

Human Civilization and the Recreation of Wilderness

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Theme: [Environment](#), [Law and Justice](#),
[Police State & Civil Rights](#)

*Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.*
— Thomas Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*

*Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.*
— Oliver Goldsmith, *Deserted Village*

*Lay the proud usurpers low,
Tyrants fall in every foe,
Liberty's in every blow! -
Let us do or dee.*
— Robert Burns, *Scots Wha Hae*

Wilderness Inside And Out

I was born in the heart, not of darkness, but of London in the penultimate year of WWII. During air raids my mother carried me, as a babe-in-arms, to the ground floor—there being no basement—of the Ministry of Information. The self-same edifice Eric Blair characterized as the Ministry of Truth.(1) As a child, eagerly anticipating our voyage across the Atlantic, I surreptitiously gloated over the map of North America under my grammar-school desk, visions of Jack London's *Call of the Wild* dancing in my head.

Does civilized man create wilderness? When does the split between man and beast divide us from the goddesses of the earth and from the wildness of our own heart?

Are we then doomed to be alienated “strangers in a strange land?”(2) Aliens landed, not as traditional gentry or peasantry, rooted in the soil, tied to the earth, but as space travellers seeking, like E.T., to “go home?”(3)

Or are we merely domesticated cattle, the wildness bred out of us, tamed, trained to the enclosure, the milking barn, and the yoke?

Perhaps domesticated man is envious of indigenous people who live on and by the fruits of the land, still connected to a way of life we can only imagine. Perhaps that is one reason they have been systematically, often brutally, cleared off the land they have occupied for

millennia.

This is being done, ostensibly, to create “sustainability”(4)–a term cooked up, not over a bubbling cauldron presided over by the cackling crones of “the Scottish Play,”(5) but by sly and slippery word-smiths spinning verbal dross with which to enchant the sedated somnambulists of the common people, the hoi poloi.

One could even suspect a conscious agenda driving the push to create “Wildways,”(6)(7)(8)(9) wide swaths of conserved, bottled and jarred countryside, corridors where no man, woman or child may set foot without permission of the overlords. To be preserved, not in aspic like cold cooked salmon, but for the use, and at their discretion even abuse, of the drafters of grand plans encompassing the entire globe, and every fish that swims, bird that flies, and creature that crawls. Could *Agenda 21*(10) be such a plan? What are the “sustainability goals” of the UN sustaining?

Surely African Bushmen have now even more reason to believe that *The Gods Must Be Crazy*.(11) Like other indigenous tribes throughout the world, stripped of their traditional lands, forced off by force of arms, they now have no means of livelihood, and may only weep as they gaze from the margins at game-preserves for the wealthy, tree-farms for the greedy.

This ongoing program, more and more vigorously pursued, may be of only marginal interest to the average denizen of the cities or ‘burbs, but it is of more than passing interest to small ranchers and farmers. They, too, are being marginalized, hemmed in, pushed off their own land, as a result of a deliberate scheme, a scenario of a future which precludes their traditional way of life.(12)

Three centuries ago, the *Enclosure Acts*(13) fenced off village greens throughout England, beginning the destruction of a way of life, if not *Far From the Madding Crowd*, (14) then mostly self-sufficient, a life that would have seemed destined to continue, essentially unchanged, for centuries to come. The *Highland Clearances*,(15) followed a similar pattern. Now we face–are having shoved in our masked and muffled faces–a series of enclosures: fences walling us in, cutting us off from each other, destroying our livelihoods, splitting us from our connection to the natural world, to the earth, the real source of our strength as humans having their being on this planet we were born on. To be borne, one fears, to the bourne from which none of us return unless perhaps reincarnated in another [day and night of Brahma](#).

Let us invoke the courage that many now display, like latter-day [Bravehearts](#), this time to prevail, as is often said: [“We be many, they be few.”](#)(16)

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S.M. Smyth was a founding member of the 2006 World Peace Forum in Vancouver, and organized a debate about TILMA at the Maple Ridge City Council chambers between Ellen Gould and a representative of the Fraser Institute.

Notes

- (1) George Orwell, *1984*
- (2) Robert Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land*
- (3) [E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial](#)
- (4) [James Corbett, *What is Sustainable Development?*](#)
- (5) Shakespeare, *Macbeth*
- (6) [The Wildlands Network](#)
- (7) [Simulated Reserve and Corridor System to Protect Diversity – map](#)
- (8) [North American Wildlands Network: Four MegaLinkages](#)
- (9) [Western Wildway Network](#)
- (10) [UN, *Agenda 21*](#)
- (11) [The Gods Must Be Crazy](#)
- (12) [Rockefeller Foundation, *Scenarios for the Future of Technology and International Development*](#)
- (13) Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*
- (14) [Enclosure Acts](#)
- (15) [Britannia, *Highland Clearances*](#)
- (16) Percy Bysshe Shelley, [The Masque of Anarchy](#)

Featured image: Fire along the border of the Kaxarari Indigenous territory, in Lábrea, Amazonas state.
Taken August 17, 2020. CREDIT: © Christian Braga / Greenpeace

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