

The Future in the Past

[This is about the current depression and its implications for all of us, beginning, as usual with the least of us. In the revolutionary days of the 60s, we believed that the police state (graduated to its current level by homeland security, etc.) and economic conditions, which are always an issue for us—but worsening—would force us to rebel and create communities that are self-determining (independent and self-sustaining). We have the option of logically creating self-determining communities because it is the right thing to do, but it is difficult to consider such things when all of the state's institutions are programming us not to be self-determining, we are lazy/too busy, and a plethora of other excuses.]

On Saturday, August 23, 6248 (2008), my son asked me to watch "Instinct" with him. For those not familiar, it is a movie about an anthropologist (Anthony Hopkins) that studies gorilla life and goes "native" (comes to live with the gorillas—"givers"). In a war with poachers ("takers") he kills about five of them and is imprisoned in the US in a psychological ward. He is to be evaluated by a psychiatrist (Cuba Gooding) to determine whether he is sane and can be tried.

The short story is that he tries to teach Cuba what he has learned from the great apes; that it is possible to live the lifestyle of givers rather than takers (Cuba, the poachers and most of the rest of us).

My son is beginning a course of study on animal behavior, with the great apes as most interesting to him. This solidified his passion and also provided the opportunity for me to transmit my greatest teaching to him: we are lost because we do not live a lifestyle of "givers" making it virtually impossible to be a giver.

In an article on health that I wrote several years ago (available at mposi.net), I referred to the "giver" lifestyle with the highest example being the Twa/BaMbiti (so-called pygmies).

Twa/BaMbiti

B. Environment - The need for fresh air, good water, and a pleasing and colorful (health maintaining) environment is frequently underestimated in most health regimens.

Reflecting on the environment of the Twa, we have the first hint of how far our current lifestyle is from the correct one. If we are tropical people that lived primarily in the open air of a lush green environment, etc., we can look around and see what we have to deal with that meets/falls short of those requirements.



Our first task is to try to make up for the shortcomings in our environment as much as possible. Providing a home and work environment that gets us as much fresh air as possible, lots of natural light, etc., as well as care to clothe our bodies as little as possible and in natural fibers whenever possible are other pointers to the good life.

C. Exercise - Again this is an area that is best exemplified through the natural nomadic lifestyle of the Twa. Moving amongst the highs and lows of the rain forest to collect food, visit friends, and move to new settlements, coupled with the communal/ceremonial song, dance and other physical activity is the definition of good exercise.

While I suggested approximating the lifestyle of the Twa, the real message that I shared with my son is that achieving that lifestyle is probably the only way of restoring our humanity (the Twa culture was described by John Turnbull in *The Forest People* as one "without crime, violence or war") and the planet. I believe it was Dr. John G. Jackson in *Introduction to African Civilization* (also the author of *Man, God and Civilization*) a history of the Twa in which they had tried permanent settlements, agriculture and the like instead of their current nomadic lifestyle and discovered the negative effects, and then decided to return to the original ways and maintain them forever.

I remember one of the other occasions when I shared this belief with a men's group in Los Angeles led by Dadisi Sanyika (one of our greatest teachers now enjoying the company of the other venerable ancestors, though sorely missed) and others. The task chosen by the group was to create a rite of passage program for Afrikan men. In a weekend retreat, I suggested that we first create a model of this man (What does he look like? How does he dress and feed himself? etc.).

After a little discussion (I usually wait to see if someone else has the same notion) I suggested the nomadic lifestyle of the Twa. There was a collective gasp and some pointed questions, especially from Dadisi. The point was made.

It continues to be a point of emphasis for me. As a student of the 60s revolution that rejected everything we learn from Babylon, it continues to amaze me that there is no serious thought given to the goal of revolution/restoration (with the notable exception of Brother Steve Cokely and a few others). We seem to think that we just need to change a few structures (philosophy, governance, etc.) and things will be okay. There rarely is a comprehensive view of liberation (self-determination), what it looks and sounds like when achieved. If *San Kofa* ("return and fetch it") has any meaning, it must be that the "it" is the past that holds the key to a successful future.

“Pressure will break a bull’s neck.” Khalid Jabril (Donnie Burrell)

In discussions with friends (and enemies, remember el Hajj Malik el Shabazz’s statement), the immediacy of this transformation is not usually apparent. I would always advise that we could think our way into this future or be forced into it by the conditions we create or allow to be created.

This pressure is applied in the form of 1) global warming, 2) “peak oil”, oil price speculation and 3) the collapse of the dollar and 4) “trace elements”. These topics have appeared on alternative radio in greater detail than anywhere else. Michio Kaku (“Explorations”, KPFK) presented several of the topics in the science show including Dr. Goldstein, *Out of Gas: The End of the Age of Oil*, Thomas Mast *Over a Barrel*, Richard Heinberg *The Party’s Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies* and *Power Down: Options and Actions for a Post Carbon World*. This morning (August 24, 2008), Julian Darley, *Post Carbon World*, continued the warning suggesting the need to “relocalize” to survive. That concept was presented earlier by Heinberg in *Power Down*, the first stimulus to write this piece. Heinberg suggested the Quakers as a model for the direction to go. It was a disappointment, for the local example of the Mexica (so-called Native Americans) is a much better example of the correct direction as they generally were nomadic; going where the food and environment best supported humans.

I spoke with several friends in the hair-care industry recently and learned that the economic downturn was affecting their industry also. Folks just didn’t have the dough to spend on hair, nails, cleaners, etc. Again this will force us to return to the days of “Black is beautiful”, natural hairstyles, etc., just to reduce costs. The rippling effect of increased costs and less income will affect everyone, even those greedy ones that have created this disaster.

“They make this life so hard...” Bob Marley

Logic, which should guide all of our decisions, gives us the best idea of where we need to go and how to get there. I believe we should have transition strategies that lead to the ideal state (The Twa). We know from the pressure principle that most folks don’t want to go there and the resistance increases the closer we get to the ideal state, but pressure still applies. Darley referred to “relocalization” or getting in environments that provide most of our needs avoiding the need for transportation of goods: essentially returning to the farm (or at least a lot of folks returning to the farm and increasing the prestige of that lost art). It’s not a big step for most folks in my generation, but these children will generally be lost and resist the pressure vigorously.

For most of us it means at least preparing the return to environments that support agriculture without a lot of technology (the south). The return is to agricultural technology that does not consume large amounts of fuel, etc. (machines, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, etc.). The emphasis by most of the authors, unfortunately, is still on trying to maintain as much of the current lifestyle as possible. That is not good (using 'alternative' power sources—electric cars, etc.), but again understandable.

An intermediate strategy is to create urban communes (if we must stay here), probably family or ideology based pooling all resources. We obviously must do some serious self-study (where school should start and end if it made any sense) so that we can be givers towards each other (the big lesson again). Being givers is the true meaning of civilization, not how much technology, material objects, etc., we have.

If this is done in a planned (logical) way, we can avoid much suffering (starvation, war, etc.). "Time will tell." Malcolm X.

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