isn't working can give you the free dom you need not to resent others, so you can work well with the

has to be friends.

I would like to be someone with whom no one would feel she had to be ashamed of any part of herself. I would like to be able to regard the actions of others without feeling threatened by them or becoming defensive, even when they are defensive with me—to see others in the context of their lives, not my own. I would like to know how to set limits on how far I rely upon people, so as not to risk losing my ability to respect them. I would like to be able to look those adversaries who should be allies in the eyes and say Like it or not, this is who I am. This is what the world has made of me, and we must all live with the consequences. I can't feel or believe or act differently than I do, let alone change the decades of life behind me that have wrought this. I don't want to compete with you for moral high ground or anything else. Unless you're prepared to kill everyone who doesn't line up with your standards, or to endure this impasse of animosity indefinitely, you're going to have to accept me on my own terms, as I hope to accept you. You are as responsible as I am for making what goes on between us positive for us both—or for the world of strife we will live in otherwise.



In a totalitarian regime (whether it be political, like the Stalinist government of the Soviet Union, or socio-economic, like the corporate capitalism of our day), in which the whole of human relations is regulated, fragmentary resistance to any one aspect of that regime—environmental destruction, police brutality, child abuse, racism, employee ennui—can only fail. The totality itself must be contested, the basic paradigms as well as their specific manifestations . . . not in order to impose another totalitarian order, but to open new horizons for everyone.

For this, a resistance is needed that does not standardize those who participate in it, in which individuals can help each other break free in the process of creating and exploring themselves. This sketch of six oppositions is not meant as a complete map of the world of human relations, but rather as a selection of tools for the woman or man engaged in her own analysis.

We move in spiral paths, imploding (🌀) or expanding (💰), relinquishing the world to become what we hate, or finding the faith to discover new worlds and loves. Alchemy is the process by which one moves from the vicious inner circle outwards.

Abundance All of us can be rich . . .

Abundance and scarcity are not just measurements of the resources which exist to meet one's needs—they are different ways of regarding both the resources and the needs themselves . . . which become reflected in the world.

Abundant resources exceed the need for them; they may even multiply when utilized. Most of the things which set life apart from survival—love, friendship, confidence, imagination, courage, adventure, experience—are available in abundance: the more you partake of them, the more they are available to you and everyone else as well

Scarce resources, on the other hand, exist in limited supply, and there may simply not be enough to go around. A scarcity economy is driven by the considerations necessitated by those conditions: in it, the "laws" of supply and demand are imposed first of all by a shortage, real or perceived, of

It might seem that scarcity is simply an inescapable fact of life, but it's not that simple. Not all scarcities are imposed by circumstances—often, we impose them upon ourselves by the ways we assess and apply our assets. In our technologically advanced, post-industrial civilization, tools and amenities which were unheard of before are plentiful, yet most of us distinctly feel there to be a shortage of the things we need. This should not be surprising, for our social and economic systems depend on there not being enough for everybody. Everyone can have a full life—but not everyone can have a full wallet. Our society institutes scarcity and deprivation, by framing life as a desperate rush for limited material wealth and status.

They say the only free men are the hobo and the king. They are indeed the only ones who can claim to be lords of all they survey—though for utterly different reasons: the former possesses the entire world by releasing it, while the latter still owns only what he can conquer. Here we can see the paradigms of abundance and scarcity in action as philosophies of life. Likewise, the scavenger who thrives off the excess of his society sees opportunity and adventure where the executive sees only hunger and destitution; the non-monogamous lover sees love as something that only increases in richness and depth by being shared freely, while the possessive husband regards it as a precarious prize obtained by sacrifice and hard labor, which must be hoarded and caged; the would-be rock idol or movie star needs a million anonymous fans watching his actions to validate them (thus selfhood itself is subject to scarcity in a spectator society), while the woman in a supportive, egalitarian community generally attains self-confidence and happiness to the extent that she helps others around her do the same.

Once upon a time, humans lived in a relationship of trust with the earth, seeing it as a wellspring of abundance¹¹. We ate fruit, which grew freely around us, naturally wrapped in a biodegradable peel and containing seeds from which more fruit trees would grow after the fruit was eaten. Today we eat candy bars, for which we must exchange our labor, of which supplies are strictly limited—and when we throw away the wrappers, manufactured from plastics and chemicals foreign to nature, we can be sure that we are adding to the slow accumulation of garbage that makes fruit trees more and more scarce. Ancient human beings lived in conditions of feast or famine, celebrating when their cups overflowed and whistling through leaner times, never having to diminish their faith in their resources by measuring them; for us, everything is a transaction, an occasion for computation

and calculation. Abundance and scarcity are above all the manifestations of opposing approaches to life: ingenuity or inertia, faith or fear. If we restructure our values and assumptions about what the cosmos has to offer us, we can enter a new world of plenty.

^{|1} "Paleolithic man [sic, throughout], a hunter/ gatherer who understood the value of sharing and mutual assistance, 'had' nothing—why

hoard things when the whole world is yours? Later, Neolithic man, who toiled in the fields, sometimes produced a surplus, which he bartered with others—and thus for him a shift occurred from being in the world to having things, mere parts of the world. The hunters and gatherers never curbed their materialistic impulses—but they never made institutions out of them. Economic Man is a bourgeois construction, the result of ten thousand years of 'subjugation': that is to say, etymologically speaking, living under the yoke."-Finnegan

Bell's Hunters and Gatherers Through the Ages

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

Life is existence when it feels worth waking up for in the morning. Life is written about in epic poetry, love songs, Shakespeare's plays and sonnets; survival is treated in unities and treasures it has to offer. medical textbooks, urban planning reports, and ergonomics presentations. Life is glorious, heartbreaking, extravagant. Survival, without life, is ridiculous, burdensome, absurd.

to recognifie, the more you can take advantage of them.

Survival,

Safety, and the Pursuit of Propert

Survival is life reduced to imperatives, whether they be biological (get air to breathe! get food to eat! get laid!) or cultural (get air conditioning, to be comfortable! get a television, to keep up with what's going on! get a sports car, to attract a mate!). It's often ambiguous which class a given mandate falls into, as in the case of the computer programmer who cannot feed himself without a can opener; but the essential character of these needs is that

Survival resources tend to be seen as scarce—there's only so much food, water, housing, medicine in the world; but as the famous tramp responded to the query of a bourgeois man ("you've got to eat, haven't you?"): "yeah, but not as much as you eat.

Our era is characterized by ever-increasing standards of survival. The minimum "standard of living" to participate in society is always mounting, and it's a full time job keeping up: getting the new format for video-viewing, learning to use the new computer program, treating yourself with the new antidepressant...This constant technological and subsequent cultural acceleration is the consequence of an economic system based on competition, in which constant innovation is necessary both to sell new products and to keep up with every-

Current anthropology suggests that people spend more time working to meet their "basic needs" today than ever before: prehistoric human beings spent the greater part of their days in creative leisure, while with all our labor-saving devices we waste most of our lives earn-

the less time we have to live.

ing the money to pay for them, using them to mow the lawn, waiting in traffic to buy more batteries for them. And of course, the traffic to buy more batteries for them. And of course, the traffic to buy more batteries for them. And of course, the traffic to buy more batteries for them. And of course, the

20,00

Fear

The one who lives in fear

moves only to consolidate the pres-

ent. He is not capable of free action—he is

too busy reacting in advance to things that haven't

even happened yet. He can only conceive of the future—any

future—as a threat. He trusts nothing to chance, and thus

When one trusts her companions and the world around to

provide, if not what she thinks she needs, at least something

qually weird and wonderful, she too can be gentle and gener-

ous. If she feels threatened by them, she grows defensive and

aggressive, strikes out blindly, becomes possessed by resent-

ment and cruelty. Vengeance becomes her greatest motivation,

more powerful than any other desire: anything to take revenge

upon this world which has made her feel so unwelcome and

worthless. Acting on these impulses, she spreads them to

others like a plague. Fear, like faith, is self-perpetuating—until

risk willfully, or do you deny yourself because of fear? What are

you afraid of? What are you saving yourself for? Do you own

your body? Do you own your experience? Preservation of the

body or the tender sensibilities is futile—we all die someday.

The other is to follow your fear, to use it as a guide, to track it

out past the limits of the world you know. Don't save yourself.

Don't spare yourself. Some things can't be written or told.

There are two possible responses to fear. One is to cower.

Ask yourself—are you living deliberately? Do you approach

It is fear that lies at the root of all violence and struggle.

chance cannot entrust him with more than he already has.

. . . or protect

something breaks the cycle.

The question is what happens first.

yourself to death.

Work

Work provides for survival, nothing more. It always appears as a response to necessity, whether it be the need for food and shelter and life insurance, the establishment of social status, or the obligation of the Protestant work ethic. Work answers to imperatives; play creates its own rules.

Play Head for horizons.

Play is what takes place when all the problems of survival have been solved and there is energy left over. Play is not constrained by external demands—the player establishes her own goals and meanings in the course of acting. Play takes place in a condition of freedom—rather, it is the condition of freedom. In play, the individual interacts with the forces around her rather than reacting to them, creates the context for her actions as she acts rather than passively being shaped by the situation: it is thus that self-determination is possible. You can see play today in the collages on teenagers' walls, in the eccentric furnishing of squatted buildings, in the break between skirmishes when the insurgents dance, in the movements of lovers' bodies together.

> The resources for play are available in abundance. The more one plays, the more others are enabled and encouraged to play; true playfulness is infectious. One can't play at the expense of others for long-being "free" at such a price ends up taking a lot of work, as in the case of the "successful" executive, and doesn't lend itself to much real, spontaneous play, as the ennui typical of the trust-fund playboy demonstrates.

> > It's ambiguous whether many of the things currently called "play" actually are: Is it play when a businessman goes golfing with his boss? When a group of young men play basketball together according to a strict set of rules, with a struggle for dominance as an ever-present subtext? How about when a young man comes home from work so exhausted that he doesn't have enough energy to do anything but "play" video games?

> > > are things no one

could ever earn. To as-

The machinery of exchange eats quality

and shits out quantity, enslaves process to despicable product, teaches that practical necessities

and moments of joy and spiritual redemption alike

must all be earned. There is something of the old

Christian theology of guilt and salvation in the ways

those who hold stock in the values of exchange speak

of hard work and entitlement. In their eyes, anything

ce, without an exchange can be worth anything—and

e act of paying for things, with the compensation they

tramp and the adventurer are assigned, not without a

world now waits for a new generosity which can

le jealous spite. For such people, human beings do

sess the commercial value of

experiences and sensations, let alone

trade in the very lives of the human be-

and everyone you touch

ings around you with an eye for your own advantage, is to flatten the world for yourself

Children, on the other hand, come into this world knowing all about play—at least until they've spent a few years cooped up in small rooms with the television on. We can recapture that lost innocence, for them and for ourselves, by approaching everything we do as a game rather than a struggle or responsibility—by creating environments in which we can run wild. For the best-kept secret of capitalism is that play activities can also provide for our survival needs: except in extremities, work is

Gift **Economics**

We know everything is priceless.

In stark contrast to exchange trading, gift-giving is its own reward. In a gift economy, which exists whenever anything is freely shared and no score is kept, the participants receive more the more they bestow. Everyone who has shared a real friendship or a morning of incredible lovemaking knows intuitively that when the option opens, human beings return to this natural relationship.

This is a challenge to find and share the trust and responsibility it will take to reinstate this as the basis of all human affairs, as it was before the cancer of avarice took hold.

> "My liberation, my delight, my world itself begins where yours begins. Nobody can command my services because I have, of my own, pledged to give all—and gratuitously, for that is the only way to give."

Exchange Economies They say everything has a price.

Liberty ends where economics begins. Get your money's worth—earn your keep—there's no such thing as a free lunch¹²: exchange economics posits life as a zero-sum sport between bargainers who maneuver to outbid and outwit each other in order to gain control of more fragments of the world. Free trade, the free market—t<mark>hes</mark>e are oxymorons: where systematized competition is free to bend all humanity to its prerogatives, ultimately no one is free to focus on anything else.

Exchange-economics thinking presupposes a one-dimensional scale of val<mark>ue</mark>, according to which everything can be appraised: if an avocado costs a dollar, and a new sports car costs \$20,00<mark>0, t</mark>hen a sports car must be worth exactly twenty thousand avocados. But such equations are absurd. Can you calculate the financial value of a friendship, the exchange rate of a clever joke for a meal tenderly prepared, the comparative worth of the sound of birds singing in the trees against the current market value of lumber? Those who would measure such things miss everything that is beautiful and unrepeatable about them; once one recognizes this, it becomes clear how patho<mark>log</mark>ical such calculations are in any context. As f one could "deserve" life in all its complexity and magnanimity in the first place—let alone good or bad fortune, the moment of stillness at sunrise, the flavor of avocados, the sensation of riding in a speeding car! This is simply not the way the world works—anyone who has lived and paid atten-

tion knows the best and worst things life has

more overt forms of power over others.

free is suspect at best—nothing obtained without sacrireceive for abdicating their lives, is itself more important than anything they could buy: it is the way one buys oneself out of the hell of "valuelessness" to which the

"deserve" happiness, comfort, even existence itself, unless they pay for it with suffering 13. It should come as no surprise that many workers see things this way: if they didn't, they would have to face the possibility that they have been wasting their lives. Likewise, those who would refuse this system of exchange are confronted with the same accusations of valuelessness by their own bodies, when they find that they cannot get food to eat or a soft place to sleep unless they give up some part of themselves for it. For once some people in a society begin hoarding and trading for their own benefit, all who interact with them must adopt the same miserliness and self-interest to survive—and the most ruthless ones inevitably end with the most power, just as magnanimity and largesse find themselves disenfranchised. The

ket running? Whether dishwash ers or directors, all who cannot feel safe enough t create and pursue their own dreams see scarcity everywhere they look create a world of shortages, those seek compensation in wealth, status, or

relations are seen as a conflict between mutually exclusive interests. It's no wonder many people have a hard time imagining how human beings could live without the coercion of [what they have been taught to see as] "beneficial" forces. But competition, combat, struggles of all kinds are barriers to freedom, for they impose their demands be disguised as a seemingly trivial argument between friends (for upon all who are subject to them, distracting and simplifying without quarter anyone who seeks to establish rank, even in knowledge of trifling The terror-mongers insist that hierarchy is necessary to protect us from the violence inherent in our species—but hierarchy is simply the expression of the violence intrinsic to this system. The fact that hierarchy can be absent—between friends, in moments of mass teamwork, in other

Ultimately, any conflict comes down to relations of force even those known, up to this point, as revolutions. Our dream your head all day, the trees they cut down by your house to make 👚 is not to win another war, but to stage a total revolution, 🗼 📞 room for the new gas station? How about the preservatives they put a war against the condition of war, on behalf of those in the food you eat, or the conditions in the factories that produce beautiful moments when people can be thankful for them? Your wages at work, or how much money the I.R.S. takes from each other's existence.

12 Editor's note—Ha! We, on the other hand, don't think much about "deserve" anymore; we ask, instead, what would be best for everyone, and leave it at that. Revenge doesn't interest us—being, as it is, just another from of exchange.

defend itself.

Thus a mindset develops in which all human societies—is proof that we can live without such violence, too.

Relationships of Love Cooperate and celebrate...

Love is secure, fearless, generous. Love does not make demands or judge according to standards—love celebrates, consecrates the unique, makes beauty and beautiful. To feel love is to be grateful for the whole of the past, present, and future, to feel for a moment that there is meaning in one's existence. To be in love is not to be deluded or destitute, but to gain a sixth sense with which to perceive the real splendor of the universe. To experience love is to be connected directly to the tragedy of existence—which is not that there is not enough beauty in life, but that none of us has the breadth or depth of self, or the time on this planet, to savor fully the magnificence the world lavishes upon us.

Walk down the street. Look around. The skin cream advertisements proposing an unreachable

ideal for women's beauty, urging them to ransom their self-confidence by pouring their income into

orporate coffers: violence. The fruits and vegetables for sale in the grocery store, which will be thrown

n locked dumpsters to rot before they are shared with the hungry a block away: violence. The taxes on the

kill their own: violence. The employees who work at the stores, so they can afford a disproportionately

small portion of the goods and services made by others like them: violence. The hospitals, insur-

ance companies, psychiatrists, manufacturers of psychoactive prescription drugs, waiting

like so many circling vultures for the bodies and minds of these people to weaken and

betray them, poised to plunder their bank accounts and drive them and their

children back to work: violence. The hush in the air, the absence of friends

rejoicing together, of the shouts of children at play, for the children are

all at home with video games and television and no one wants to

be here, everyone wishes they were in a world somewhere

ar, far away, farther even than the palm-tree-spotted

scenes on the billboards advertising vacation

esorts and malt liquor . . . violence, violence.

You may not see one altercation, one

the feeling of war.

oruise; but the feeling in the air is

sales of those vegetables, which pay for prisons to hold men who will slave there as their ancestors did in

chain gangs and slave plantations, and bombs to be sent as foreign aid to governments who oppress and

Love makes war upon any peace which in fact is war systematized and concealed, for love is a ruthless enemy of senseless conflict and waste. It is love, of liberty when not of one's fellow beings, that makes it possible for us to coexist in pursuit of our own desires rather than languishing in thrall to that fat old god Discord. Those in love come to identify each other's needs with their own, ultimately making no distinction, and overcoming the self/other dichotomy that is at the root of Western alienation: thus in love we find a way to surpass ourselves, to exalt each other and ourselves in the course of living.

Faith

Invest in the future . . .

One either invests oneself in the present, or the future: either reacts to existing circumstances and their demands, or acts to change them. You can spend all your energies surviving according to the terms set by the market economy, the expectations of parents and peers, the force of your own inertia—or risk everything to make those considerations obsolete. For this, though, you need a nihilist's abandon . . . or faith.

Scarcity

... not all of us can be wealthy.

Faith is the opposite of superstition. Faith means believing in the boundless possibilities of the universe—and setting out to explore them. It means knowing that if you leap off a cliff, you're bound to and somewhere. Faith means trusting that the world is wider and richer than you could possibly see from this point, and therefore not feeling pressure to plan out the rest of your life from here. Better to sketch a route to the horizon: from there, you'll be able to make out new vistas, and make new plans accordingly. Heaven help the people who make long term plans today and stick to them, whose lives will never be greater than what they can imagine right now!

Faith enables you to rely on your intuition: instead of being trapped by what you know, you do what you need to do. Faith gives you power over your fear. Whether you are confronting a police line or giving birth to a child or a song, faith is indispensable for capital-L living.

you? These aren't just inevitable "facts of life"—they are the manifestations of conflict as the system of human relations, every man for himself and force against us all¹⁴. The leagues of intimidating red tape and the battering of women, the biased news coverage and the inhumanity of factory farms, the jockeying for ascendance between colleagues and countries, all these are simultaneously expressions of the strife at the heart of our civilization and weapons which, used by factions fighting for survival on its terms, perpetuate it. Living under the reign of coercion strips you of your faith, leaves

Relation-

ships of Force

When you live in fear, the only way to approach the world

that makes sense is with a gun in your hand. Just as the ones who

who depend on force to relate to others create a necessity for it; and

ing" bombings, economic sanctions. It comes camouflaged as body

image standards (which even masquerade as "health" standards),

psychological pressures that influence people to repress their desires,

things, seeks a lever with which to exert force on his fellows), or

that quiet self-mutilation which lovers and relatives sometimes use

Some call this a democracy—did you get a say in what the bill-

boards you pass every morning say, what they go on repeating inside

to manipulate each other—the inverse and identical twin of macho

laws enforced by public opinion as well as thugs in uniform. It may

Coercion comes in more subtle forms than rape, "peace-keep-

those born into this world of coercion inherit the cycle.

aggression

... be in the hearts of the ... be in the ... be in the hearts of the ... be in the he you ready to use force on others, to treat them as the world has treat-

"Beauty must be defined as what we are, or else the concept itself is our enemy. Why languish in the shadow of a standard we cannot personify, an ideal we cannot

> To see beauty is simply to learn the private language of meaning that is another's life: to recognize and relish what is."

DO IT YOURSELF.

deClassifieds ____

The raw awareness that you have the power to change the world is more important than any other resource—this is the hardest one to develop and share, and the most essential. It cannot help to give your endorsement to political representatives, social programs, or radical ideologies when the fundamental problem is that you don't know your own strength.

Self-determination begins and ends with your initiatives and actions, whether you live under a totalitarian regime or the canopy of a rain forest. It must be established on a daily basis, by acting back on the world that acts upon you—whether

that means calling in sick to work on a sunny day, starting a neighborhood garden with your friends, or toppling a government. You cannot make a revolution that distributes power equally except by learning firsthand how to exercise and share power-and that exercising and sharing, on any scale, is itself the ongoing, never-concluded project of revolution.

What you do today is itself the extent of that revolution, its limits and its triumph.

tery—put a piece of copper in one possible, above head level, to avoid the exit pipes. side, a piece of zinc in the other, and injury to chainsaw operators, and to attach wires to each. Add more potamake the spikes more difficult to spot for more power.

YOU CAN create a seam sealing two ice (anonymously!) and corporations sheets of plastic together by cutting that the proposed sale is full of spiked them with a hot razor blade—try this problem-causing trees. You can glue for do-it-yourself lamination.

For a new listening experience, **YOU** loud sounds generated by hammering and it appears. **CAN** play your favorite music back- nails into trees. Advanced spikers can wards by taking a cassette apart with look into "pinning" trees (using drills) reels in backwards; better, record it metal detectors). onto another tape on the third or fourth channel of a four track recorder, then listen to the other side of the second **YOU CAN** carry out guerrilla plant-

bass guitar strings by boiling them.

YOU CAN entertain everyone by putting soap or laundry detergent in public fountains.

YOU CAN compile a monthly calendar of events that include free food (art openings, city council extrava- YOU CAN put glass etching solution to a power line. ganzas, etc.) and circulate it to hungry (hydrofluoric acid) on the windows people.

to kick you out for napping than the without ever having to take it out. 24-hour diner), or investigate whether there are any rooms or closets to wait in until the public library closes.

grocery stores as a representative of ers, of course a charity group, asking for their leftovers. You should be able to gather enough food this way to provide for YOU CAN short-circuit any electric YOU CAN carry a marker in your a public place.

garden, with plots open for people even more fantastic) result. to grow their own food, or volunteer programs for them to participate and share in the harvest. Many people **YOU CAN** save the "postage paid by

Many towns have a time where there are very few police on patrol and even fewer people on the street; in YOU CAN soak the ink off some most towns of under 500,000, this cancelled stamps with alcohol-bethappens after the bars close at 2 ter, cover the stamps with a thin layer a.m. Imagine all the things **YOU CAN** of soap or water-soluble glue before do with the streets to yourself—paint mailing; the addressee can soak off **YOU CAN** go to stores that sell house umlauts over all the vowels on the the soap or glue. street signs, for example.

YOU CAN prevent the destruction of sawdust to serve as a toilet. the last of our forests. Tree spiking can be an extremely effective way to interfere with the market value of To make compost, reduce garbage, timber—and thus discourage logging. or fertilize your gardening projects, and large nails—a usual carpenter's ground and dump your biodegradable hammer isn't enough. A "60 penny" waste in it. nail (app. 6.5" long) will do the trick; no more than one per tree is neces- YOU CAN build a greywater system sary. Drive the nail almost all the way (greywater: any water that has been

randomly throughout the lot and be absolutely sure to alert the forest servbark over the nails to further decrease the chances they will be detected. Spiking in the rain greatly reduces the

ings of kudzu and other fast-growing, indestructible 'weeds' in public parks, around buildings that are unattended **YOU CAN** clean and refresh old, dirty for a few weeks, etc. to give nature a hand in revitalizing cities and sub-

> YOU CAN use BB guns to shoot out lights that are otherwise difficult to reach, if you need to act under cove of darkness.

of corporations or agencies that you

YOU CAN approach restaurants and magnet. The same goes for comput-missile silo towers over the Inaugural YOU CAN get drinks at fast food

machines, causing them to spit out

already have yards that go untended, addressee" envelopes you get in junk in a shoe polish applicator or similar and there's always those abandoned mail to send back stuffed with more device—how about a deodorant conjunk mail—or, better, with love letters to whomever opens them, begging them to seek a better life.

toes or other vegetables to the circuit during the initial cut. Only spike timber being considered for a cut. Spike from your roof and redirecting the water it. Try sewing with dental floss—it's into a basin. Install a pump in the basin, tougher than thread. set up some piping into your kitchen area, and with a little fine tuning YOU **CAN** have running water.

as invisible ink-heat up the paper,

a screwdriver and putting the tape and using ceramic spikes (to avoid YOU CAN take the clear adhesive Federal Express stations everywhere sweat a lot. and put them up on the walls of city streets, corporate elevators, gas instructions or maps to buried treas-

> **YOU CAN** insure that the big banner hand-warmer. you drop from a building or freeway won't blow in the wind.

larly difficult to take down, **YOU CAN**

think need a wake-up call, if a brick YOU CAN make massive inflatable would attract too much attention; if you structures out of thin plastic sheeting. If you are travelling and need water, YOU CAN sleep outside. Laying out want to make it clear why you're doing Try making them from painters' tarps, YOU CAN open the outside spigots cardboard when you sleep in fields, it, try applying the solution through a 2-4 millimeter thickness, available at at most gas stations and many other alleys, etc. will help you stay warm stencil expressing your message! If any hardware store; use packaging buildings with a good wrench. These and dry. In bad weather, look for an all- a brick is called for, you can dress up tape to close up the seams. These spigots generally have one of two night bus terminal (they're less likely nice, carry it in your purse, and apply it will fold up to a small size convenient kinds of handles which can be at-YOU CAN really wreak some havoc street demonstration or public event pened to find them unremoved. on videotapes in noxious corporate by stretching one over a hot air vent rental stores, etc. with a powerful on a city street-presto, a sixty foot

Parade.

tainer with a dry eraser inside?

YOU CAN make those paper stickers you scam from the local copy shop with. If you have a room empty in your more weatherproof by covering them house now that your daughter has

with potato stampers, or linoleum, for union workers. **YOU CAN** fill a five gallon bucket with into a word or line image.

Basic spiking involves a big hammer YOU CAN dig a four foot hole in the YOU CAN find fabric (napkins, table- find you had purchased a defective cloths, etc.) for making patches, banners, etc. in the laundry bins behind coupons.

off the head, and finally drive it the the water you do use is used more the time it would take you to earn the need a stamp to be valid, just steal rest of the way in to make it more dif- efficiently—for example, to irrigate money to buy them prefabricated, the stamp. Many chains have coupon

YOU CAN make a potato into a bat- remove. Spike as high on the tree as put buckets under the sinks and open ments. You can turn a large t-shirt

bicycle tires. YOU CAN use lemon juice or urine

envelopes available free at unmanned

If you want to make a banner particususpend it from helium balloons tied the layers of your clothing, so the one

for smuggling into unexpected envi-tached to them for operation; you ronments. Even if you couldn't sneak a fan in, you could still spice up a sure-fire access to water, if you hap-

a number of people—perhaps a free or electronic machine by introducing pocket and get in the pleasurable. If quitting your job leaves you with grocery program for a poor neighbor-salt water into it. Once upon a time habit of altering your environment more time on your hands than you hood, or a weekly communal meal in vandals would do this to soda vending everywhere you go - by adding know what to do with, YOU CAN try "capitalism:" at the top of DEAD END baby-sitting nights for single mothfree soda and change. You can also signs, for example, or "LIES" across ers—there are thousands of them put stripped-down fireworks in the coin the display window of corporate news-longing for a chance to go out and YOU CAN establish a community slot to achieve a similar (or perhaps paper vending machines, or "ballot have a good time. If you have a circle box" on trash cans during an election. of dependable volunteers, you could You can make your own ineffaceable organize an alternative day care colgraffiti marker by combining 80% lective—there's a real shortage of Rustoleum and 20% mineral spirits those these days.

> paint and get mis-mixed buckets for of urban hunter-gatherers can poslittle to no cost. Think of all the things you can do with paint. Make woodcuts see if you can get in touch with striking example—or make a stamp out of shoelace with wire through it, shaped

into a tighter, smaller one by laying a shirt of the intended size upon it, tracing around the smaller shirt, cut-

> **YOU CAN** fix holes in your shoes with the rubber used for repairing holes in

YOU CAN keep warm in winter by lining the inside of your clothes with plastic. This will work best if you place the layer of plastic right next to your skin-although it will make you

station bathrooms, etc. with secret YOU CAN make a pocket handwarmer by filling a cloth bag with dry beans, plus rice or corn, and microwaving it. It should retain heat for a couple hours. If you get hungry, By putting a weight at the bottom, you can always cook and eat your

> YOU CAN keep a little warmer on those cold, cold nights by eating foods high in fats an hour or so before you go to sleep. It may also help to switch beside your skin is not damp with perspiration.

> could carry both handles with you, for

restaurants by retrieving a cup from

the trash and asking for a refill.

energy, love than you need for yourself and the ones who depend on you, **YOU CAN** find others to share gone to college, you could lend it to a homeless writer or travelling activist, for example—or if you have more sources of free bread than your team sibly take advantage of, you should

If you have more food, shelter, time,

YOU CAN write to companies informing them that you really enjoy their product, or that you were shocked to item. They'll probably send you free

YOU CAN steal coupons from corporate stores, or copy them (this may work best if the coupons have a bar into the tree, use bolt cutters to cut used in the home except in toilets) so **YOU CAN** knit your own clothes in code on them already). If the coupons ficult to spot and nearly impossible to your garden. For a simple start, just and in much more pleasant environ-systems in place that few consumers

are aware of — educate yourself about vou could always use an awl to puncthese. Old timers tell of a certain 'sub-ture tires—aim for the sidewall, and be way sandwiches' chain that gave away sure to do at least two if you want to stamps with every purchase—seven be sure the spare won't help.

stamps bought you a sandwich. Kids could stand outside the franchises,

YOU CAN make your own ammuni-

for books about "reloading"). Use

steel-core bullets—they usually have

a sure thing, but expensive).

states YOU CAN legally purchase

any pistol or rifle from another pri-

in them before attempting said pur-

chase (a good place to start might be

conventions, outside movie theaters

showing mildly subversive movies (like

front.com/library/elf_manual300.pdf

If you want to make a movie or docu-

download it onto a computer before

the return deadline. You can do the

YOU CAN get free press passes to

attend concerts and similar events

ers as a representative of the media.

national borders in an emergency.

at all hardware stores) to cut all types

being seen by others.

with . . .

bagels or donuts as well.

own coupon options.

asking if people would mind getting YOU CAN glue door locks to keep stamps for them when they got their those doors shut. Try filling a syringe sandwiches, and thus saving enough (minus needle) with epoxy glue mixed stamps up for a sandwich every half with a little alcohol—you'll have half an hour or so . . . while simultaneously hour before it hardens. You can also educating the consumers about their use superglue, jam in and break off as many flat toothpicks as will fit, or try Liquid Nail, if you can find it.

tion that will penetrate bullet-proof YOU CAN throw an old piece of carvests and light armor. Learn to load pet over barbed wire to make it easy to ammunition through studying instruc- climb over. Two layers should suffice tions available in common books (ask where one doesn't.

a green (good) or black (better) tip. YOU CAN improve your chances These can be legally purchased as of being picked up and treated well reloading components at gun shows while hitchhiking by dressing in dark and through mail-order. If bullet proof pants and a white shirt with a tie and glass is on the menu, follow the above perhaps a name tag—that is, as a instructions, and be sure to use a .308 young Mormon on mission! Pick up caliber round or larger (.50 caliber is some free Mormon bibles at your nearest tabernacle for authenticity. If anyone asks serious questions, what better form of cultural terrorism than If you are rightly concerned about to spread a little fun misinformation? your firearms purchases being moni- This disguise might also help you to tored by the government, in many get away with other things . .

vate individual (i.e. not a gun-dealer) YOU CAN create a distraction in a without having to fill out any forms or variety of settings by announcing that provide any identification. This often you've lost a contact lens and insisting occurs at gun shows. State and local that everyone help you find it, or at laws may vary—become well-versed least stay off a given floorspace.

YOU CAN protect your home from police dogs by laying down a thin line of cavenne pepper across each For that matter, YOU CAN set up doorway. The dogs will pause to sniff literature tables to distribute anar- it on their way in, and won't be able to chist texts, etc. at gun shows, tattoo smell anything else for a while.

Fight Club), anywhere no one would

If you need to create a false identity expect it. Try giving away dumpstered in an emergency—for example, at a hospital, when you have no money or insurance—**YOU CAN** simply make up a name and give your social se-If you are looking to stay warm and curity number with the first five digits have fun over the coming winter, as they really appear but the last four **YOU CAN** learn everything you need changed. If you offer a distant false to know at http://www.earthliberation- home address, it will take longer for them to find out you have played a trick on them.

mentary for free. YOU CAN buy an YOU CAN give your friends tattoos expensive electronic video camera with a clean safety pin and India ink. from a distributor with a liberal return For branding, heat a shaped piece of policy, and shoot all your footage and coat hanger with a small blowtorch.

same thing with fancy musical equip- YOU CAN steal the low-wattage ment for a few days of recording, or solar panels sometimes used to keep billboards illuminated at night and use tnem yourself, to power just abou anything you want.

simply by approaching the promot- YOU CAN make paper maché (for puppets, or uncommissioned public You'll probably get more privileged sculptures, or . . .) by heating three treatment than any of the paying cus-parts water and two parts corn starch tomers. A press pass might also help until it becomes thick. Let it cool a bit, you get past security, or could bolster and apply it to newspaper to make it your cover story if you need to cross stick together.

YOU CAN make wheat paste by mix-

YOU CAN keep an extra pair of ing three parts wheat flour and one shoes stashed in a secret place to part corn starch, boiling that in water use for 'night work'; this will prevent (at proportions of two parts starch the inevitable footprints from being to three parts water), and cooking used against you in court. Wear extra it down to a paste. Hurry to stick up socks so you can wear the shoes a posters everywhere with it before it dries. Some hold that corn starch is not entirely necessary—try variations of the recipe until you find a personal **YOU CAN** use cotton work gloves to favorite. The more paste you slop keep your fingerprints off of places on, the better it will stick, so be sure they don't belong. Leather gloves to prepare at least a gallon for a serishould be avoided, as they leave their ous night of pasting. Don't be afraid own unique fingerprints. Latex gloves to use a lot of paste on each poster, are good for light work, but they both between it and the wall and on leave perfect prints on the inside—so top of it. Be sure corners and edges be very careful how you dispose of are all secure and flat. Plastic gallon them. Burning them might be your orange juice jugs work well, just leave the cap for off quick application—or, keep your wheat paste warm and wet longer in winter by carrying it around **YOU CAN** use a small and easily in a drink cooler. concealable pair of tin snips (available

of barbed wire, razor wire, and chain **YOU CAN** encourage strangers to share their brilliant ideas with you and everyone else (and make public space more interesting!) by wheatpasting YOU CAN put a blue filter on your fliers with wheatpaste recipes on flashlight: this will enable you to use it them all around your city—along with in the dark without ruining your night a headline reading "call for submisvision, and with much less chance of sions.' YOU CAN make stencils out of

cardboard or clear plastic acetate **YOU CAN** disable cars and trucks and spraypaint your own artwork and quickly and easily by using a large raw ideas everywhere. You might have potato to plug the exhaust pipe. Use luck finding the acetate in the trash a stick to force the plug further in and of companies that do lamination—like out of sight. This technique can baffle office supply or photocopying chains. even skilled mechanics, and once the You can also apply house paint potato is removed, the automobile will through the stencils with rollers. You work again. If you can pry off the gas could make a "handicapped" stencil cap with a crow bar and pour sugar and make all the parking spaces at the in the gas tank, you can create more mall handicapped spaces. You could permanent problems. Or, of course, make a stencil a hundred feet long

streetcorner—or the same image so they won't fog up. everywhere you go, until people know it better than any corporate

YOU CAN take those priority mail cocktails. stickers they give out at the post office, stencil your own designs on them, and put them up anywhere—in mere YOU CAN get a fire extinguisher for

Speaking of spraypaint, when you afford one. see billboards that make you uncomfortable. YOU CAN reverse the effect by adding a clever phrase or picture of When you move into a new space, with these. If you need more, dress YOU CAN put on public puppet friends and neighbors—ordering food

and throw. On an entirely different collect the insurance on it. subject—has it occurred to you that the Achilles' heel of riot gear

stop . . .) and replace them after makwith the name plates on business- asking for listening material. men's desks or professors' doors, or the commemorative plaques at like way back when.

point across without actually touching before you're legally an adult. them. A smaller scale, subtler application of a similar concept would be to

YOU CAN set up short-range pirate on popular frequencies around the the community to share. clock, without attracting the attention a

citywide pirate radio station would.

On a big day of political action, **YOU** expertise with your friends, and make ous corporate chain stores—slightly **YOU CAN** spice up a first date by **CAN** draw the police away from other knowledge freely available to every-damage them, take them to the return resolving to get in trouble with the events by spreading the word about one regardless of their background desk and ask for a refund, and when authorities for something dreadfully your demonstration (which turns out or resources. to be in a district far from the action, attended by a handful or less of well-

busy and misinformed; during highly-settings. surveilled demonstrations, you can leave unmarked boxes and bags all around town, to keep the bomb squad YOU CAN find food, flowers, furni

plying for a permit for it.

whisky or similar substance, push a store credit. couple of them where they need to be, and throw in a smoke bomb for

demonstrations that double as shields or pie filling. for self-defence by reinforcing them with an internal fiberglass base, for example. Cut in half, the larger-sized **YOU CAN** seek out the food and cylindrical traffic cones might be useful for this, and they are freely available.

out of a roll of thick paper, and apply YOU CAN protect yourself from the beverage distributors in your area vine." Exchange this information with it on the street in two minutes with effects of tear gas by covering your and check out what great surplus of others—make sure not a single blackthree people—one in front, unrolling, mouth and nose with a rag soaked products is discarded every day, as berry or pear goes to waste. one in the middle applying the paint in vinegar or lime juice, and wearing expiration dates draw too near for roller, and one in back, rolling up. swimming goggles. When not wear- them to be sent out. Sometimes the bounty will be more than you could **YOU CAN** get as many credit cards You could stencil a sonnet through- ing the goggles, put them on your out downtown, one word on each forehead with the inside facing out, person you know in your town.

> YOU CAN mix styrofoam into gasoline to make it stick—this recipe has been used for the filling in molotov

> > after they've enjoyed it.

same way you did.

a good set of wire cutters. You could

start a "free bikes for kids" program

instants. The post office will send vour house or squat easily enough

of a long stick and operate it by means nearby coffee shop or cafeteria. of a lever and pulley, or put paint in Be sure to return them when you a long-distance water gun (a "super leave—reduce, reuse, recycle! Try soaker") and get your point across the same thing with airplane pillows more simply. Try between three and and blankets if you ever have a round five in the morning—the floodlights are trip ticket—it'll help you travel light. Imagine the flight attendants wondering how a pillow could get so dirty in a few hours, when you return it! Also, town at specified drop off points so worthwhile cause of your choice. To apply paint from a distance, when you fly or travel by bus, beware YOU CAN also fill up light bulbs or of your friends stealing your luggage to another. Voila! Public transportation Christmas tree ornaments with it, when you arrive—you would have to that is both free and autonomous.

YOU CAN remove advertisements have free video borrowing, for movies. thoughts. (from the subway, the bus, the bus If you can't use the internet to get free recordings of your favorite songs, go ing subtle adjustments. You could do to a local college radio station; act like For a more advanced project, try this write to Christian evangelical groups

to project messages or images onto random times in unused lockers. Re- sneak in, anyway-if just walking in the sides of big buildings, and get a member, you can get away with a lot purposefully (to retrieve your forgotten

remove the "WALK/DON'T WALK" **YOU CAN** set up your own library, employee entrance. screens from crosswalk signs and making all the books and magazines and records and videos and clothes you and your friends already have YOU CAN get a job working for a available for everyone, so no one company you don't respect that has a YOU CAN use the personal ads at has to buy their own copies anymore. Whenever a band comes to your town developing, food, information, art sup- a novel recruiting tactic: "Capitalism or pregnant." radio stations by key intersections, to play, have a part of the door money plies ...) and hold it as long as it takes sucking the life out of you? BiWF, 27,

> YOU CAN hold skill share workshops, to trade knowledge in your areas of YOU CAN get free items from nefari-

behaved citizens), perhaps even ap- YOU CAN start a reading/discussion you. Alternatively—damage the items, group with friends in order to get more leave them, and check their garbage If you have to work, **YOU CAN** organout of just about anything you might later. read. You may find it easier to give **YOU CAN** set up a fake activist web voice to your thoughts in this environpage for the F.B.I., to keep them ment than in traditional classroom

busy and entertained-better yet, put ture, clothes, building supplies, and little letters in the bags for them, or more precious things left out on the fragments that all together spell out street in front of houses in the suburbs, or in dumpsters. You might have more luck finding building supplies at construction sites at night, though—or In street warfare, it might be useful just wheeling them out the back door to know that **YOU CAN** easily set the of a corporate "home repair" chain dumpsters outside of bars on fire—the on a cart. You might be able to return bottles and cans inside all have the some of the items you rescue from the residue of alcohol on them, after all. trash—such as food that has passed Just douse the inside with a bottle of the expiration date—for money or

YOU CAN take fruit that is about to go rotten and freeze it to make smooth-**YOU CAN** make puppets for street ies, or mash it up to make fruit crisps

to provide fresh juice for every single limits purchasing useful materials, wanted to, you could write them all letters announcing that you were to get together a circle of trustworthy stered food for friends and family that whose lives have been ruined by still have reservations about your debt-though this might get you in use the space as a meeting place or you have sex. lifestyle. Don't disclose its origins until trouble. Or, better: get together a center for the performing arts; in the circle of people who are committed countryside, you could grow enough more of them to you on request—but from a restaurant, dormitory, hospital, YOU CAN go to college campuses for the needs of the group, and then with housing cooperatives in other also help your vocal cords heal, if they're beware, misusing them is a federal or library. Chances are they'll notice at the end of the semester and collect declare bankruptcy. There should be cities, so you can move around if damaged—as can inhaling steam, it missing and replace it quickly, and incredible amounts of discarded food, enough people in the group to cover you like without having to rent from and, of course, being silent for a while. you don't want to be unprepared for clothes, and furnishings—and all the the years until the bankruptcy period strangers. And—if you're ready for a an emergency just because you can't bicycles that have been abandoned of a participant is over and the process challenge—there's always squatting.

your own. If you can't reach them, you YOU CAN get the plates, glasses, up and go to the local police sta- shows for children that get important in bulk for all of you will save you a lot can attach a spraypaint can to the end and silverware you need from a tion—chances are they've already information across to their parents as of money. collected scores of forgotten bikes the well. You might be able to arrange to give educational presentations at local schools, too. If you know students in- YOU CAN go hitchhiking! Find the volved in a student group on a college YOU CAN establish a "yellow bike" program for your town: get a bunch of a speaking engagement for you that it takes is cardboard and a marker) beans), strain, cool, and drink! cheap bicycles, paint them all an ugly would pay a significant amount of vellow color, and leave them around student funds—which could go to the location—or, if you're going far, an people can ride them from one point

the "free market," the "loyal officer," YOU CAN walk or ride your bike etc.) and have a piñata party at which, your mohawk with a nice hat. is that the wearers need to be able YOU CAN still get almost all the instead of always driving or riding in when sufficiently beaten, the piñata books you need at the library, especars. It may take longer, but you will spills out party favors such as candies, cially if you ask them to order the ones see a lot more of the world, and you little books, or invitations to the next YOU CAN cure a case of the hic- rituals to get in touch with and established. they're missing. Many libraries also might enjoy the chance to collect your special event. Try doing this in a public cups! Take large gulps of water, and, lish power over your fears: try being place during times of unrest.

YOU CAN help your bicycle stay **YOU CAN** make quite an impressive, something similar with the labels on you work there, and tape whatever healthy by remembering to spray arresting noise by shaking a large through the nose, out through the familiar and then unfamiliar streets food products in the grocery store. records you want. For free cassettes, the chain and joints with WD-40 oc-piece of sheet metal. These should be mouth).

If YOU CAN get a password from a historic sites. For post-graduate work, If you are a high school student in student, you should be able to use the YOU CAN blow fire by holding a help everyone stay relaxed and feel try kidnapping time capsules from the United States, chances are **YOU** computers at the local university for torch (an old 100% cotton t-shirt close. corporate skyscrapers or university CAN get your school to pay for you everything from email to printing out wrapped around a bent coat hanger) ties and replacing the contents with to take college classes, if the classes fliers. If you can borrow a student's and spitting a cloud of paraffin lamp information about what it was really aren't available there. You can also meal plan card, you can go into a oil through it. Be sure not to swallow If your lover is a woman, YOU CAN steal the attendance book, arrange college cafeteria with a backpack and it, and have both water on hand to find her g-spot by putting your fingers munity—neighborhood associations, to take over the intercom system to come out with enough food to feed wash out your mouth and a towel to inside of her with your palm facing up punk rock scenes, bowling leagues, make an important announcement, yourself and some companions for a keep your face dry so you won't blow and moving them in a beckoning mo- Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, **YOU CAN** make projection devices or lock alarm clocks set to go off at few days. Hell, you might be able to yourself up. backpack, of course) doesn't work, try YOU CAN brighten others' lives by

supplying a different resource. they refuse (on the grounds that you embarrassing by the end of the night. didn't bring the receipt, etc.), you'll Don't tell your date, of course. have to take them back home with

to rust on the bike racks, if you have can be repeated.

easy to find unattended at construc-

looking for the handicapped access passing out notes reading "you are a elevator, the emergency exit, or the beautiful person" or "you deserve to be happy" or "you can do it!" to total fantasies, dancing together or for strangers.

resource you need (photocopies, film the back of the local newspaper for movies-and that can't get you sick broadcasting site-specific messages go to buying a copy of their record for to smuggle out what you want. A circle non-monogamous, seeks lovers of of friends could do this together, each life and liberty to form a revolutionary organization. Only those serious by applying hot water bottles, having cut these holes—by masterminding

about playing need apply."

ize a union with your fellow employees to gain a little leverage over your YOU CAN rub lavender oil workplace. Once you pull off a sudden into your temples to relieve ten-YOU CAN figure out which trees and strike, or get support from a larger unsion and pounding headaches. bushes around your town produce ion organization, the management will edible goodies and "feast from the be forced to take you seriously.

And don't forget, **YOU CAN** quit your job. No, really.

thing a few inches further back!

YOU CAN make love by whispering

of the body or libido that often go

ignored, or in any number of other

orgasms, doing yoga, stretches, ex-

ercise, anything that increases blood

circulation to that region of your body.

Or, try drinking a combination of pep-

YOU CAN use cloth rags or sea

pads-or steal organic all cotton

tampons. Never pay for hygiene!

sponges instead of tampons or adventures...

permint/chamomile tea.

wonderful ways you never see in the

ever imagine—imagine being able as possible, run them all up to their YOU CAN organize rent strikes to YOU CAN put whole garlic (do not make your landlord take care of the cut it) in and around genitals to help and then declare bankruptcy. If you problems with your plumbing, heat, with yeast and bladder infections. electricity-but it would be far wiser YOU CAN prepare a meal of dump- acting to avenge all the families people to invest in a communal living YOU CAN decrease the risk of bladspace together. In the city, you could derinfections by always urinating after to supporting each other; each year vegetables to feed a lot of people. YOU CAN eat fresh ginger to ease inone will run up massive debts paying You can organize exchange programs digestion. Sucking on ginger root can

> If you get nettles out on the road YOU CAN apply your own urine to **YOU CAN** start a food co-op with your relieve itching.

YOU CAN make your own soy milk! Just put sov beans in water for twelve hours, drain the water, mix the beans with a little water and mash them. on-ramp of your nearest highway. cook the mashed beans with water campus, they can probably arrange Go stand there with a clear sign (all (one liter for one hundred grams of bearing the name of your intended

YOU CAN boil water with whole rose-

mary in it and soak any cuts or sores

you have to prevent infection.

intermediate stop. For a cross-conti- YOU CAN reclaim a sense of ownernental trip, you could make a whole ship of your body by reading up on book of signs in advance. Make sure how it works and learning about do-**YOU CAN** make a piñata in the form to be dropped off near a gas station or it-yourself health care, birth control. of a politician or monstrosity (such as on ramp if you need to continue hitchmedicinal alternatives. Don't leave it ing after your first ride. Oh—and cover up to the experts, it's your body!

> YOU CAN practice a variety of daily before swallowing, press your hands naked with your friends and then to your ears. Or, have someone rub strangers, being intimate with people the cuticle area of your middle finger, of the sex opposite the one you are while you breathe slowly and fully (in used to touching, walking alone down blindfolded, starting frank conversations with strangers, climbing ladders on water towers—nothing can multiply YOU CAN give your friends mas- your capabilities like confronting the sages on a regular basis. This will limitations you have set for yourself.

YOU CAN take advantage of thousands of different attempts people have already made to establish comtion exerting light pressure towards church choirs, high school clubs, her belly. If he is a man, try the same student organizations, knitting circles, hobby groups—as starting points for working towards larger, more radical,

durable, ambitious communities.

each other, concentrating on parts YOU CAN travel across the globe. hiking or skateboarding or hopping trains or driving cars for cross-country delivery services or working as the saxophonist on a cruise ship, and everywhere you go you will find people looking for holes in the fabric of this YOU CAN ease menstrual cramps so-called reality. Together, you can unexpected street festivals, carrying out occupations and permanent rent strikes, playing music that blows the roof off the world, seizing chances to leap up and shout out truths no

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he old man lives in a city filled with factories. The factories roar away morning, noon, and night; it is well-nigh impossible to hear anything over them. The people of the city must shout at the tops of their lungs when they speak to each other, and even when they are alone making grocery lists or reflecting on the lost afternoons of childhood. They blast their music, which is necessarily cacophonous and overbearing, at the maximum volume their stereo speakers can deliver; they buy alarm clocks louder than bombs. There is not a single space or moment free from the incessant ear-splitting din.

Only the old man, who was a young boy before the factories were built, can remember what it was to walk, think, linger in silence. He tries to tell the others about it, but they cannot hear his soft voice. He tries to ponder what to do about the noise, but cannot clear his throbbing head to begin. He stuffs his ears with cotton and wax, presses pillows over his head—nothing helps. Finally, driven mad by the constant bangings and clangings of the machines, the wails of sirens, honks of horns, screams and guffaws and whistles of his neighbors, he grabs a sledgehammer and sets out for the center of the city, where the greatest of the factories thunders. He clambers over the barbed wire fence, shredding his fingers and thighs, and charges through the stockyard to a back door. It is unlocked, and he enters; but security guards spy him, and hurry after.

He finds himself in the entrails of the machinery. The blows of its hammer rhythm are deafening. Pounded by shockwaves, almost overwhelmed, he struggles forward to a vulnerable pipe and raises his weapon to deliver a crippling blow. At that moment the security guards, horrible in their matching uniforms

and ear protection, overtake him and drag him away. He is sent to a prison. The halls there echo all day and night with the hoots and yells of prisoners, the ringing of bells, the slamming of doors and the jingling of keys, but for once he is not disturbed by the clamor: the moments he spent in the factory have deafened him.

In this new-found peace, he writes a manifesto of silence that will be read by millions and whispered from ear to ear.

he Sultan is omnipotent in his desert empire because he controls the water supply. He rations it strictly: for women, a teaspoon a day; for great, stout men, a tablespoon; for infants and elders, a thimble-full. No one dares protest, for to drink any less would be fatal. Priests baptize babies with spit from their droughted mouths; wives collect the sweat off their husbands' brows to bathe in. The subjects make do as best they can, and take great pains not to displease their ruler.

One day, an incredibly beautiful maiden appears from far away. She is the Sultan's new wife, fresh from the monsoon country. Her long, black hair flows and ripples like a river; her voice is the song of a laughing brook; looking into her dark eyes, one finds oneself floating in a summer sea. The very air around her drips nectar.

The Sultan's stable boy falls in love with her. He languishes for months, living only for the rustle of her skirts, the glimpse of her moist skin. Unbeknownst to him, she too is watching him—she likes his faraway air, his shy seriousness, the depth of feeling in his knitted brow. One morning, while the Sultan and his henchmen are away on business, the stable boy sneaks into her chamber. She is bathing in a magnificent pool.

The poor boy stands mute before her. All he has longed for his whole life, the years of parched throat, cracked lips, arid isolation, is personified in her—and he is a simple stable boy, intruding upon her. In the recklessness of desperation, he opens his mouth: a torrent of adoration pours out. It becomes a deluge; then, a psalm. She is moved; it has been a long time since anyone has spoken to her honestly, let alone beautifully, in this barren land. She tells him to come to her after sundown.

That night, after everyone else is asleep and the moon is high in the clear sky, the stable boy leaves his tent and creeps to the tower in which the Sultan keeps his wife. The door is locked, and soldiers stand guard inside, so the boy scales the dry brick of the wall to her window. She opens it and helps him in. Hours later, the Sultan is awakened by sounds of passion from his young

wife's bedchamber.

His soldiers stamp up the stairs, but it is too late. From their lovemaking flows a river so deep and so wide that all the Sultan's horses and men are unable to cross it to punish the enraptured couple. In a rage, the Sultan orders that a mountain of dust be piled up so that his subjects will not see the new body of water. It is done, and none of them do; but the hot sun shines overhead, and soon the gypsies in the countryside are crooning a new folk song: you can outlaw the rain, they sing, but we all see the clouds are

gathering.

"All this is like a dream, and I never dream."

"Like the king who never had any dreams until the wizard made him sleep in a pigsty."

she confides. "Let's not be, either."

Scarcity, propriety, cruelty, routine—these things seem like laws of nature, until you experience otherwise. You can't blame those who cannot imagine more—only show them it exists

And so our charge is to be alchemists. Just as the alchemists of bygone days strove to change lead into gold, we must make fortune from misfortune and magic of the mundane. Alchemy is the art of reinventing the world, of rearranging existing elements to create new possibilities. The alchemist understands it is the forces that count, the relationships, not the materials, not the things in the world. Any situation, every situation, can be revolutionized—you simply have to enter knowing your life is at stake.

Our contest is with gravity, with the weight of inertia. It is up to us to shake it off—or turn it to our advantage. For the slothful man, gravity is a force to be feared, a hated master; he finds in it an argument against motion, action, life itself. But for the dancer, gravity is indispensable, beloved even. Without it, she would have nothing to play against, no counterpoint for her strength and skill. She flies all the more gracefully for being born without wings.

We must dance with our apprehensions, our agonies, our histories, or be paralyzed by them. With lightness of foot, we can transform our centuries-long history of destruction and disappointment into a mere prologue, the tragic overture before a beautiful symphony—justifying and absolving ourselves, and the world we know, in the process.

If there is anyone foolish enough to want this world the way it is, then let him have it—let him have it!!—and perish with it. For the rest of us, alchemy is our only hope.

She takes my hand and leads me breathless from the ruins. "Life is not retrospective

of absolutely regulated time. In the boarding school, every moment is strictly regimented: rise at six o'clock, wash until ten after, dress by twenty after, breakfast at six thirty, and so on; likewise Tuesday night is laundry night, Thursday is soccer day, and every other Saturday evening, a movie at ten on the dot. The nuns meet every morning at five thirty to synchronize their watches by the great tolling belltower. They teach that time is ordained by God: He has created it in all its

he lives

in a world

that time is ordained by God: He has created it in all its precision to show that He is universal, that His creation is flawless and uniform, that there are no exceptions. Bells ring to announce every movement of students and faculty. Clocks and watches tick tick tick in unison in every room. Every semester includes exactly 1200 hours of sleep, 100 hours of mathematics homework, and 10 hours of visiting time.

The young student is secretly terrified by this timekeeping mania. She lies awake in bed when everyone is supposed to be asleep, counting down the seconds to her death. It seems to her it is lunacy to calibrate life this way—as if subdividing time made *more* of it!—but whatever it could be she would prefer, she cannot imagine. She comes up with a plan. The next day, she and a few rebellious students are ten minutes late to each class; she has calculated that they can gain a few minutes more free time this way, in relation to the detention time their tardiness will occasion. It is strange and new to have these few minutes to do with what they please; but they still have to keep an eye on the clock, for arriving at class more than ten minutes late draws much longer periods of detention.

After a couple days, she is the only one still playing this game; the others are already in too much trouble with the administration for their tastes. *That's it for your little insurrection*, she thinks bitterly to herself—and then, possessed by frustration and defiance at being abandoned by her classmates, *no, it's not*. She tears off her watch, tosses it away, and stomps into the forest.

There, everything is wholly different. Time, as she has known it, stops completely; in its place is a profound and beautiful stillness, like nothing she has felt before. Here, there is no need to fear death, for she can linger in the eternity of the moment, absorbing and savoring it. The birds twitter overhead, the sun moves slowly across the sky; eventually the moon ascends, the darkness thickens, and she reluctantly concedes to herself that she must go back, since she is not yet ready to live alone in the woods.

Upon her return, she is immediately apprehended by a stern hall monitor, who seizes her arm and drags her to the office of Mother Superior. She receives her talking-to in stoic silence, and doesn't flinch when the woman threatens severe punishment. The next morning before dawn she rises and advances on the great belltower with a book of matches. She knows her freedom depends on whether she can wrest everyone from the rhythm of the bells.

he brother and sister have grown up together; everything they are, they have become as a pair. They have survived the same challenges, heartaches, illnesses; they have treasured the same meanings in songs and poems and chilly sunrises. If one prefers the crusts of bread, it is because the other favors the soft core. Whenever one feels, suffers, triumphs, it is them both

for them both.

A day comes when they decide to part and seek their separate fortunes; between the two of them, they reason, they can chart the world, and share it when they meet again. The sister sets out with a simple pack on her back, and doesn't stop to sleep until she is many leagues from their childhood home. She continues this way for many weeks, entering regions vastly different from their homeland. There, she encounters wondrous animals, witnesses new cultures, strange customs, exotic religions and value systems. She learns to charm cobras, to dance flamenco, to speak a few of the infinite languages in which the grandeur of the cosmos is written.

Years later, as agreed, she returns home to meet her sibling. The two embrace, and sit down before a warm fire. The sister relates all her adventures, all the wonders she has experienced, one by one. Her brother listens pensively, hesitates, finally speaks.

He explains that all the marvels she has seen are little better than illusions: that there is only one thing in the world worthy of contemplation. He relates how he, too, set out from home, and stopped the first night at a monastery. When the monks inquired about the purpose of his journey, he told them of how he and his sister had pledged to chart the corners of creation together. The abbot informed him that they could assist in his quest, and brought out their holy book: a book which, the elderly man declared, held the truth about everything in the world, down to the last blade of grass.

The brother recounts how he spent the following years deep in study with the monks, and found that the whole of the world, all that can be felt or known or pondered, was indeed contained in this book. It became clear to him that further traveling was unnecessary; instead, he isolated himself entirely and spent every waking instant poring over the book, memorizing every word, learning to fit every detail of life, even the ones that seemed not to fit, into the system it contained.

Her brother concludes his story and implores his sibling to return with him to the monastery. But she politely takes her leave, and sets out again across the earth. She will find the single unaccounted-for blade of grass, the irreplaceable note from a french horn, the one recalcitrant turtledove that will break the book's grip on her brother, so he will again be free to recognize the universe in all its diverse splendors—to perceive that the world is too big and too beautiful to fit in one million such books.