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Bern Porter
Sheila Holtz
Natasha Bernstein

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You can’t understand God.
You can’t define God,
and you can’t contain God.

But you can, if you
don’t look at yourself,
be God.

You are the eyes with
which God looks, and the
mind through which God
understands itself.

"Twenty-eight years ago, at the height of the Counter-culture Movement,
Stephen Gaskin and several hundred other hippies drove their school buses
into southern Tennessee and founded one of America's largest modern day
intentional communities, THE FARM.

"In the twenty-first century, THE FARM remains a vibrant working
environment for change, alternative lifestyles, sustainable ecological
living and social activism." (Albert K. Bates)

My research for PAX 398 will focus on the history and legacy of THE
FARM and its present-day activities in the ECO-VILLAGE NETWORK OF THE
AMERICAS, with which it is now affiliated. (Sheila Holtz)

visit: www.thefarm.org www.ena.org www.gaia.org ecovillage@thefarm.org
The Farm also operates THE ECO-VILLAGE TRAINING CENTER
560 Farm Road, PO Box 90 Summertown, TN 38483-0090 USA
Greetings Scholars and Fellows. This issue begins a new feature by Sheila Holtz, "Report from HOME." This issue, November 15, 2001, features a reprint of The Green Zine, produced by a class I am currently taking, "Building Sustainable Communities," Peace Studies Department 398, being offered at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast, under the auspices of the University of Maine.

I have found this class extremely inspiring, at least in the beginning. But as time passes and the fall semester wears down toward winter, I am finding myself growing increasingly pessimistic vis à vis the prospects for saving the world.

The statistics that have come to light through the research of my fellow students shows, for example, that Americans use up between 13 and 20 acres of resources per person per year. By contrast, the per capita number of resources used by India is 1 (one.) Last week's reports on individual communities such as Arcosanti, in Arizona, and The Farm in Tennessee paint a rather bleak picture of real prospects for the success and sustainability of the high ideals of the founders of intentional alternative communities.

What I am beginning to realize is this: high-end consumptive Americans will never voluntarily, en masse, modify their greedy and wasteful lifestyles. They will not change unless they are up against the wall. And maybe not even then. Therefore, we ought to think about how we can ELIMINATE some of that high-end consumptive population. In light of this, I am beginning to see the only solution to the problem as: Voluntary Euthanasia. And if that does not achieve the desired end, maybe we should consider INVOLUNTARY euthanasia.

Consider this: 6000 (plus) high-end consuptive Americans who worked in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon prior to September 11, are now, after September 11, NO LONGER CONSUMING. Consider this age-old addage: "Everything happens for the best." Think about it.

When I first heard from a friend at HOME that an airplane had stuck the First Tower -- maybe 9:15 or so that morning -- he said, puzzled, disturbed and confused, "I don't know what it means." In response, the first words that came out of my mouth were: "Maybe it's God's way of telling us that world trade is not a good idea." I said it without thinking, and later I regretted it, realizing it was a tasteless and insensitive remark. But now I realize it is the truth. "First thought, best thought." Think about it.
Many people experience events, which have a profound impact on their worldviews. Military experience, birthing a child, the first real job or travel can have a lasting effect. As a student in a Peace Studies Class, I look back to a time when I developed opinions, which influence me today. As a result of travel experiences, at the age of eighteen, I became a pacifist.

I had embarked on an initial three-week trip, which lasted six-months, to Europe and the Middle East. This time was divided between Sweden and Israel. In the fashion of the period, I lived out of a backpack and closely associated with others traveling in a similar bohemian style.

What I learned from observing many different people and cultures was that imposing the American way of life on people cannot be justified. My talks with and observations of people in Sweden and Israel were very significant to that view.

In Sweden, I was often asked why I wanted to kill Vietnamese because in that time period the U.S. was deeply mired in a war in South East Asia. I did not personally plan to harm anyone. However, in order to leave the country, I had taken my draft physical and been classified 1-A, fit for military duty. I would most likely be drafted into the Army and sent to the Vietnam War. I began to question U.S. policy during my stay in Sweden and later in Israel.

In Israel I was able to observe the effect of American foreign policy which was to assist in the forced removal of Arab people from their homes. The Kibbutz I live on near the Palestine City of Gaza contained very productive farmland. I puzzled over why no one was living on the land before the creation of the kibbutz. As I began to explore the near by orchards and cropland I observed numerous abandoned homes. In one case an entire empty village. I could see evidence of a violent assault in this village and concluded that the Palestine homeowners have been forced to leave. My kibbutz was in effect a military unit used to intimidate Palestine people.

My stay in Israel convinced me that human problems should not be resolved by violence. I realized that what my government had been telling Americans about Israel was not true. My experiences as an eighteen year old resulted in my becoming a pacifist. Thirty plus years latter I still believe in the conclusion made during my first travel abroad.
We are one in the Spirit

We are one in the spirit
we are one in the lord
we are one in the spirit
we are one in the lord
and we pray that our unity
may this day be restored

Chorus: And you'll know....

We will walk with each other,
we will walk hand in hand
We will walk with each other,
we will walk hand in hand
and together we'll spread the news that god is in our land

Chorus:
and you'll know we're god's children
by our love by our love
and you'll know we're god's children by our love.

We will work with each other,
we will work side by side
We will work with each other,
we will work side by side
And we'll restore our dignity
and throw away false pride.

Chorus

Song submitted by Carol Kinsey

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Ishmael, by Daniel Quinn: A book review by Chris B

"...In 1989 Ted Turner created a fellowship to be awarded positive solutions to global problems. The winner, chosen was a work of startling clarity and depth: Daniel Quinn that explores the most challenging problem humankind faces, the world from ourselves.

The book opens with a deceptively ordinary personal ad: "I have an earnest desire to save the world." Seeking a different answer, the ad and is startled to find that the teacher is the creature uniquely placed to vision anew the world.

(http://www.ishmael.com/Origins/Ishmael/)

For me, the story of Ishmael is as meaningful and fresh today as it was yesterday. By design, the young man in the book represents questions I had about the human story. What Ishmael does is ask questions; and these questions are not small: Why is life such an outsider? Why doesn't any of this make sense? Religious answers that perpetuate the separation of humanity from God gives is a retelling of the human story with a more complete and undisputed facts that our culture has chosen to ignore.

The ignorance of our culture is, in fact, a major theme of the book. A view of itself that is blind to its origins. Ishmael's purpose is to point to an inclusive vision. In this short review, I cannot answer without taking all the punch out of the book. But I can tell you, you can read the book for yourself.

This book is not new-age. If anything, it's old-age. But the disassociation are common among both Ishmael and any young adult does this in turn mean that Ishmael is a spiritual book? Well, the author, yes. However, I know many people who agree we would not consider it a spiritual journey. In other words, asked for. It just happens sometimes.

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Poems by Roy Morrison
P.O. Box 114
Warner, NH 03278
rmjsc@conknet.com

Before the War

before the war
I taught poetry
to the third grade,
watched a toddler
carefully pour water
onto the flower garden
with wobbly grace, even
lay in a field and backtracked
the milky way's trail of wonder

Truth

Truth arrives as fully
realized as Athena in
a harlequin mask
sprung from my forehead,
extracted with great effort
the sort of grinding and cracking leverage
with which my teeth sally forth as red porcelain
from Dr. Dugas' pliers that
the dentist calls a spoon.

The same spoon I jam
into my brain,
scoop at wayward thoughts
pursuing the ache
the truth, bloody
and all come fl
As I walked about Cape Jellison, the geo-region where I presently live, I noticed the bombardment of my senses by the shape, color, and odor of apples. Within ten-minutes’ walk of my dwelling, there are at least a dozen old, rather small, apple trees, all bearing. When I returned home, I found three apple trees, one too young for much fruit, one too old, and a third with a shower of small, gnarly apples hanging on the southerly side. These apples produced a lot of peel, core, seeds and unusable parts and took a lot of time, but tasted god in apple crisp. Why not just dump the whole apple into water, boil same and see what I get? What I got was a great big bowl of delicious applesauce, nothing added but lots of elbow grease to push the cooked apples through a colander.

I wondered how many apple trees are on the Cape and when I investigated, I found more trees, and more and more apples, many rotting away in the grassy ground beneath the trees. Some were on land not being cultivated, others in neat yards looked unpruned, unsprayed and the fruit unused. Who could use these apples? Would a community group gather them? Would some restaurant or school cafeteria allow us to cook them there? Would some health department care? Would cider, apple juice, jelly or applesauce be the most practical product? Could we give the stuff away? Would land owners contribute or would they fear damage or lawsuits or trespassers on their land?

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What do acid rain, the Exxon Valdez, Chernobyl, the Gulf War, and smog have in common? They are all part of our unsustainable approach to energy use. When I started college in the 70’s the USA was in the middle of our “first” energy crisis. Rising costs and dwindling supplies made people question our dependence on foreign fossil fuels. There was growing interest in solar energy and other renewable energy sources. Energy conservation was encouraged, and rising prices did cause a slight per capita drop in energy use.

ENERGY ISSUES

We have reached the 21st century without much change in US energy policy. The economic, environmental, and political effects of this energy policy drive my continued interest in renewable energy. Is it possible to have sustainable energy use in Maine? In the US? In the world?

My goddess morphs with poetic dexterity first my younger and wiser, stern master. Then our eyes clutch and I’m in Rilke’s zoo looking down into the tigers pit as she circles and I stare into her blue blue eyes leaning forward.
Columbus, 500 Year Anniversary
by Missy Martin

The light off the prow of a ship on the horizon
Burns my eyes with the blinding glare
Of its silent approach
The blue sky pales to the shining
Drained of color are the forests and flowers

I float towards the spectre
Too bright to look at, a thing of wonder
Stunned under the harsh angle of the sun
Taking on a life of its own
Not reflecting off of anything
Searing the soil, scorching the air
Infiltrating and radiating the dark
With a flash that exposes the insides
And skeletons of our present situation
Becoming a blindness that covers the world
A whitewash, a brainwash, a memory loss
Of what it used to look like
Remembered barely at the sound
Of a genuine voice, an honest touch
The sure-footedness of an animal
Stepping into the clearing

Time now builds to the speed of light
We rivet beyond the bounds of sacred space
Into hintered lands miraged with ships
Always just on the horizon, always out of reach
Seen in the light of today's setting sun
Hitting the prow on its way down

Did Columbus ever really sight land?
Have we seen the land ever since?

There may be some clever lines in this poem, and it accurately describes to me the psychic landscape of the world I saw surfacing just after the Gulf War at the 500-year anniversary of Columbus. What is most striking to me about the poem shortly after it was scripted was my own arrogance and self-righteousness, as well as sadness. I'd spent my life standing for peace, but had no peace myself. My teaching and working with people and nature meant nothing to me in that moment as I understood my spiritual bankruptcy.

Today my motivations are the sole criteria from which I judge my actions. The sadness was the only honest feeling in the bunch. The other reactions were because the world was wrong and the world was to blame. My ways if followed would make the world a better
place to live for everyone and by god we were all going to follow them. How many times had I used a politically correct action to justify a resentment or to build myself onto a self-righteous moral pedestal? My motivation was to make the world wrong and me better. I told you that if you were eating meat, you were causing starvation and destroying our planet or if you called God "Him" you were sexist.

I went seeking and I received some unusual and strong spiritual guidance to deal with my arrogance. I was told to eat meat and to use the word Him for God (and to use the word "God" not Goddess,) whenever possible until my resentments and self-righteousness dissolved. Until I could stop judging others and using my beliefs to separate myself from the world. Until I could take action with love in my heart. I needed to do things to fulfill my personal moral responsibility solely because they are my ethic. It took ten years for compassion to be actively rooted in my heart. When the towers were hit in NY and the bombs were dropped I felt instant caring for all involved on all "sides." People are telling me to stop using the word "guys" when talking to people and I eat meat for health reasons; I take it in stride.

I came to Maine this fall to volunteer with the organization I was teaching with during the Gulf War, the Audubon Expedition Institute. This semester they are running their first site-based program on sustainability. I looked up a friend, Pam Gross, who I knew had gone to get her doctorate in theology. I'm in the Belfast area, and I find that not only is she is working in Belfast area, but she is with the Unitarian Universalist congregation. She helped organize a service of area faiths to share prayer, strength, and hope around the world events that some of you may have heard of or attended. I went to the service. These folks, Muslims, Christians, and Jews, and Pam, the only female minister, had met for weeks to see how they could honestly share in a service of worship—they explored their likeness and discovered where they needed to be sensitive to their differences. You could feel the work that went into what they shared—they achieved peace and a new community.

The external issues of sustainability seem compelling; but there are internal issues to explore. That spiritual paths transforms individuals to experience inner peace, that inner peace and compassion sustains communities and gives direction for entering into deep relationship with nature, these are the deeper structures. I want to dialogue with Pam about her choice to become a "ministress." I'd like to learn about the original thanksgivings the native people had, and what they do today. Prayer itself may be action of the highest order. Not a retreat from the world, but instead the most powerful entry into it.

As I read back over the initial poem with new eyes, I see that it shares some truth. My heart asks the question of if we've seen the land, in a deep sense, and asks that today. It is asked from a place of caring, like a prayer, and from a place of commitment, like a ship's first voyage. I sailed off the coast at Camden, Maine and got to see this land from the ocean-forested, colorful, beautiful, gentle, ever-changing—a place I would want to come to.

I've avoided writing for awhile, but if we're going to write a project, I hope we do it with the essence of sustainability in mind, which I see as interrelationships. I hope we to do something like a public reading with shared discussion to follow on possibilities and actualities of sustainability in the Belfast area. It would be wonderful to enter into dialogue and become vulnerable, rather than have the zine writing appear as community-minded, but actually be an isolative exercise. Land ho!
three hits in four tries is a good American batting average said the suicide hijackers while staffers in the World Trade Center made their last ATM withdrawal

#8

on TV National Blank police officers firemen too hosed down Suberbia for bacon

THE ANTHRAX REPORT by Daniel A. Russell