

DE-COLONIZING THE REVOLUTIONARY IMAGINATION

Values Crisis, the Politics of Reality and why there's Going to be a Common Sense Revolution in this Generation

patrick reinsborough may 2003 anti-copyright

Patrick is a writer, grassroots organizer and popular educator who has worked on a wide range of issues including forest protection, nuclear power, police brutality, urban sprawl, peace in northern Ireland, indigenous rights, and numerous local and global environmental justice struggles. Patrick is the co-founder of the smartMeme strategy and training project, which works to deepen analysis, develop new social change tools and promote a culture of strategy in grassroots movements. He writes and speaks frequently about the ecology movement, global resistance to corporate rule, indigenous rights and the theory and practice of social change. He is a dad, a struggling optimist and a novice go player.

contents

i.	introduction: post-issue activism	p. 2
ii.	the doomsday economy	p. 4
iii.	naming the system (global pathology)	p. 7
iv.	the control mythology: consume or die	p. 9
v.	articulating values crisis	p. 12
vi.	framing the debate	p. 15
vii.	direct action at the point of assumption	p. 19
viii.	case study: the san francisco uprising	p. 23
ix.	beware the professionalization of social change	p. 25
x.	towards a politics of reality	p. 28
xi.	APPENDIX : a pragmatic dreamer's glossary	p. 31
xii.	end notes/sources	p. 34

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This essay was written for the City Lights Press anthology "Globalize Liberation" June 2004. These ideas are works in progress. Feedback of all sorts (including scathing criticism) is welcome. Many of the concepts discussed in this essay have been translated into training and strategy tools through the work of the smartMeme Strategy and Training Project. To bring the author or other smartMeme project trainers/consultants to your community, contact info@smartmeme.com, call 415-255-9133 or check out www.smartmeme.com. Join the fun - start your own laboratory of resistance!

"If you expect to see the final results of your work, you simply have not asked a big enough question." I.F. Stone

i. introduction: post-issue activism

Our planet is heading into an unprecedented global crisis. The blatancy of the corporate power grab and the accelerating ecological meltdown is evidence that we do not live in an era where we can afford the luxury of fighting the symptoms. As is often noted, crisis provides both danger and opportunity. The extent that these two opposing qualities define our era will be largely based on the appeal and breadth of the social movements which arise to address the crisis.

This essay is part of my own struggle to explore a politics that is commensurate with the scale of the global crisis. In part it was inspired by a profound strategy insight I received while watching a circling bird of prey. The raptor seemed to spend hours calmly drifting on the breezes, waiting and watching, then suddenly made a lightning quick dive to seize its prey. Had I only witnessed the raptor's final plunge, I might not have realizing that it took hours of patient surveillance for the raptor to be in the right place to make a seemingly effortless kill. I was struck by what a clear metaphor the raptor's circling time is for what our movements need to do in order to be successful. Social change is not just the bird of prey's sudden plunge—the flurry of direct confrontation - but rather the whole process of circling, preparing and strategizing.

Analysis is the most import tool in the social change toolbox. It is this process of analysis—the work to find the points of intervention and leverage in the system we are working to transform—that suggests why, where and how to use the other tools. Many of us are impatient in our desire for change and particularly, those of us from privileged backgrounds, are often times unschooled in the realities of long-term struggle.

I often recall the Buddhist saying “The task before us is very urgent so we must slow down.” This essay is my effort as an organizer who has been deeply involved in a number of recent global justice mass actions, to “slow down” a bit and explore some new analytical tools.

My hope is that this essay will incite deeper conversations about strategies for building movements with the inclusiveness, creativity and depth of vision necessary to move towards a more just and sane world. To do so, let's begin by asking why aren't more global north movements coming forward with systemic critiques? Why despite the increasingly obvious nature of the crisis, isn't there more visible resistance to the corporate take over of the global political system, economy and culture?

The answer to this question lies in our exploration of how pathological values have shaped not only the global system but also our ability to imagine true change. The system we are fighting is not merely structural it's also inside us, through the internalization of oppressive cultural norms which define our worldview. Our minds have been colonized

to normalize deeply pathological assumptions. Thus often times our own sense of self-defeatism becomes complicit with the anesthetic qualities of a cynical mass media to make fundamental social change unimaginable.

As a consequence activists frequently ghettoize themselves by self-identifying through protest and failing to conceive of themselves as building movements that can actually change power relations. All too often we project our own sense of powerlessness by mistaking militancy for radicalism and mobilization for movement building. It seems highly unlikely to me that capitalism will be smashed one window at a time. Likewise getting tens of thousands of people to take joint action is not an end in itself, rather only the first step in catalyzing deeper shifts in the dominant culture. Our revolution(s) will really start rolling when the logic of our actions and the appeal of our disobedience is so clear that it can easily replicate and spread far beyond the limiting definition of “protester” or “activist”.

To do so, our movements for justice, ecology and democracy must deepen their message by more effectively articulating the values crisis underlying the corporate system. We must lay claim to life-affirming, common sense values and expose one of the most blatant revolutionary truths of the modern era: the corporate rule system rooted in sacrificing human dignity and planetary health for elite profit is out of alignment with common sense values.

This is the domain of **post-issue activism**— the recognition that the roots of the emerging crisis lie in the fundamental flaws of the modern order and that our movements for change need to talk about re-designing the whole global system— now. Post-issue activism is a dramatic divergence from the slow progression of single-issue politics, narrow constituencies and band-aid solutions. Traditional single-issue politics, despite noble and pragmatic goals, is not just a strategic and gradualist path to the same goal of global transformation. Too often the framework of issue-based struggle needs to affirm the existing system in order to win concessions and thus fails to nurture the evolution of more systemic movements. An analogy is that much of our social change energy is spent campaigning against the smoke rather than clearly alerting people to the fact that their house is on fire. Post-issue activism will not replace single-issue politics - the people and ecosystems closest to the smoke need relief now - but rather strengthen ongoing struggles by providing a larger social change context.

Post-issue activism is the struggle to address the holistic nature of the crisis and it demands new frameworks, new alliances and new strategies. We must find ways to articulate the connections between all the “issues” by revealing the pathological nature of the corporate system. To do so we must rise to the challenge of going beyond (rather than abandoning) single-issue politics. We have to learn to talk about values, deepen our analysis without sacrificing accessibility and direct more social change resources into creating political space for a truly transformative arena of social change.

To explore de-colonizing the revolutionary imagination, we must reference the history of colonization. The word colonialism comes from “colonia” a Latin word for rural

farmstead. When the armies of the Roman empire conquered the peoples of Europe they seized the land and created colonias to control the territory. Over a thousand years later Europe came to be controlled by leaders who went on to mimic this cruelty, and force Western civilization ("a disease historically spread by sharp swords"¹) upon the rest of the world.

Colonialism is not just the process of establishing physical control over territory, it is the process of establishing the ideologies and the identities - colonies in the mind - that perpetuate control. Central to this process has been the manufacture of attitudes of racism, nationalism, patriarchal manhood, and the division of society into economic classes. If we are to take seriously de-colonizing the revolutionary imagination then we must examine how these attitudes, shape the way we conceive of social change. Likewise we must remember that analysis is shaped by experience and that those who suffer directly as targets of these oppressive attitudes often live the experiences which create clear analysis. Let us not forget that effective revolutions are based on listening.

In facing the global crisis, the most powerful weapon that we have is our imaginations. But first we must liberate ourselves from the conceptual limitations we place on social change. As we expand the realm of the possible we shape the direction of the probable. This means directly confronting the myths and assumptions that make a better world seem unattainable. To that end this essay endeavors to explore some tools to help us unshackle our imaginations and deepen the momentum of the global justice movements into a political space to fundamentally re-design the global system.

On a final note of introduction I wish to clarify that most of the ideas presented in this essay are neither new nor truly my own. Ideas by their nature quickly cross-pollinate and grow beyond any individual's role in their articulation. All activists owe a great debt to shared experience. I personally am indebted to many seasoned activists and theorists from across numerous movements who have shared their thoughts and helped me deepen my analysis. Likewise all of these ideas are a work in progress. They are intended to be tools to spark discussion, encourage debate and it is my sincerest hope that they will generate more questions than they answer. Questions are always more radical than answers.

ii. the doomsday economy

We live in a dangerous time, an urgent time, a time of profound crisis. Ecologically speaking it is an apocalyptic time defined by the sixth mass extinction², the destruction of the planet's last wilderness areas and the forced assimilation of the planet's few remaining earth centered cultures. Every ecosystem, every traditional culture and every subsistence economy is on the chopping block as the global corporatizers force their consumer monoculture "development" model (read anti-development) upon the entire world. Corporate capitalism's inherent drive towards global domination has literally pushed the life support systems of the planet to the point of collapse.

Increasingly more and more people are recognizing that we are at a global turning point. The corporate take over— the latest offensive in the 500 plus year conquest of the planet by Western Culture — is being met with massive resistance around the planet. However, the elite planners and architects of the global economy seem incapable of hearing their multitude of critics and are continuing to push towards total commodification, assimilation, and a global corporate state.

Over the last few years as corporate power has begun to undermine the economic self-determination and political sovereignty of even the global north over-consumers, resistance has grown more visible in the heart of it all— the United States. Unprecedented coalitions have formed, and different movements have been united in creative mass protest to slow the pace of corporate globalization. But slowing things down is one thing, replacing the doomsday economy with a democratic, just and ecological sane world is another.

The global system is mutating. Although its roots remain sunk deeply in its history of colonial genocide, corporate power grabs, and ecological devastation the structure has changed dramatically over the past generation. The biggest element of this is the rise of the speculative economy. As the world financial sector has been deregulated and many countries have been forced to drop limits on investment, there has been a widely noted transition in global economic priorities from the production of real goods to a global casino economy based on high risk short term speculation.

In 1986 the world's foreign exchange markets were handling nearly \$200 billion a day. By 1998 this figure had grown 8 fold to \$1.5 trillion dollars EVERY DAY! ³ Since the entirety of world trade is estimated to be worth about US \$6.5 trillion a year ⁴ that means that 5 days of currency transactions surpasses the value of an entire year of world trade. But the most important aspect of this so-called "financial revolution" is that the massive numbers represent growth in the speculative sector of the economy. Financial speculation has accelerated to the point that by the year 2000, for every one dollar of international investment facilitating trade in real goods, nine dollars were being spent on short term speculation. ⁵

Understanding the rise of the speculative economy is central to debunking the neoliberal myth of growing prosperity. The reality is that all the money circulating in the speculative economy doesn't feed anyone, clothe anyone, or provide anyone with meaningful jobs. Rather the speculative economy is largely just rich people, through their corporate institutional proxies, using the money they already have to make more. This massive speculative economy is a powerful de-stabilizing force threatening local economies and ecosystems. Speculation is the opposite of sustainability and encourages a deeper disconnect between ecological realities (limits, natural cycles of production etc.) and the arbitrary mechanics of financial manipulation.

Since 1980 the total value of the planet's financial assets (money in stocks, bonds, bank deposits, and cash) has increased seven fold from \$12 trillion to \$80 trillion in 2000. ⁶

These statistics are the "rising tide that lifts all the boats" and the "miracle of economic growth" that is the basis for the politician's promise of prosperity. But anyone (especially those unbrainwashed by the arcane logic of conventional economics) can see that surely seven more Earths haven't been created over the last 2 decades -- so where did all this new "wealth" come from?

Once we cut through the numerology and semantics we recognize that what economists call economic growth is really the liquidation of the natural wealth of the planet. Almost literally, they are destroying the natural economy of living forests to make an economy of disposable paper on which they print money to tell themselves how rich they are. It is a true doomsday economy, which is incapable of seeing the natural systems which sustain life as anything other than resources to be extracted. The flawed accounting of the speculative economy hides the horrible truth that what the corporate globalizers call "progress" is really the Earth's going out of business sale.

Our strategies must be informed by the fact that we're not fighting that colloquialism once called in activist parlance "The Man"— these days we're fighting "The Machine". This machine is the culmination of the pathological world view that has hard-wired patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalist domination and ecological illiteracy into the global operating system. The rich, white (self-congratulatory) men who have always benefited from global domination continue to do so but ultimately they have created a runaway machine that is increasingly getting beyond even their own control.

++++++

SIDE BAR

A FEW NOTABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DOOMSDAY ECONOMY

- Corporatization and increasingly centralized control.
- Reliance on coercion (both physical and ideological) to maintain control
- Drive to commodify all aspects of life.
- Community fragmentation/cultural decay (replacement of lived experience with representation— image based mass culture, television addiction, increasing alienation).
- Elevation of consumerism to the center of public life (consumer monoculture).
- Increased mechanization and blind faith in technology (trend towards cyborgianism).
- Fetishization of speculative/financial wealth.
- Distorted accounting that mask liquidation of ecological and social capital.
- Pathological values/flawed assumptions.
- Undermining of planetary life support systems, accelerating ecological collapse.

++++++

iii. naming the system (global pathology)

In this era of escalating global crisis one of the most important roles radicals can play is to help build a common analysis of the system's flawed design. Not the dogmatic vanguardism of a single analysis, but rather the political space for a critical mass of people to define the problems they face in their own lives in a systematic way which allows the imagining of fundamental change. We don't have to convince people that something is wrong. As corporate control becomes more blatant and the ecological crisis worsens the system is doing much of the work to discredit itself. We must, however, help people imagine alternatives that go beyond tinkering with the symptoms to address actually dismantling and re-designing the global system.

Radicals have always struggled to build oppositional power by **naming the system**. If only it were as easy as putting "Capitalism" or "Corporate Rule" or "Algae Bloom Civilization/Insane World" on a banner, we'd have probably won by now. But naming the system isn't merely a semantic or intellectual exercise. Rather, it is the revolutionary process through which a critical mass of people recognize the deadly design flaws of the current social order. The process of "naming" is our way of revealing the hypocrisy, brutality and idiocy of the corporate controlled world in order to build the popular consciousness necessary to inspire transformative action.

One of the beauties of the recent global uprisings has been their ability to look beyond tactical, cultural and ideological differences to see a unifying commitment to structural change. The more we articulate the fundamental flaws of the current world order the more we see the links between the many types of resistance that are springing up to confront the doomsday economy.

A useful description of our current system can be found in the science of pathology—the branch of medical study which examines the nature of disease. The modern system is pathological on many levels, but the disease that most closely corresponds to the global crisis is the quintessential modern pathology— cancer. Cancer is not merely a metaphor but a literal diagnosis of the doomsday economy.⁷

Cancer is a perversion in the biological systems of the human body— our internal ecosystem— when a cell goes haywire and loses its connection to the surrounding cells. The cancerous cell forgets its own boundaries and its own mortality. The infected cell lives forever, continuing to divide without limits, until it finally overwhelms the entire biological system of which it is a part.

Cancer is the definition of biological insanity. This disease which has now become so common at the molecular level is a chillingly apt description of what is happening at the macro-level— the emergence of a pathological world system.

Corporate power is a cancer in the body politic. Corporations are the institutional embodiment of the perverted values system of modern capitalism— shaped through the

historic lens of white male supremacy to be anti-democratic, exploitative, and incapable of respecting ecological limits. The corporation is a machine which blindly focuses on its one function: the maximization of profits. Now as the elites are on the brink of ushering in de facto global corporate rule through the neo-liberal free trade agenda the cancer is metastasizing (spreading) through out the host— planet earth.

We can learn about the pathological nature of the corporate take over by examining four ways in which cancer operates in our physical bodies.

1. Cancer is a perversion by definition. Cancer usurps the function of the cell away from the collective interest of the organism and into an illusionary self-interest separate from the host. Corporations are the manifestation of a similar deep perversion in modern culture— alienation from nature and the failure to recognize our collective self-interest as tied to the over all health of the biosphere. Just as the cancer cell loses its connection to the organism, the corporate paradigm is incapable of seeing the ecological reality, the interdependence between humans and ecosystems that define the real limits of the economic sphere. The corporation, like the cancer cell, defines itself around unlimited growth and exists through its desire to expand, consolidate power and subvert any limits placed upon its ability to maximize profits. The cancer cell models the same fundamental flaw as our modern system— defining its self-interest so narrowly that it forgets that it is part of and dependant upon a larger biological system

2. Cancer re-writes the rules. Cancer infects the cell's genetic instructions to make the cell operate separately from the rest of the organism. This is exactly what corporate elites have done first in America and then around the world: re-written the laws to limit democratic tendencies and to consolidate power. Since 1886, when corporations achieved legal "personhood" in the United States through judicial fiat, the corporate form has become the preferred method for elites to organize their wealth and rationalize their seizure of public property and assets.⁸ Corporations continue to undermine the regulatory framework and to subvert democratic decision making with campaign finance corruption, influence peddling and public relations campaigns. Free from its historic limits the corporation has risen to become the defining institution of the modern world. The ideology of privatization has facilitated the corporatization of every aspect of life. International trade, health care, schools, prisons, even the building blocks of life itself -- our genetic material -- are all being gobbled up as corporations become the defacto tool of governance. Corporate pathology has become so ingrained that the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank, IMF, WTO) now overtly force rule changes to favor corporations over the public interest. The essence of the doomsday economy is that the same corporations who profit from destroying the planet are being allowed to write the rules of the global economy. Structural adjustment is the marco-economic equivalent of cancer reprogramming a cell.

3. Cancer masquerades as the host. Since cancer is not an outside invader but instead a perversion within the body's existing cells, our immune system fails to recognize it as a threat. The body's defenses fail to attack the cancer because the cancer masquerades as part of the body. This is probably cancer's most important quality for informing our

strategies because it is central to understanding how the corporate take over has managed to become so advanced without triggering a stronger backlash. Corporate rule masquerades as democracy. The elites use the symbols, trappings and language of democracy to justify control while corporations hijack the democratic form without the democratic function. This process conceals the deepening values perversion - ecological illiteracy masquerades as “market forces”, monopoly capitalism masquerades as “free trade” and doomsday economics masquerade as “economic growth”.

4. Cancer Kills the host. Cancer’s suicidal destiny is a product of its initial perversion. If not confronted cancer inevitably metastasizes, spreading throughout the body and killing the host. This is exactly what the corporate pathology is doing to the biosphere. Spread across the planet by waves of colonizers, from the conquistadors to the resource extraction corporations to the International Monetary Fund, the corporate system is on the brink of killing the host— the biological and cultural diversity of life on planet earth. People’s ability to govern their own lives is sacrificed along the way since corporate rule is antithetical to real democracy. By definition corporate decision making must operate within the narrow, short term interests of their shareholders. Corporations are not wealth generating machines as the American mythology would have us believe but rather wealth consolidating machines. Corporations extract the biological wealth of the planet, liquidating our collective natural heritage in order to enrich a tiny minority. The corporate drive to shorten the planning horizon, externalize costs and accelerate growth has pushed the life support systems of the planet to the brink of collapse.

iv. the control mythology: consume or die

At the center of the ever-growing doomsday economy is a perverse division of resources that slowly starves the many while normalizing over-consumption for the few. Maintaining control in a system that creates such blatant global injustice relies on the age old tools of empire: repression, brutality and terror. Multinational corporations have long since learned how to “constructively engage” with repressive regimes and put “strong central leadership” to work for their profit margins. Whether it's US approved military dictatorships or America’s own ever growing incarceration economy, the naked control that is used to, criminalize, contain and silence dissent among the have-nots is obvious.

But this brutality is just one side of the system of global control. Far less acknowledged is that in addition to the wide spread use of the stick, the global system relies heavily on the selective use of the carrot. The entire debate around globalization has been framed to insure that the tiny global minority who makes up the over-consumption class never connects their inflated standard of living with the impoverishment of the rest of the world.

Most people who live outside the small over-consumption class can’t help but be aware of the system’s failings. But for the majority of American (global north) consumers the coercion that keeps them complicit with the doomsday economy is not physical; it is

largely ideological, relying heavily on the mythology of America. It is this control mythology which buys people's loyalty by presenting a story of the world that normalizes the global corporate take over.

In this story, America is the freest country in the world and corporate capitalism is the same as democracy. The interests of corporations are represented as serving popular needs --jobs being the simplistic argument -- and the goal of US foreign policy is presented as a benevolent desire to spread democracy, promote equality and increase standards of living. This control mythology prevents people from seeing how pathologized the global system has become. Much of this story is merely crude propaganda that relies on American's notorious ignorance about the world but elements of the control mythology have become so deeply imbedded in our lives that they now define our culture.

Among these most deep ceded elements of the control mythology is the ethic of an unquestioned, unrestrained right to consume. Consumerism is the purest drug of the doomsday economy. It epitomizes the pathology— the commodification of life's staples and the human and cultural systems that have been created to sustain collective life.

Children's author Dr. Suess provides a simple, eloquent critique of consumerism in his cautionary tale *The Lorax* when he describes how the forests gets destroyed to make useless disposable objects appropriately called "thneeds". A slick businessman markets "thneeds" and maximizes production until the forest is entirely destroyed. This is the essence of consumerism— creating artificially high rates of consumption by getting people to believe they need excessive or useless things. Over-consumption (invented in America but now exported around the planet) is the engine that drives the doomsday economy. Bigger. Faster. Newer. More! More! More!

We live in a culture of information saturation which constantly redefines an increasingly insane world as normal. Media advocacy group, TV Free America estimates that the average American watches an equivalent of 52 days of TV per year.⁹ As corporations have seized the right to manufacture and manipulate collective desire, advertising has grown into a nearly \$200 billion a year industry and become the dominant function of mass media. Feminist media critic Jean Kilbourne estimates that each day the average North American is bombarded by 3000 print, radio and television ads.¹⁰ This media saturation plays heavily into the control mythology by over digesting information, thereby shrinking our attention spans to the point where we can no longer re-assemble the story of the global crisis.

The doomsday economy's elevation of consumerism to the center of public life, is causing massive psychological damage to people around the world. Advertising works because it subtly assaults a customer's self esteem to get them to buy more unnecessary stuff. This process is fundamentally de-humanizing. The culture-jamming magazine *Adbusters* has re-hashed William S.. Burroughs to give us the concept in a slogan: "The Product is You." The result is a pathologized global monoculture which fetishizes over-consumption, self-gratification and narcissism. Although this may insure ongoing profits

for the corporations who manage the “culture industry” it also prevents people from recognizing the impacts of their over-consumption on communities and ecosystems around the world.

The control mythology masks the realities of the doomsday economy by narrowing the popular frame of reference to the point that it's impossible to see beyond the next upgrade of pre-packaged lifestyle. The omni-present commodification of all aspects of life turns freedom into “image branding” and “product placement” while the distinction between citizen and consumer becomes more blurred. The army of one. Individual purchasing power. America open for business. How else could we get to the point where the United Nations estimates that nearly 1 in 6 people on the planet do not get their basic daily calorie needs met,¹¹ but in America shopping is still presented as entertainment.?

Increasingly in the corporatized world a person’s rights are defined by their purchasing power— access to health care, education, a nutritious diet, mental stimulation, or nature are all a factor of how much money you have. The right to over-consume becomes the centerpiece of the new unspoken Bill of Rights of America, Inc. A country of the corporations, by the corporations, and for the corporations. The unification of Europe looks ready to follow a similar path- towards a United States of Europe. The cancer spreads....

Consumerism is the manifestation of our pathological re-programming to not ask questions about where all the “stuff” comes from. The American bootstrap mythology (as in, “pull yourself up by”...) relies on our ecological illiteracy to believe that everyone could live the “American” over-consumption life style if they only worked hard enough. The cancer cell operates as if it were not part of a larger organism. The fully conditioned consumer thinks only in terms of themselves, acting as if there were no ecological limits in the world.

The twisted logic of consumerism continues to function as a control mythology even as much of the affluence of working America has been siphoned off by corporate greed. A complex range of sophisticated anesthetics (dare I say bread and circuses...?) helps bolster the control mythology by keeping people distracted. Whether its the digital opium den of 500 channel cable TV, the cornucopia of mood altering prescription drugs or now the terror-induced national obsession with unquestioned patriotism, there’s little opportunity for people to break the spell of modern consumerism.

The mythology of prosperity still holds even as the reality becomes more and more illusive. For now perhaps, but for how much longer? As author and media theorist James John Bell writes, “images of power crumble before empires fall.”¹² There are many signs that the empty materialism of modern consumer life is leaving many ordinary people discontent and ripe for new types of political and cultural transformation.

v. articulating values crisis

To articulate the pathology of the corporate system we must avoid debating on the system's terms. As the classic organizer's tenet says "We have to organize people where they are at." In other words, if we tell people our truths in a way that that connects with their experience, they will understand it, and they will believe it.

I find that most people largely believe the stories that activists tell them about bad things happening in the world. Activists excel at packaging issues, explaining the problem, the solution and the action that people can take. Activists break it all down into 60 second raps with accompanying flyers, fact sheets, and talking points and these tactics win important campaign victories. But where is our system changing mass movement? Although many of our critics are so blinded by propaganda and ideology that they will always see us as naïve, unpatriotic or dangerous, there is already a critical mass of people recognizing that our society is facing severe problems.

This analysis is supported by the work of researcher and author Paul Rey who has done extensive demographic research into the beliefs and values of the American public. Rey's work first received prominence through his discovery of the "cultural creatives" which he describes as the cultural by-product of the last 40 years of social movements. The defining characteristics of this new social grouping includes acceptance of the basic tenets of environmentalism and feminism, a rejection of traditional careerism, big business and monetary definitions of "success", a concern with psychological and spiritual development, belief in communities and a concern for the future. Perhaps most profound is the fact that since the mass media of America still reflects the modern technocratic consumerist world view, cultural creatives tend to feel isolated and not recognize their true numbers. Most importantly, based on their 1995 data Rey and his co-author Sherry Ruth Anderson conclude that there are 50 million cultural creatives in America and the numbers are growing.¹³

Rey has continued his work in a soon to be published book *The New Political Compass* in which he argues with statistical data that the left-right break down of politics is now largely irrelevant and proposes a new four directional political compass. Rey's compass is a fascinating tool for showing the complexity of public opinion, mapping not only political beliefs but also cultural shift. Rey contrast the left of New Deal liberalism and big government as "West" with the "East" of cultural conservatism and the religious right. Rey gives north on his compass to a grouping he calls the New Progressives who are heavily composed of cultural creatives and completely unrepresented in the current political system. He defines their major concerns as ecological sustainability, corporate dominance, child welfare, health care, education, a desire for natural products and personal growth. He contrasts them with "south" on his compass the Big Business Paradigm of profits before planet and people, economic growth and globalization. Again his statistical data has profound messages for all of us working to change the world. He

estimates that whereas only 14% of the population supports the Big Business paradigm, 36% of Americans fall into the New Progressives category. ¹⁴

To me the message is a simple affirmation of post-issue activism. Our movements need to stop focusing on *only* the details and start getting the bigger picture of a holistic analysis out there. Unless the details articulate a broader vision they are just more background noise in our information saturated culture. The 18th century political frameworks of left vs. right no longer fully capture the political fault lines of our era. Perhaps a better description of the real debate is flat earth vs. round earth. The corporate globalizers program of ever expanding industrial exploitation of the earth is in such deep denial of the ecological realities of the planet that it is akin to maintaining the earth is flat. Fortunately more and more people understand that the Earth is in fact round and that we need some big changes to both the global system and the way we think of our relationship with the planet. Now we need social movements with the vision and strategy to harness this consciousness into real momentum for a better world.

The ability to choose your issue is a privilege. Most people involved in resistance are born into their communities struggle for survival. They didn't choose their issue any more then they chose their skin color or their proximity to extractable resources. Activists from more privileged backgrounds have the luxury of choosing what they work on and have to be aware of the dynamics which privilege creates. To expand the base of struggle and support front line resistance with systemic work we need to confront the silent (and frequently uninformed) consent of the comfortable.

Unfortunately all too often we are still talking in the language of single-issue campaigns and are thus competing with ourselves for over-worked, over-stimulated people's limited amount of time and compassion. The pool of aware concerned people not immersed in front line struggle is constantly having to choose between issues. Do I work on global warming or labor rights? World Bank or deforestation? Health care or campaign finance reform? One result is that a lot of people fail to make the connection between an general sense of wrongness about modern society and their own interests and actions. Without an impetus to overcome the colonization of people's revolutionary imaginations it is often easier to retreat into self-centeredness, apathy or cynicism.

One of the strengths of the emerging global justice movement has been to create a new framework which goes beyond the age of single issue politics to present the corporate take over as a unifying cause of many of the planet's ills. The problem has been the amount of information we've been packaging into the critique as we slowly try to work the public through the alphabet soup of corporate cronies, trade agreements, and arcane international finance institutions. I don't doubt people's ability to grapple with the mechanics of corporate globalization but I do doubt our movement's ability to win the amount of air time out of the corporate media that we need to download endless facts.

Everything—including the corporate global system—is very complicated. But likewise everything is very simple. There is sick and healthy. Just and unjust. Right and wrong.

Despite the obvious over-simplification of binary frameworks, the language of opposing values is a powerful tool to build holistic analysis and subvert the control mythology.

Ultimately the change in collective priorities which is required will mean nothing less than a mass **values shift** to overcome some of the dominant culture's deepest pathologies like patriarchy, fear of “otherness” and alienation from nature. However, we must be very careful how we frame this concept. Picture yourself knocking on the country's front door and announcing that you have come to shift people's values. Slam! In fact, this is far too often the way that activists are perceived.

An alternative strategy for a first step is to **articulate values crisis**. This means speaking to people in terms of their basic values and showing them that the global system which is engulfing them, is out of alignment with those values. In other words we have a “values crisis”, a disconnect between what kind of world people want to live in and the corporate world that is rapidly taking over.

Long term activist and movement theorist Bill Moyer writes about the concept within psychology of “confirmatory bias” or people’s habit of screening information based on their own beliefs. In other words people are much more likely to believe something that reinforces their existing opinions and values than to accept information that challenges their beliefs.¹⁵

Moyer’s point is that social movements succeed when we position ourselves within widely held existing values. The emerging global justice movements are already laying claim to core values such as democracy, justice, diversity and environmental sanity as part of an inclusive vision of a life affirming future. Now our work is to expose the flawed values of the corporate take over.

We can articulate the values crisis by showing people that corporate capitalism is no longer grounded in common sense values. The corporate paradigm is a perversion— a cancer— that is masquerading as being reflective of commonly held values while it writes the rules of the global economy to metastasize corporate control across the planet.

A simple dichotomy for articulating the crisis is the clash between a delusional value system that fetishizes money and a value system centered around the biological realities of life’s diversity.¹⁶ [SEE TABLE PG 15] We need to cast these opposing value systems as two very different paths for the future of our planet. The path shaped by life values leads towards many choices— a decentralized, self-organizing, diversity of different cultures, political traditions and local economies. In contrast, the money values path leads to fewer and fewer choices and finally the homogeneity of global corporatization.

It is our job as activists to clarify the choice by revealing the nature of the system and articulating the alternatives. Will it be democracy or global corporate rule? Will we be subsumed into a fossil fuel addicted global economy or build vibrant sustainable local economies? Which will win out ecological sanity or pathological capitalism? Will it be the corporate globalization of economics and control or a people’s globalization of ideas,

creativity and autonomy? Democracy versus corporate rule. Ecology versus pollution. Life versus the doomsday economy. Hope versus extinction.

++++++

SIDE BAR

Here are a few examples of dichotomies with ripe potential for articulating values crisis.

MONEY VALUES vs. LIFE VALUES

Exploitation/dignity
centralized control/democratic decision making
commodification/sacredness
privatization/the global commons
corporatization/collective responsibility
shareholders/stakeholders
output/throughput
disposable/renewable
mechanistic models/organic models
information/wisdom
productivity/prosperity
consumers/citizens
spectator/participant
global economy/local economies
extraction/restoration
monoculture/diversity
transferrable wealth/replenishable wealth
property/ecosystem
alienation from nature/earth centered values
absentee landlordism/stewardship
ecological illiteracy/biocentrism
proxy decision making/real democracy
short term gain/sustainability
narrow economic indicators/full cost accounting
artificial scarcity/abundance
inequitable distribution/economic justice
corporate rule/global justice
empire/community
The System/ systemic change

++++++

vi. framing the debate

One of the biggest pitfalls activists face to effectively articulating values crisis is the fact that the category of protester has been constructed to be highly marginal by the establishment. Within the pathological logic of corporate capitalism dissent is delegitimized to be unpatriotic, impractical, naïve or even insane. Unfortunately radicals

are all too often complicit in our own marginalization by accepting this elite depiction of ourselves as the fringe.

The reality is that the neoliberal policy writers and corporate executives who think the world can continue on with unlimited economic growth in a finite biological system are the wackos, not us. We are not the fringe. We can frame the debate. In fact as Paul Rey's research has shown us a sizable percentage of the population already shares our commitment to cultural transformation, all we need to do is reach them.

The significance of the recent mass actions against corporate globalization has not been our tactics. Movements aren't about tactics – take this street corner, blockade that corporate office – movements are about ideas. Movements are about changing the world. When we say a better world is possible – we mean it. We want a world that reflects basic life centered values. We've got the vision and the big ideas and the other side doesn't. We've got biocentrism, organic food production, direct democracy, renewable energy, diversity, people's globalization and justice. What have they got? Styrofoam? Neo-liberalism? Eating disorders? Designer jeans, manic depression and global warming?

In a context where the elites hold so much power, almost all our actions are symbolic. Accepting this can be one of our greatest strengths and help us realize that the most important aspects of our actions are the messages they propel into mass culture. We must exploit the power of narrative structure to weave our ideas and actions into compelling stories. Inevitably our broadest constituency will start their interaction with new ideas as spectators. Thus our campaigns and actions must tell inclusive, provocative stories that create more and more space for people to see themselves in the story. We must tell the story of values crisis. Our stories must make people take sides – are you part of the sickness or are you part of the healing? Are you part of the life affirming future or are your part of the doomsday economy?

The first step is to separate dissent from the self-righteous tone which many people associate with protest. This tone can be particularly strong in activists from privileged background who are invested in visible "defection" as a way to validate their resistance. These politics of defection by their very nature create obstacles to communicating with the mainstream and frequently rely on symbols of dissent and rebellion that are already marginalized.

We need new symbols of inclusive resistance and transformation. We need a better understanding how to create effective memes¹⁷ - self-replicating units of information and culture – to convey the values crisis. Memes are viral by nature, they move easily through our modern world of information networks and media saturation. We need to be training ourselves to become "meme warriors"¹⁸ and to tell the story of values crisis in different ways for different audiences. We must get a better sense of who our audiences are, and target our messages to fit into their existing experiences.

We need to be media savvy and use the corporate propaganda machine. Not naively as the exclusive means of validating our movements, but as a tool of information self defense to oppose the information warfare being waged against us. The corporate media is another tool to name the system and undermine the grip of the dominant mythology. While we play at spin doctoring, we simultaneously need to promote media democracy and capitalize on the alternative and informal media and communication networks as a means to get our message out. Our movements must become the nervous systems of an emerging transformative culture.

It's essential that we frame our ideas in such a way that as people wake up to the crisis they have the conceptual tools to understand the systemic roots of the problem. Over the next decade as the global crisis becomes more visible we won't have to do much to convince people about the problem. Rather our job will be to discredit the elite's band-aid solutions and build popular understanding of the need for systemic solutions.

Whether we are talking about biological contamination, financial collapse or nuclear meltdowns, if we haven't framed the issue in advance even the most dramatic breakdowns in the system can be "crisis-managed" away without alerting the public to the system's fundamental failings. If we do the work to challenge the control mythology and undermine the flawed assumptions then people will know whom to blame. As we build a public awareness of the values crisis it helps shift the debate away from inadequate reforms and towards re-designing the global system.

This is the strategy of **leap-frogging**, or framing our issues in such a way that they force the public debate to "leap" over limiting definitions of the problem and elite quick-fixes to embrace systemic solutions. For example, instead of debating how many parts per million of pollution regulatory agencies should allow in our drinking water, we can challenge the right of industrial interests to poison us at all. An effective framing forces questions to be asked about the upstream polluters - do we need their product? If so, how can we make it in a way that doesn't pollute? In order to successfully leap-frog colonized imaginations and entrenched power holders, we must have the skill and courage to articulate real solutions that avoid concessions that dead end in inadequate reforms.

It is essential that as the ecological crisis becomes self-evident we are building mass awareness of the system's design flaws. As we become more effective at leap-frogging the elite framing of problems we can prepare people to accept the dramatic changes that will be necessary to make another world possible.

There are any number of macro-issues that when framed correctly can help us name the system. Global warming, commodification of basic human needs from health care to water, the rate of technological change, systemic racism, the spread of genetic pollution, ongoing violence against women—these are just a few examples which can tell the story of the values crisis. The challenge is not what issue we work on but how we avoid becoming trapped in the limiting framework of single-issue politics.

Knowing that the rules of the political game are already stacked against us, the anti-war and anti-corporate rule mobilizations of the past few years have chosen to expand our political framework by taking our actions into the streets. The politics of protest and confrontation have created new political space but how can we insure that this builds towards a truly transformative arena of struggle?

+++++

SIDE BAR

FRAMING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Global warming is an obvious example of an issue where leap-frogging is desperately needed. As global warming creates more visible eco-spasms it will soon become one of the macro-issues that re-defines politics as we know it.

Global warming when expanded from the single issue context of carbon dioxide pollution and re-defined as a systemic issue of fossil fuel addiction becomes a vehicle for exposing the global system's deep design flaws. Thus global warming can be used not only to show the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of a fossil fuel based economy but also to indict the corporate rule system that has created the fossil fuel chain of destruction. When framed properly this story promotes not only environmentally friendly alternatives, but also democracy (“energy sovereignty”¹⁹) and the need to confront the racism and classism that has allowed the basic human rights of communities impacted by fossil fuel production to be ignored.

The global oil barons are among the most powerful interests on the planet and they have used their drug lord influence to block any realistic effort to transition away from fossil fuels. Despite the fact that it is scientifically inadequate to address the problem, the Kyoto protocol – an international framework for reducing carbon emissions - has been stalled by the political influence of the fossil fuel industry. In response many concerned American pressure groups have reduced their demands and lobbied for more minor concessions, like fuel efficiency standards, that they thought they could get without having to fundamentally challenge the corporate influence over politics.

But instead of reducing our expectations, when we face the limits of the existing political debate we need to expand our vision and have the courage to leap-frog the political log-jams with the values crisis analysis. Strategically the most significant aspect of the climate crisis is that we know its going to get worse and more visible - so why settle for the limited concessions that can be "won" now?

Imagine, hypothetically, ten or fifteen years from now when super-hurricanes displace forty million in Florida, America's corn belt is withering under a mega-drought and the eastern seaboard is spending \$2 trillion building floodwalls. The American public is going to want some answers. If possible, before it gets that bad its important that people understand that we are not all equally culpable for the de-stabilization of the global climate. Sure a lot of people drove SUV's and consumed way more than their share but

let's be clear who did more to de-stabilize the climate - the soccer moms or Exxon-Mobil?

It's up to activists to insure that people understand that a small cartel of energy corporations and their financial backers knowingly de-stabilized our planet's climate for their own personal gain. This may turn out to be the most devastating crime ever perpetrated against humanity, the planet and future generations.

How we frame the issue will help decide what actually happens when public acceptance of the problem becomes undeniable. Taking the time to frame the climate crisis systemically may not win concessions in the short term but it will pay off when people's outrage can be effectively channeled into fundamental change. Imagine two different scenarios. In one scenario a decade of organizing and struggle belatedly convinces the oil barons to approve the Kyoto Protocol in its current inadequate form. As climate chaos accelerates the oil industry plots how to maintain their monopoly power during the transition to sustainable energy. While in the other an empowered populace jails the oil executives, dissolves their illegitimate corporations and uses their billions to fund the transition to clean energy. Which future would you rather live in?

+++++

vii. direct action at the point of assumption

Direct action— actions that either symbolically or directly shift power relations— is an essential transformative tool. Direct action can be both a tactic within a broader strategy or a political ethic of fundamental change which defines all ones actions. Every direct action is part of the larger story we are re-telling ourselves about the ability of collaborative power to overcome coercive power.

As we endeavor to link systemic change with tangible short term goals we must seek out the **points of intervention** in the system. These are the places where when we apply our power— usually through revoking our obedience — we are able to leverage change.

Direct action at the **point of production** was one of the original insights of the labor movement. Labor radicals targeted the system where it was directly effecting them and where the system was most vulnerable. From wildcat strikes to sabotage, slow downs and factory occupations, point of production actions helped promote the dignity and rights of working people.

Modern resistance movements have continued to target the system at its most blatant— the **point of destruction**. We become the frontline resistance by placing our bodies in the way of the harm that is happening. Whether its plugging the effluent pipes that dump poison on a neighborhood, forest defenders sitting in trees marked for cutting or

indigenous peoples blocking road-building into their ancestral homelands, direct action at the point of destruction embodies values crisis. It polarizes the debate in an effort to attract the spotlight of public attention to a clear injustice. But tragically the point of destruction is often times far out of the public eye and the values confrontation is made invisible by distance, imbedded patterns of bias or popular ignorance. Frequently the impacted communities have little political voice so in order to provide support we must find other points of intervention.

Inspiring **point of consumption** campaigns have been used by many movements as ways to stand in solidarity with communities fighting at the point of destruction. This is the realm of consumer boycotts, attacks on corporate brand names and other campaigns which target the commercial sector as a way to shut down the markets for destructive products. Activists have confronted retailers selling sweatshop products and forced universities to cancel clothing contracts. Likewise forest activists have forced major chains to stop selling old growth forest products by doing direct actions aimed at companies media profiles and market share. Attacking the point of consumption expands the arena of struggle to mobilize consumers made complicit in the injustice of the globalized economy by their own purchasing decisions. These strategies can be based on a very accessible notions of “ethical shopping” or a more profound rejection of the consumer identity altogether.

The **point of decision** has always been a common and strategic venue for direct action. Whether its taking over a slumlord’s office, a corporate boardroom or the state capital many successful campaigns have used direct action to put pressure on the decision makers they are targeting. Much of the mass action organizing of the past few years has been largely aimed at re-defining popular perceptions of the point of decision. The actions at WTO and World Bank meetings, G8 summits and Free Trade negotiating sessions have helped reveal the corporate take-over by showing that it is these new institutions of corporate rule that have usurped decision making power.

All of these points of intervention in the system are important and the best strategies unite efforts across them. Increasingly as the global financial sector has becoming the “operating system” for the planet the pathological logic of doomsday economics has replaced specific points of decision in driving the corporate take over. We aren’t just fighting acts of injustice or destruction but rather we are fighting a system of injustice and destruction. In recognizing this we must expand our efforts to intervene in physical space with similar initiatives in cultural and intellectual space. How can we side step the machine and challenge the mentality behind the machine? In other words we need to figure out how to take direct action at the **point of assumption**.

Targeting assumptions— the framework of myths, lies, and flawed rationale that normalize the corporate take over— requires some different approaches from actions at the other points of intervention. “Point of assumption” actions operate in the realm of ideas to expose pathological logic, cast doubt and undermine existing loyalties. Successful direct action at the point of assumption identifies, isolates and confronts the big lies that maintain the status quo. A worthy goal for these types of actions is to

encourage the most important act that a concerned citizen can take in an era defined by systematic propaganda – QUESTIONING!

Direct action at the point of assumption is a tool to de-colonize people's revolutionary imaginations by linking analysis and action in ways that re-frame issues and create new political space. Whether we're deconstructing consumer spectacles, exposing the system's propaganda or birthing new rhetoric we need actions that reveal the awful truth— that the intellectual underpinnings of the modern system are largely flawed assumptions. Direct action at the point of assumption is an effort to find the rumors that start revolutions and ask the questions that topple empires.

The first action of the radical ecology network Earth First! is a great example of direct action at the point of assumption. In 1981, at a time when many wilderness preservation groups were fighting new dam construction, Earth First! did a symbolic “cracking” of Glen Canyon Dam by unfurling a 300 ft long plastic wedge from the top of the dam. This created an image of a fissure down the dam's face.²⁰ This simple symbol sent a powerful message that rather than just stopping new dams, wilderness advocates should be calling for the removal of big dams and the re-wilding of dammed rivers. Within the industrial paradigm of dominating nature the question of removing a mega-dam was an unthinkable thought— it was beyond the realm of imagination. The “cracking” action however challenged that assumption and created a new political space and a powerful image to forward that agenda. Two decades later, in the late 90's, the unthinkable thought had rippled right up to the power holders and the U.S. government actually began removing dams.

Likewise as the anti-car movement has grown groups like Reclaim the Streets have taken effective direct actions at the point of assumption to make the idea of car free cities imaginable. Reclaim the Streets groups showed what a better world could look like with actions that occupy car clogged streets and transform them into people friendly space with music, festivity, comfy furniture and in some cases even grass and plants. Similarly activists around the world have taken creative “Buy Nothing Day” actions to attack the assumptions of consumerism by calling for a 24 hour moratorium on consumer spending on the busiest shopping day of the year. This simple idea, often popularized with ridicule and humorous spectacle has led to many successful efforts to define consumerism itself as an issue.

Direct action at the point of assumption has taken many forms— creating new symbols, embodying alternatives or sounding the alarm. The Zapatista ski mask is a well known example of a symbol which functioned as direct action at the point of assumption . The ski masks, repeatedly worn by the Zapatista insurgents and particularly their spokesman Sub-commandante Marcos, created a symbol for the invisibility of Mexico's indigenous peoples. Marcos's has eloquently written of the irony that only with the ski masks on— the symbol of militant confrontation— was the government able to see the indigenous peoples it had ignored for so long.²¹

In Argentina the “cacerolazos”— the spontaneous mass banging on cacerolas (saucepans) - has become a tactic which has helped topple several governments since the popular uprising began in December of 2001. The simple inclusive direct action of banging a saucepan has created a dramatic new space for people from many different backgrounds to unite in resisting neoliberalism and structural adjustment. It broke the assumption that people will simply accept the actions of a government that ignores them.²²

Direct action at the point of assumption provides us with many new opportunities to expand the traditional political arenas because it is less reliant on specific physical space than other points of intervention. This gives us the opportunity to choose the terms and location of engagement. Effective point of assumption actions can transform the mundane into a radical conversation starter. For instance putting a piece of duct tape across a prominent logo on your clothing can invite a conversation about corporate commodification.

Media activist James John Bell writes about “Image Events”, events whether actions, images or stories that “simultaneously destroy and construct [new] meaning”. Image events either replace existing sets of symbols or re-define their meaning through the “dis-identification” of humor or shock.²³ A simple application of this concept can be seen in what Adbuster’s magazine founder Kalle Lasn has dubbed “culture jamming” to describe methods of subverting corporate propaganda by juxtaposing new images or co-opting slogans.²⁴ For instance when McDonald’s hyper-familiar golden arches are overlaid with images of starving children or Chevron’s advertising slogan is rewritten to say “Do people kill for oil?” the power of corporate images are turned back upon themselves. This type of semiotic aikido exploits the omni-presence of corporate advertising to re-write the meaning of familiar symbols and tell stories that challenge corporate power. These skills have been artfully applied in billboard liberations, guerilla media campaigns and creative actions but tragically they often remain in a limited media realm. We need to expand guerilla meme tactics to connect with long-term strategies to build grassroots power.

The reliance of many mega-corporations on their branding has been widely acknowledged as an Achilles heel of corporate power. Indeed effective grassroots attacks on corporate logos and brand image have forced corporations to dump multi-million dollar advertising campaigns and sometimes even concede to activist’s demands. However not only are there many powerful industries that do not depend on consumer approval but we no longer have time to go after the corporations one at a time. Our movements need to contest the corporate monopoly on meaning. We must create point of assumption actions that go beyond merely jamming the control mythology to actually substituting transformative, life-affirming stories. Culture jamming has largely been applied like a wrench to disable the brainwashing infrastructure of corporate consumerism. We must supplement the wrench with the seed by planting new transformative stories that use the information replicating networks of modern society to grow and spread. Our actions must create image events and launch designer memes with the power to supersede the controlling mythologies of consumer culture, the American empire and pathological capitalism.²⁵

Concerted direct action at the point of assumption in our society could be an effort to draw attention to the design errors of the modern era and encourage wide spread disobedience to oppressive cultural norms. We need to openly plot attacks on the symbolic order of anti-life values. This could take the form of challenging consumerism's influence on our collective identities, historic patterns of oppression, unchecked industrialism, our separation from nature and the framework of corporate rule. We need easily replicable actions, new symbols and contagious memes that we can combine with grassroots organizing and alternative institution building to expand the transformative arena of struggle.

What would this look like? What are the big lies and controlling myths that hold corporate rule in place? Where are the points of assumption? How can we exploit the hypocrisy between the way we're told the world works and the way it actually works to name the system, articulate values crisis and begin de-colonizing the collective imagination? These are all questions for our movements to explore together as we challenge ourselves to be pragmatic idealists, calculating provocateurs and revolutionary dreamers.

viii. CASE STUDY: The San Francisco Uprising

The Bush administration's invasion of Iraq was met with massive resistance in the United States and around the world. In particular the response in San Francisco was inspiring - 20,000 people engaged in mass non-violent direct action to shut down the financial district. Corporations invested in the mass destruction business (like Bechtel, Citibank and the Carlyle Group) had their offices blockaded as did a military recruiting station, the British consulate and a Federal office building. Using tactics ranging from lock-downs to mobile blockades and critical mass bike rides Bay area residents transformed the usually car clogged consumption zone into a living statement of hope and life-affirming resistance to Bush's war for empire. Over the course of the four business days after the invasion began on March 19, 2003 twenty six hundred people were arrested for engaging in acts of protest and resistance.

Although this uprising was de-centralized and highly organic it grew out of a foundation of organizing laid by an affinity group based mobilization called Direct Action to Stop the War (DASW). For the preceding two months DASW had organized the uprising's launching pad through a weekly spokescouncil, a website (www.actagainstwar.org) and the simple notion that a rational response to an illegal and unjust war for empire would be a mass direct action shutting down the financial district.

The real success of the action came not only from the fact that several thousand people were pre-organized into affinity groups, but that tens of thousands of people joined in on the day of the action. One of the reasons that so many people joined the action was that it was timed to harness a predictable mass **psychic break** - a point where the unfolding of events shatters people's illusions that the system reflects their values (such as justice, democracy, peace). A psychic break is a massive point of intervention in the system's

assumption of obedience when people are uniquely open to new actions. In an infamously progressive city like San Francisco there was a predictable anti-war majority but a common framework was needed to facilitate action and make opposition visible.

DASW's work to build this framework for popular resistance was aided by a strategy of **telling the future**. Telling the future, (similar to the "scenario planning" used by the Pentagon and multinational corporations) is a method of manifesting a specific outcome by normalizing a possible scenario. Advertisers have long known that the best way to get people to do something (like buy their product) is to have them take action in their head first. Hence much of advertising is designed to help people imagine themselves buying a product -- to normalize a specific commercial scenario. Strategies that tell the future can use some of the same principles to unify people around a common goal and vision to literally self-organize a specific future through building collective belief. DASW organizers challenged the mass media narrative of normalized passivity by promoting an alternative story where if Bush invaded Iraq, residents would rise up in a non-violent insurrection and shut down the financial district.

The future uprising was foretold with a series of foreshadowing events ranging from a high profile press conference, to an open letter to city residents to pre-emptive actions in the financial district including a shut down of the Pacific Stock Exchange in which 80 people were arrested. All of this outreach, organizing and media work was successful in the goal of promoting DASW's website and the action meeting spot, including getting it printed on the front page of newspapers and mentioned on major radio and television station.

Likewise in creating a public image of the action DASW focused on a values-based critique that worked to mainstream the concepts of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. The DASW website and kick-off press conference emphasized the diversity of participation by featuring endorsements from leaders of a cross section of Bay area communities - Queer, Labor, Faith, People of Color, Veterans, Seniors even the former CEO of the Pacific Stock Exchange. Without sacrificing the opportunity to put out a systemic analysis, the organizing appealed to mainstream values - democracy, sense of security, justice, belief in international law, patriotism - and used them to leverage opposition to the invasion of Iraq.

The combination of effectively telling the future and articulating a values based analysis effectively reached a cross section of American society who had never engaged in direct action before. As a result the streets were flooded with people from different walks of life: soccer moms, office workers, people of faith, students, teachers, queers, people of color, labor folks, black bloc anarchists even a few anti-war corporate CEO's.

This type of inclusive mass organizing may stretch the comfort zone of many radicals, however it has great potential to exploit some of the growing fault lines in American society. Bush's naked imperial agenda is challenging a lot of American's sense of national identity as an international beacon of democracy and justice. Regardless of the fact that much of America's national story has always been a hypocritical mythology,

there is an incredible opportunity for change activists to lay claim to widely held values like security, democracy, and national pride and direct these energies into "imploding" empire. Let's ask ourselves how our resistance can galvanize anti-war sentiments into a deeper movement for fundamental change that articulates the values crisis - the disconnect between the values of empire and the values that ordinary Americans hold. In San Francisco the strategy worked well enough that 20,000 people took to the streets - with more refinement and widespread application who knows what is possible?

ix. beware the professionalization of social change

The worst thing that can happen to our movements right now is to settle for too little. But tragically that is exactly what is happening. We are largely failing to frame the ecological, social and economic crisis as a symptom of a deeper values crisis and a pathological system. Thus many of the modest visions of social change being put forward seem incapable of even keeping pace with the accelerating global crisis let alone providing true alternatives to the doomsday economy.

Too many of our social change resources are getting bogged down in arenas of struggle that can't deliver the systemic shifts we need. Most of the conventional venues for political engagement – legislation, elections, courts, single issue campaigns, labor fights – have been so co-opted by elite rule that its very difficult to imagine how to use strategies that name the system, undermine the control mythology or articulate values crisis from within their limited parameters.

One of the most telling symptoms of our colonized imaginations has been the limited scope of social change institutions. Most social change resources get directed towards enforcing inadequate regulations, trying to pass watered-down legislation, working to elect mediocre candidates or to win concessions that don't threaten the current corporate order. One of the main reasons that so many social change resources get limited to the regulatory, electoral and concessionary arenas is the fact that much of social change has become a professionalized industry.

The NGO – non-governmental organization – a term made popular by the United Nations policy discussion process has become the most familiar social change institution. These groups are frequently made up of hard working, under-paid, dedicated people and NGOs as a group do lots of amazing work. However we must also acknowledge that generally the explosion of NGO's globally is a loose attempt to patch the holes that neoliberalism has punched in the social safety net. As government cedes its role in public welfare to corporations, even the unprofitable sectors have to be handed off to someone. A recent article in the Economist revealingly explains the growth of NGO's as "... not a matter of charity but of privatization." ²⁶

My intention is not to fall into the all too easy trap of lumping the thousands of different NGOs into one dismissable category but rather to label a disturbing trend particularly among social change NGO's. Just as service oriented NGO's have been tapped to fill the voids left by the state or the market, so have social change NGO's arisen to streamline the chaotic business of dissent. Let's call this trend NGOism, the belief - sometimes found among professional "campaigners" - that social change is a highly specialized profession best left to experienced strategists, negotiators and policy wonks. NGOism is the conceit that intermediary organizations of paid staff, rather than communities organizing themselves into movements, will be enough to save the world.

This very dangerous trend ignores the historic reality that collective struggle and mass movements organized from the bottom up have always been the springboard for true progress and social change. The goal of radical institutions – whether well funded NGOs or gritty grassroots groups – should be to help build movements to change the world. But NGOism institutionalizes the amnesia of the colonized imagination and presents a major obstacle to moving into the post-issue activism framework. After all who needs a social movement when you've got a six figure advertising budget and “access” to all the decision makers?

A professional NGO is structured exactly like a corporation, down to having employee payroll and a Board of Directors. This is not an accident. Just like their for-profit cousins this structure creates an institutional self-interest which can transform an organization from being a catalyst for social change into being a self-perpetuating entity. NGOism views change in reference to existing power relations by accepting a set of rules written by the powerful to insure the status quo. These rules have already been stacked against social change. NGOism represents institutional confusion about the different types of power and encourages over-dependence on strategies that speak exclusively to the existing powers – funding sources, the media, decision-makers. As a consequence strategies often get locked in the regulatory and concessionary arenas – focused on “pressure” – and attempt to re-direct existing power rather than focusing on confronting illegitimate authority, revealing systemic flaws and building grassroots power.

The mythology of American politics as populist or democratic is rapidly being undermined by the obvious realities of corporate dominance. As people's confidence in the facades of popular rule (like voting, lobbying and the regulatory frame work etc.) has waned, more and more campaigns are directly confronting destructive corporations. This is an essential strategy for revealing the decision making power which corporations have usurped, but unfortunately most of these NGO led efforts to confront individual destructive corporations are failing to articulate a holistic analysis of the system of corporate control.

This is an extremely dangerous failure since in pursuing concessions or attempting to re-direct corporate resources we risk making multi-national corporations the agents of solving the ecological crisis. This is a flawed strategy because by their very nature corporations are incapable of making the concessions necessary to address the global

crisis. There is no decision maker in the corporate hierarchy with the power to transform the nature of the corporate beast, and confront its identity as an extraction-profit making machine. The CEO who has an epiphany about the need to re-define her corporation as a democratic institution that looks beyond the limited fiduciary interests of shareholders, will find herself on the wrong side of a century of corporate law. We need to avoid the temptation to accept concessions that legitimize corporate control and obscure the fundamental democracy issues underlying the global crisis.

Too often, political pragmatism is used as an excuse for a lack of vision. Pragmatism without vision is accepting the rules that are stacked against us while vision without pragmatism is fetishizing failure. The question shouldn't be what can we win in this funding cycle but rather how do we expand the debate to balance short and long term goals? Like a healthy ecosystem our movements need a diversity of strategies. We need to think outside the box and see what new arenas of struggle we can explore.

This is not to say that corporate campaigns and winning concessions is merely “reformist” and therefore not important. The simplistic dichotomy of reform versus revolution often hides the privilege of “radicals” who have the luxury of refusing concessions when it’s not their community or ecosystem that is on the chopping block. A more important distinction is which direction is the concession moving towards? Is it a concession that releases pressure on the system and thereby legitimizes illegitimate authority? Or is it a concession that teaches people a lesson about their collective power to make change and therefore brings us closer to systemic change?

NGOism creates ripe conditions for going beyond mere ineffectiveness and into out-right complicity with the system. Time and time again we've seen the social change NGO's grow into becoming a part of the establishment and become a tool to marginalize popular dissent by lending legitimacy to the system. Whether its World Wildlife Fund giving a green seal of approval to oil companies or the American Cancer Society's downplaying of environmental pollution's role in cancer²⁷, NGO's can easily become an obstacle to transformative change.

The professionalization of social change requires extensive resources and thus in this cynical era of mail-order mobilizing and feel-good-from-your-armchair activism its become cliché to point out that NGO agendas can be shaped by their funding needs. Whether NGOs are reliant on a membership base or institutional funders, NGO's are often forced to build a power base through self-promotion rather than self-analysis. Not only does this dilute NGO agendas to fit within the political comfort zone of those with resources, it disrupts the essential process of acknowledging mistakes and learning from them. This evolutionary process of collective learning is central to fundamental social change and to have it de-railed by professionalization threatens to limit the depth of the change that we can create.

When a system is fundamentally flawed there is no point in trying to fix it – we need to re-design it. That is the essence of the transformative arena – defining issues, re-framing

debates, thinking big. We must create political space to harness the increasingly obvious global crisis into real change towards a democratic, just and ecologically sane world.

Our movements must evolve past mere mobilizing and into real transformative organizing. Transformative organizing is more than just making the protest ghetto louder and bigger. It is the nuts and bolts business of building alternatives on a grassroots level, and creating our own counter legitimacy to replace the institutions of corporate society. Real organizing is giving people the skills and analysis they need to ground the struggle to reclaim our planet at both ends of the social change spectrum - the structural and the individual; the creation of new identities and the transformation of global systems.

It is essential that we don't waste all our energy just throwing ourselves at the machine. Resistance is only one piece of the social change equation. It must be complimented by creation. Movements need institutions that can be the hubs to help sustain our momentum for the long haul. There are definitely NGO's which play this role well, we just have to insure that NGOism doesn't infect them with limiting definitions of specialization and professionalism.

We have to plant the seeds of the new society within the shell of the old. Exciting work is being done around the concept of **Dual power strategies**. These are strategies that not only confront illegitimate institutions but simultaneously embody the alternatives, thereby giving people the opportunity to practice self-governance and create space for new political realities. Examples of inspiring dual-power strategies are taking place across the world, particularly in Latin America. From indigenous autonomists in Mexico, to the landless movement in Brazil to Argentina's autoconvocados (literally "self-convened") people's movements are resisting the corporate take over of their lives by defiantly living the alternatives.²⁸

In the creation of these alternatives - the holistic actions of community transformation that go far beyond any of the limiting boundaries of professionalized social change - we see a vision of direct action at the point of assumption. Actions that reveal new possibilities, challenge the assumptions of the corporate monoculture and create infectious, new political spaces.

We can fight the doomsday economy by de-voking the apocalypse with visions of a life affirming future. In doing so we lay claim to a radical's best ally - hope. But our hope must not be the naiveté of denial. Rather our hope must be a sign post, a reminder of the potential for our struggles. We must not ghettoize hope as some mythic endpoint of struggle but rather learn to carry it with us as blueprint for our daily efforts.

x. towards a politics of reality

Reality is that which is.

The English word 'real' stems from a word which

meant *regal*, of or pertaining to the king.

‘Real’ in spanish means royal.

Real property is that which is proper to the king.

Real estate is the estate of the king.

Reality is that which pertains to the one in power,
Is that over which he has power, is his domain, his
Estate, is proper to him.

The ideal king reigns over everything as far as the
Eye can see. His eye. What he cannot see is not
Royal, not real.

He sees what is proper to him.

To be real is to be visible to the king.

The king is in his counting house.

- Marilyn Frye The Politics of Reality 1983

Feminist author Marilyn Frye writes about reality from the perspective of a lesbian fighting to “exist” within an oppressive heterosexist culture for which the idea of a women who is not sexually dependant upon men is unimaginable. Her poem eloquently reminds us that reality is constructed and that those in power get to decide who or what is “real”. Or in the words of the 80’s disco-industrial band My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult : “ ‘reality’ is the only word in the English language that should always be used in quotes.”

Frye’s poem uses the etymology of the word reality to expose the flawed assumptions that shape the dominant cultural lens. The king’s counting house is the origin of today’s corporate driven doomsday economy. A “reality” which has colonized our minds to normalize alienation from nature, conquest and patriarchal hierarchies. A “reality” based on the censorship of our history of collective struggle that makes us think rugged individualism is the only tact for resistance.

“Reality” is the lens through which we see the world. If we want to create a different world we’re going to need to create some new lenses. We can begin by understanding that the values which currently underlie the global system didn’t win out because they are time tested, democratically supported or even effective. This “reality” is a product of the naked brutality of European colonization and the systematic destruction of the cultural and economic alternatives to our current pathological system.

The struggle to create political space for a truly transformative arena of social change is the fight to build a new collective reality. Our last (or is it first?) line of defense to the spreading consumer monoculture is the struggle to de-colonize our minds and magnify

the multitude of different “realities” embedded in the planet’s sweeping diversity of cultures, ecosystems and inter-dependant life forms.

At the center of these efforts must be the understanding that the ecological operating systems of the biosphere represent an over-arching **politics of reality**. If we want to talk about reality in the singular, outside of its conceptual quotation marks, then we must talk about ecological reality- the reality of interdependence, diversity, limits, cycles and dynamic balance. A politics of reality recognizes that ecology is not merely another single issue to lump on to our list of demands, rather ecology is the larger context in which all our struggles takes place. A politics of reality is grounded in the understanding that the ecological collapse is the central and most visible contradiction in the global system. It is an implicit acknowledgement that the central political project of our era is the re-thinking of what it means to be human on planet earth.

We have to confront the cancer and pull the doomsday economy out of its suicidal nose - dive. The move towards a politics of reality is the essence of a fight for the future itself. Indian writer and activist Vandana Shiva said it eloquently in her speech at the World Summit on Sustainable Development counter-summit in August 2002 “There is only one struggle left and that is the struggle for survival.”

Ecology must be a key ingredient in the future of pan-movement politics. But to do so, we must insure that Earth centered values don’t get appropriated by white, middle class messengers and get artificially separated from a comprehensive critique of all forms of oppression. A global ecology movement is already being led by the communities and cultures most impacted by the doomsday economy, from international campesino movements to urban communities resisting toxic poisoning to the last indigenous homelands. Those of us dreaming of more global north counterparts to these earth centered movements have much to learn from listening to the voices of frontline resistance.

The Western Shoshone people— the most bombed nation on earth who have survived half a century of U.S. nuclear colonialism on their ancestral lands in what is now called Nevada—have mobilized under the banner of “Healing Global Wounds”. This inspiring slogan reminds us that despite the horrors of brutality, empire and ecological catastrophe the strongest resistance lies in the ability to think big.

In facing the global crisis, the most powerful weapon that we have is our imaginations. As we work to escape the oppressive cultural norms and flawed assumptions of the corporate system we must liberate our imaginations and articulate our dreams for a life affirming future. Our actions must embody these new “realities” because even when people realize that they are on the Titanic and the iceberg is right ahead, we still need to see the lifeboat in order to jump ship. It is these alternatives which can help catalyze mass defections from the pathological norms of modern consumer culture by showing people the lifeboats.²⁹

Our job is to confront the sickness while articulating the alternatives, both ancient and new. Our true strength lies in the diversity of options presented by earth centered, life values whether we find the alternatives in the wisdom of traditional cultures, local economies, spiritual/community renewal or ecological re-designs. As we de-colonize our own revolutionary imaginations we will find new political frameworks that name the system and articulate the values crisis. We can base our work in an honest assessment of our own privilege, and a commitment to healing historic wounds. We can imagine a culture defined by diversity that promotes revolutionary optimism over nihilism and embraces collective empowerment over individual coercion. Not only can redefine what is possible, but we must!

We are already winning. Life is stronger than greed. Hope is more powerful than fear. The values crisis is in full swing and more and more people are turning their back on the pathological values of the doomsday economy. The global immune system is kicking in and giving momentum to our movements for change. Call it an Enlightenment. Call it a Renaissance. Call it a common sense revolution. The underlying concepts are obvious. As the saying goes— for a person standing on the edge of a cliff, progress must be defined as a step backwards.

Imagination conjures change. First we dream it, then we speak it, then we struggle and build it. But without the dreams, without our de-colonized imaginations our efforts to name and transform the system will not succeed in time.

I take inspiration from the slogan spray painted on the walls of Paris during the springtime uprising of 1968, “Be realistic. Demand the Impossible!” The slogan is more timely now than ever because the king can’t stay in his counting house forever. And then it's our turn....

xi. APPENDIX: a pragmatic dreamer's glossary (a few cognitive stepping stones towards building a lexicon for transformative action.....)

by the smartMeme strategy and training project

The smartMeme Project is an emerging network of thinkers, trainers, writers, organizers and earth-centered radicals who are exploring efforts to combine grassroots movement building with tools to inject new ideas into popular culture. To join in the fun, help expand and apply these concepts check out the evolution at : www.smartmeme.com.

ABCNNBCBS - the increasingly blurred brand names for the same narrow stream of U.S. corporate filtered mass media. This is the delivery system for the advertising product that giant media corporations sell to the general public. This process used to occur primarily through overt advertising, increasingly however it has become a complex web of cross-marketing, branding and self-promotion among different tentacles of the same media empires.

advertising - the manipulation of collective desire for commercial interests. Over the last 20 years as it has grown to be nearly a \$200 billion industry it has become the propaganda shell and dream life of modern consumer culture. (See **Control Mythology**)

articulating values crisis - a strategy in which radicals lay claim to common sense values and expose the fact that the system is out of alignment with those values

controlMeme - a meme used to marginalize, co-opt or limit the scale of social change ideas by institutionalizing a status quo bias into popular perception of events. The type of memes that RAND Corporation analysts and Pentagon information warfare experts spend countless hours and millions of dollars designing.

control mythology - the web of stories, symbols and ideas which define the dominant culture's sense of normal (including limiting our imagination of social change) and make people think the system is unchangeable.

confirmatory bias - psychological concept in which studies have shown people are more likely to accept/believe new information if it sounds like something they already believe.

defector syndrome - the tendency of radicals to self-marginalize by exhibiting their dissent in such a way that it only speaks to those who already share their beliefs.

direct action at the point(s) of assumption - actions whose goal is to re-frame issues and create infectious new political space by targeting underlying assumptions

earth-centered - a political perspective through which one defines themselves and their actions in the context of the planet's ecological operating systems, biological/cultural diversity and ongoing efforts to re-center human society within the Earth's natural limits/cycles. An emerging term to draw links and build alliances between ecological identity politics, land based struggles, indigenous resistance, earth spirituality, agrarian folk wisdom and visions of sustainable, ecologically sane societies both past and future. (etc.) A politicized acceptance of the sacredness of living systems.

global crisis - the present time in the history of planet earth characterized by the systematic undermining of the planet's life support systems through industrial extraction, unlimited growth, the commodification of all life and emergence of global corporate rule. Symptoms include : accelerating loss of biological and cultural diversity, the deterioration of all ecosystems, the de-stabilization of global ecology (climate change, soil erosion, bio-contamination etc.) growing disparities between rich and poor, increased militarization, ongoing patterns of racism, classism and sexism and the spread of consumer monoculture. Part of the endgame of 200 years of industrial capitalism, 500 years of white supremacist colonization and 10,000 years of patriarchal domination.

image event - an experience, event or action which operates as a delivery system for smartMemes by creating new associations and meanings

meme - (pronounced meem) a unit of self-replicating cultural transmission (ex. ideas, slogans, melodies, symbols) which spreads virally from brain to brain. Word coined by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976 from a Greek root meaning "to imitate" to draw the analogy with "gene". "A contagious information pattern" - Glenn Grant

movement - a critical mass of people who share ideas, take collective action and build alternative institutions to create social change.

points of intervention - a place in a system, be it a physical system or a conceptual system (ideology, cultural assumption etc.) where action can be taken to effectively interrupt the system. Examples include **point of production** (factory) **point of destruction**, (logging road) **point of consumption**, (chain store) **point of decision**, (corporate HQ) **point of assumption** (culture/mythology) and **point of potential** (actions which makes alternatives real).

political space - the ability of an oppositional idea or critique of the dominant order to manifest itself and open up new revolutionary possibilities. The extent to which our imaginations are colonized is the extent to which we lack political space and can't implement or even suggest new political ideas.

psychic break the process or moment where people realize the system is out of alignment with their values.

psycho-geography - the intersection of physical landscape with cultural and symbolic landscapes. A framework for finding targets for direct action at the point of assumption.

radical - a person committed to fundamental social change that believes we must address the roots of the problem rather than just the symptoms

smartMeme - a designer meme which injects new infectious ideas into popular culture, contests established meaning (controlMemes) and facilitates popular re-thinking of assumptions.

subverter - an effective radical who works within the logic of the dominant culture to foster dissent, mobilize resistance and make fundamental social change imaginable

tipping point - epidemiology term to describe point where a disease becomes an epidemic. Popularized by author Malcolm Gladwell to apply to the point where a new idea hits a critical mass of popular acceptance.

Values - the social principles, goals or standards held or accepted by an individual, group or society. The moral codes that structure people's deepest held beliefs.

Values crisis - the disconnect between common sense values (justice, equality, democracy, ecological literacy) and the pathological values which underlie the global corporate system

Values shift - a recognition that the global crisis is the expression of pathological values which we will need to change. An area of extreme difficulty to organize since people's values are very ingrained and the effective language to communicate in the values arena is often appropriated by powerful reactionary traditions and institutions. (government, organized religion, patriarchal family etc.)

Xerxes - ancient Persian emperor who despite having the world's largest military force over extended himself and was defeated by the unity and creativity of the Greeks starting a long decline that led to the end of Persian dominance. A conceptual archetype for the fall of all empires. America take note.

X. END NOTES/SOURCES

-
- ¹ Merely, Michael unpublished monograph "The Difficult Position of Being an Anti-Statist Within the Context of Northern Ireland" 2002 available upon request from m.reinsborough@queens-belfast.ac.uk
- ² The sixth mass extinction has become a widely accepted term within scientific circles to describe the current period of extinction. Dr. Niles Eldredge, the curator in chief of the permanent exhibition "Hall of Biodiversity" at the American Museum of Natural History has an article "The Sixth Extinction" available at www.amnh.org June 2001. Also see Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson's work.
- ³ Data taken from BIS, 1999. *Central Bank Survey of Foreign Exchange and Derivatives Market Activity, 1998*. Basle: Bank for International Settlements. Thanks to Ricardo Bayon for his research into private capital flows for the Rainforest Action Network. "Citigroup and the Environment" Feb 2000
- ⁴ IMF. 1999. *World Economic Outlook – October, 1999*. Washington DC: International Monetary Fund.
- ⁵ Ellwood, Wayne *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization 2001* : New Internationalist Publications
- ⁶ Stats taken from "The Economist" (October 23, 1999) quoted in Ricardo Bayon's report for the Rainforest Action Network "Citigroup and the Environment" Feb 2000
- ⁷ Canadian philosopher John McMurtry has probably done the most to articulate this analysis in his (cumbersome but useful) book *The Cancer Stage of Capitalism* 1999 : Pluto Press
- ⁸ Any analysis of the corporate take over of the American legal system is indebted to the work of the Program on Corporations Law and Democracy. Info and materials can be found at www.poclad.org. Particularly noteworthy is their recent compilation *Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy: A Book of History and Strategy* edited By Dean Ritz and published by APEX publishing 2001. Likewise the 1993 pamphlet by Richard Grossman & Frank Adams, "Taking Care of Business: Citizenship and the Charter of Incorporation" remains a classic. For a thorough discussion of the 1886 ruling and corporate personhood see "Santa Clara Blues: Corporate Personhood versus Democracy" by William Meyers the pamphlet can be ordered from www.iiipublishing.com
- ⁹ Facts cited in the "TV Free American" newsletter of the TV Turnoff Network which has extensive facts and figures about television addiction. See www.tvturnoff.org
- ¹⁰ The statistic comes from Jean Kilbourne's research into advertising and gender roles. Kilbourne's known for her award-winning documentaries Killing Us Softly, Slim Hopes, and Pack of Lies. Her latest book is *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel* 2000 Touchstone
- ¹¹ Exact stat is over 800 million people living in hunger, 770 million in the global south or "developing world". *Food Insecurity in the World 2001*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Report is available at : <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x8200e/x8200e00.htm>
- ¹² Bell, James John *The Last Wizards Book of Green Shadows : The Destruction and Construction of Ideas in Popular Consciousness* 2002 Out of Order Books www.lastwizards.com

-
- ¹³ Rey, Paul and Anderson, Sherry Ruth The Cultural Creatives New York: Harmony Books, 2000
www.culturalcreatives.org
- ¹⁴ Rey, Paul "The New Political Compass" pre-publication manuscript 2002
- ¹⁵ Moyer, Bill Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements 2001 : New Society Publishers R.I.P. Bill - your work inspired many and continues to nurture new generations of activists.
- ¹⁶ The contrast of money values vs. life values is widely used. For a particularly eloquent articulation of it check out the books or lectures of Global Exchange co-founder Kevin Danaher. Most are available through www.globalexchange.org. Also useful is the work of David Korten particularly The Post-Corporate World : Life After Capitalism 1999 Kumarian Press
- ¹⁷ meme (pronounced meem) describes a building block of replicable meaning, a unit of cultural information with the ability to spread virally from brain to brain (ex. ideas, slogans, melodies, symbols). Word coined by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in analogy with "gene" from a Greek root meaning "to imitate". See The Selfish Gene Oxford University Press 1976. "A contagious information pattern" - Glenn Grant
- ¹⁸ The term "meme warriors" was coined by Kalle Lasn in Adbusters Magazine and is expounded upon in his book Culture Jam : How to Reverse America's Suicidal Consumer Binge and Why We Must 2000 NY:HarperCollins Despite its militarist connotations the term is not intended to be gender neutral.
- ¹⁹ The phrase "energy sovereignty" represents the simple but radical concept that local communities should have the right to decide how to meet their own energy needs. Thus "development" decisions around energy are placed in the context of local communities and ecosystems rather than the macro-scale context of multi-national corporations, privatized utilities and global economic infrastructure. The term comes from Oilwatch an international network of 120 ecological, human rights, religious organizations and local communities, who support resistance against oil and gas activities from a Southern Countries perspectives. www.oilwatch.org.net.ec Also see US based organizations Project Underground www.moles.org and CorpWatch www.corpwatch.org
- ²⁰ Lee, Martha F. Earth First! Environmental Apocalypse 1995 Syracuse University Press
- ²¹ The Zapatista uprising is one of the most documented revolutionary movements in recent history, there is no shortage of excellent coverage of their inspiring actions and important analysis. One of most accessible and poetic of the compilations of Zapatista communiqués and the writings of Marcos is Our Word is Our Weapon edited by Juana Ponce de Leon 2000 Seven Stories Press
- ²² A spectacular account is recorded by John Jordan and Jennifer Whitney in their news print zine "Que Se Vayan Todos : Argentina's Popular Uprising" May 2002 more info at www.weareeverywhere.org
- ²³ Bell, *ibid*
- ²⁴ Lasn, Kalle, *ibid*
- ²⁵ Many of these strategies around "image events" and applying the elements of narrative structure to "telling the future" have been further developed by the smartMeme strategy and training project in their essays "The Battle of the Story" and "The Next Environmental Movement". These essays and an ongoing forum for activists to explore and apply these ideas is available at www.smartmeme.com
- ²⁶ Quoted in James Davis "This is What Bureaucracy Looks Like" in The Battle of Seattle : The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization ed. Eddie Yuen, George Katsiaficas and Daniel Burton Rose 2002 Soft Skull Press. The article is also a useful and relevant examination of NGOs.
- ²⁷ The modern cancer epidemic has spawned a parasitic industry of drug companies that sell expensive treatment drugs many of whom also produce carcinogenic chemicals. Connected to many of these corporations are various high profile, big-budget non-profit organizations that help keep public attention focused on expensive treatments (the mythic "cure") rather than the cause. For more information on the "Cancer Industry" see activist organizations like Breast Cancer Action (www.bcaction.org) and environmental justice resources like the Environmental Research Foundation (www.rachels.org).
- ²⁸ For comprehensive writings, discussions and organizing around the dual power concept check out www.dualpower.net
- ²⁹ I am indebted to my conversations with Kevin Danaher for the lifeboat metaphor.