

**The poverty of the 1<sup>st</sup> world: Why the poverty of western individualism needs to recognize the so-called “3<sup>rd</sup> world” as a resource, not a charitable cause.**

*“Human beings are the only animals who have to work and I think that is the most ridiculous thing in the world. Other animals make their livings by living, but people work like crazy, thinking that they have to in order to stay alive. The bigger the job, the greater the challenge, the more wonderful they think it is. It would be good to give up that way of thinking and live an easy, comfortable life with plenty of free time. I think that the way animals live in the tropics, stepping outside in the morning and evening to see if there is something to eat, and taking a long nap in the afternoon, must be a wonderful life. For human beings, a life of such simplicity would be possible if one worked to produce directly his daily necessities. In such a life, work is not work as people generally think of it, but simply doing what needs to be done.”*

- Masanobu Fukuoka

There is a magnificent illusion in the idea that the western or 1<sup>st</sup> world countries are “developed” and everyone else is “developing” (another word for “destroyed”). However to suggest that this be otherwise, that in fact the westernized society is actually deeply poverty-ridden and sick and is moving headlong towards essentially deepening all of this with added “development”, this realisation is absolute anarchic to the status quo. We are taught and trained to believe that the lives we lead, everything we do which is full of ambition and torturous tension on the back of an industrialized economically developed affair is in fact a “normal” approach to life. We have even sold this ideal abroad, colonialising the world and forcing the countries we come across to submit to the sheer power and might of military control and the short-term victory of antibiotics.

However this says nothing about what life is really like within the developed country. For all the wealth technology and power, the poverty stems from the intense movement brought about by the modern and industrialized societies of the process of individualism and separation. There is a direct proportionality between the amount of capitalistic idealism there is in a country and the increase in the sense of separation and isolation. There is a direct proportion in the attempt to educate and “learn” and the increase of so-called “intelligent” ideology and the situation of depression and internal illness. There is a direct proportion in the movement towards city life and disease increasing as a whole. The point is that everything borne out of the western ideology no matter what it is: the industrialization, the individualism or even the process of medicine that comes from this background, all are tainted with the same messy contraction that moves people into a highly technical and hygienic hell of inorganic madness.

The term “3<sup>rd</sup> world” is often an accurate one in terms of devastation to land and life because it was raped and destroyed by an invading population and now it is turned into a desert. However, the 3<sup>rd</sup> world is seen as being in “3<sup>rd</sup> place” because it is deemed to be “in development” in order to become closer to the western world, which is seen as an arbitrary “1<sup>st</sup> place prize” by its own ridiculous standards. But why the hell would you want someone to “be like us”, why would we send a message out to the world suggesting we are the happy masters of the globe when in fact all we are, to

echo the brilliant Johnny Cash, is holders of an “[empire of dirt](#)”. Soon there will be nothing left of our land other than deserts. Sure it all looks green at the moment, but this is only because we are importing from all around the world. When food production is based entirely on our own lands but focused on industrial agriculture, which is the only way we know, “England’s green and pleasant lands” (for example) will be washed away even faster than they are at the moment.

The problem is not the land, it is never the land, the problem lies in the ideology of the people. It always lies in the actuality of the modern west being a root-less culture where there is no connection to land and community and the meaning of this. We have an idea that we can form communes and build new cultures, even “transitional cultures” but from within the modern western way of thinking this is absolutely impossible because it is no longer in our lineage to know what community and land actually means, we have lost the “plot”. We take our separatist-individualism/city mentality with us into the country and form the same thing there, just on a green plot with the idea of “being more natural” in our heads.

There are almost no countries in the world that still retain their native peoples who are still connected to their land and have a lineage of more than 100 generations, but within those that remain there is a true sense of community and connection with the land. These people are one with the land and so there is no separation between them and it, or to each other. The problem for us is that we believe it is our birthright to independently set up communities and to form nations, however this cannot be further from the truth. The native peoples of the world have no choice about who they are, there’s no such thing as being “proud” of a heritage because actually they did nothing to form it, there are simply living, nothing more nothing less.

At this time many of us are realizing the predicament of the westerner, we find ourselves without a home and without a family, without a root and with a culture and we all yearn for “home”. We want to find a place where it feels okay to be part of something larger than our intense, internal, individual lives, while at the same time hating the prospect of being forced into submission by a dictatorship or controlled by a traditional belief system that we can’t adhere to. Mostly we hate the idea that our independence is taken away and we will need to rely utterly on each other, or to literally move as one animal!...how can anyone trust to this degree?

All of these questions are lived through and answered by the so-called “3<sup>rd</sup> world person” . Far from these people needing or being worthy of our charity they often just need help repairing the damage originally done by the invading population. Why is it not said to these peoples “don't do it the way we did it, it leads to the heart of hell!” Very often it is too late. The innocence and peace of a culture without the power, struggle and tension of modern capitalist warfare is now a rarity. Everyone wants to be involved in “helping educate” these “poor” people, bringing them our idol of mind-filled money grabbing to replace their sensitivity and connection to nature....and not only is this legal but its deemed “a righteous cause”.

There is another possibility, which is that the peoples of the 3<sup>rd</sup> world (and the 4<sup>th</sup> world which are those indigenous tribes who are the rarest groups on earth) need to be listened to, need to be seen as people who have a connection that we have lost. Instead of being seen as “poor” people in need of education, we might ask them point

us us back to the natural way of life they know and help us out of our own dis-ease. It is not us that needs to go to them with the ideology of mad education and arrogant suggestions on how to live, but rather if we go to them it would be better for us to find out how they live, how to integrate and emulate their ways and let go of our own as they do us no good.

From our ivory towers many say that we are “lucky”, but the ivory towers are hell, they are not towers we build with passion but towers of protection from our own minds. We imprison ourselves within them and say that these are our “castles” and yet suggest that we are in communities of other “castles”! Why do there need to be walls to protect ourselves from one another if we live in community? These protections are simply the expression of separation.

The modern western culture is extending, with the exception of a few pockets it has ravaged all of Europe and Russia and much of the Mediterranean. It is grabbing hold of every main city worldwide and expanding like a cancer across the earth’s surface flaunting the same separatist message and leaving the same destruction of nature in its wake. Northern Asia has been almost entirely engulfed in this, including Japan and China,. There are still some parts of India and Indonesia that are freer from this pattern and also parts of south America and Brazil and areas of Africa which are not part of the devastation of western culture and still retain some connection to their roots but gradually the wave of tension will come upon even the most remote places.

There are native peoples of numerous cultures and a few western people who realize that the unravelling of the westerner’s tension is of considerable value to the rest of the planet. In the James Cameron film “Avatar” there is a recognition of the modern West’s total misunderstanding of nature and natural balance. This message was a key insight into the reality of what we feel globally as the response to the film was so unanimous in its agreement. There is a deep and growing undercurrent that instead of going to countries to “suck-up” the culture on holiday, or going to help the “poor Africans” we should instead visit without the colonial motivation. Then when we tread on the soil of another land whose people belong to it, we might see it as a new possibility, as a refuge to heal our wounds and a realization that being amongst these people of the earth can actually sometimes allow us to live simply without needing the ambition of modern life to be our master.

The movement into communities by the west is a want to find ourselves but without inner forgotten instinctive guidance it is very difficult for us to do. The guidance comes from those who live without asking for hand-outs or education, but like a child who has been knocked down by a violent adult, simply ask to be helped up so they can continue living as they were before, so that the trauma can be healed and that nature can return to balance with the human living as an intricate strand in the web of nature. This is essentially now the role of the westerner in connection to the so-called “3<sup>rd</sup> world”. As Christ points out: *“Blessed be the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”* In this case “meek” means those with the nature of children and the clarity and simplicity of the natural human being for this is true intelligence, it is not the stupidity of the “knowledge” of the well-read intellectual.

In this context we re-activate the instinctive sensory process of our body, how to heal without medicine, how to live based on our hands and feet, not on mind. We need not

live by the processes of commerce and ambition but by the simplicity of what the body produces. Women can be women, men can be men, each oblivious of the nature of any ideology about sexuality or even of “role”. There is no evaluation but simply an acceptance of what we truly are. Those native peoples who are still in touch with nature have an understanding that we are just children of mother earth, that we have no power and that it is nature that lives through us, there is no centre to power, no centre to “myself”. The formation of culture is very different when it is not based in “what I have to teach it” or “what they have to learn from me”, or even that “I have to be subservient to a culture and be something that I am not”. Then there is the realization that outside of the student-teacher, right-wrong duality there is a connection which is about simply being and knowing nature. There is no unlearning or learning, for this too is a duality, there is just simply being. Native/natural cultures don't learn or unlearn or help us to do that, they simply are what they are and being around them invokes this in us, it unravels our constraint, without any “doing” on our part.

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