

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: OOPS!
Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051545630.inmta004.9295.1155823>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.6475 M:98.8113 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108 S: 0.2047)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) Pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good recip)

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>>Leverett, Robert
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM
Subject: OOPS!

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parcs.org>

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]
Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 15:44:58 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051559102.inmta002.5362.1170274>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.6475 M:98.0684 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108 S:
5.2805)
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He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Herb Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

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From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

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From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert

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Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]
Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 15:59:06 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051559958.inmta006.14220.1254176>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.5542 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.9425)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good recip)

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:parks@parks.org>>Maurice Schwartz
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 3:44 PM
Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

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Yes, I agree 100%. Leaving the old stone age (Paleolithic) and entering the age of farming (Neolithic) really represents, in my opinion, the Biblical "fall". The problem is that it was a one way door. Now we have to figure out the next step in cosmic evolution. We'll get passed this degraded condition eventually.

(snipped)

Joe

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Don Bertollette <dbertollette@unneedspeed.net>
Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]
Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 20:14:22 -0700
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051595708.inmta007.7496.1000008>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.6475 M:98.8113 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108 S: 3.6954)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) Pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertollette@unneedspeed.net> forward
(good recip)

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

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From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 09:20:00 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051622404.inmta002.16822.1009810>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:96.6932 M:98.0684 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108
S:26.4345)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) Pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

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To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

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From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

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Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

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From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 10:31:14 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051626705.inmta002.16822.1011166>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:96.6932 M:98.8113 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108 S: 5.3173)
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X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good recip)

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of

the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

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And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

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Bob

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Howard Stoner <stonehow@hvcc.edu>
Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 11:13:32 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051629134.inmta007.9392.1022583>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
Organization: HVCC
X-Accept-Language: en
X-pstn-levels: (C:88.7295 M:99.5542 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:55.8134)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <stonehow@hvcc.edu> forward (good recip)

Two that I know of from a book "Paradise for Sale"
McDaniel/Gowdy.
The book is mostly about the island nation of Nauru where a durable way of living existed

for some 3000 yrs before arrival of westerners and the discovery of phosphate. You can probably guess the result. Read about it in the book. Also in the above mentioned book they site Tikopia (pg 151-153) as another island nation that has a durable living pattern. It would seem that our species has in some relatively small and isolated place come up with a culture and living system that is sustainable. I find little hope in thinking we today will ever get close but we do need to work at it.

Howard

Don Bertollette wrote:

BLOCKQUOTE { PADDING-BOTTOM: 0px; PADDING-TOP: 0px } DL { PADDING-BOTTOM: 0px; PADDING-TOP: 0px } UL { PADDING-BOTTOM: 0px; PADDING-TOP: 0px } OL { PADDING-BOTTOM: 0px; PADDING-TOP: 0px } LI { PADDING-BOTTOM: 0px; PADDING-TOP: 0px } Maurice-Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM
Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe, When you wrote even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok you were much too kind to human history. Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment. He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation.

The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort." In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses." In short, humans have been degrading their

natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character. Maurice -----Original Message-----To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>Subject: Re: OOPS!Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

Subject: OOPS!

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Bob

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051641886.inmta004.27650.1000897>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 29 Apr 2003 17:30:37.0332 (UTC)
FILETIME=[0C174540:01C30E75]
Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment.
Thread-Index: AcMOcvife0wbHtHQQR2C7a6QWVmeYAAANVug
X-pstn-levels: (C:88.7295 M:99.4056 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:19.0533)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good recip)

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment – so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Enuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM
Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

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even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

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He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly

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In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM
Subject: OOPS!

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Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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Any views expressed in this message are those of the individual

sender, except where the sender specifies and with authority, states them to be the views of Sisters of Providence Health System.

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Gary A. Beluzo" <gaian2002@attbi.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 20:44:45 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051664056.inmta007.8573.1020013>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3 (Normal)
Importance: Normal
X-pstn-levels: (C:79.6396 M:98.8113 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:5.7712)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <gaian2002@attbi.com> forward (good recip)

Bob,

Are all of these groups you mention characterized by

specialized labor
government
art, culture, communication
religion
stable food production?

If so-- then they are all CIVLIZATIONS.

Gary

-----Original Message-----

From: Leverett, Robert [<mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 1:31 PM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

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----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

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From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

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Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

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In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I

am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney
<gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM
Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just rip off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes û little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not, will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains

National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 21:23:54 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051665837.inmta007.8574.1012518>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.8525 M:98.8113 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:35.7620)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology; they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself.

Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Enuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

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From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

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He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth

most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney
<gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM
Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative

place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally

figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes ~ little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not, will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest

creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: windbear@juno.com
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:56:54 GMT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051700304.inmta004.27650.1023619>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Originating-IP: [207.198.18.10]
X-Original-From: windbear@juno.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:51.8443 M:97.7375 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.4154)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <windbear@juno.com> forward (good recip)

Bob,
And let's not forget the Native American civilizations within the current boundaries of the U.S. They certainly did not fade due to their lack of respect for the environment. But the barbarians that exterminated them will certainly do so if they do not wake up soon.

Dennis

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 08:51:31 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051707093.inmta006.29928.1074816>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.8525 M:98.0684 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:19.5983)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Gary,

I admire and am comfortable with the extreme conciseness of your statement of criteria for recognizing a civilization.

specialized labor
government
art, culture, communication
religion
stable food production

I take it that your "communication" includes " the capability to write and to keep written record;" that your "stable food production" includes the "transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing;" that your "specialized labor" includes the "division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization;" and that your "culture" includes the "establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice."

How about the "transition from crude tools to elementary technology?"

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Gary A. Beluzo" <gaian2002@attbi.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 20:44:45 -0400

Bob,

Are all of these groups you mention characterized by

specialized labor
government
art, culture, communication
religion
stable food production?

If so-- then they are all CIVILIZATIONS.

Gary

-----Original Message-----

From: Leverett, Robert [mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 1:31 PM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment -- so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Eñuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----A Related Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parcs.org>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 21:23:54 -0400

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

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Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

maurice

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

Gary,

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art, culture, communication
religion
stable food production

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religion
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Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 1:31 PM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
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Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 21:23:54 -0400

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maurice

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 09:30:49 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051709461.inmta006.29928.1076810>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
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0.5634)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) PmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good
recip)

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:parks@parks.org>>Maurice Schwartz
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 8:51 AM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Gary,

I admire and am comfortable with the extreme conciseness of your statement of criteria for recognizing a civilization.

specialized labor
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religion
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Maurice

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Joe

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051711889.inmta004.27650.1026700>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.2571 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.5200)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <SHAMROCK94@aol.com> forward (good recip)

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:32:26 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051713234.inmta006.29928.1080036>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 30 Apr 2003 14:32:26.0740 (UTC)
FILETIME=[526A2340:01C30F25]
Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment.
Thread-Index: AcMPHMI8Z2Q1SwvVQQ6bF4irvxkNJAABPLrA
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.4056 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108 S:
0.7152)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) PmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good recip)

Maurice, Joe, Gary, Don, et. al:

The extreme technological sophistication and education needed to maintain our vast urban infrastructures suggests that primitive cultures had little to offer. From a modern-day perspective, I suppose that is true except that now humanity is over-populating and extirpating species at an unprecedented pace. It is not apparent where all our technology, art, and comfortable living is going to lead us. I for one really don't want to give up Beethoven, baseball, digital cameras, laser rangefinders, e-mail, hot showers, and a good transportation system. Nor do I want to see us continue in the direction we're going. Hell'uva dilemma.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 9:31 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 8:51 AM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

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Joe

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:42:19 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051713769.inmta007.8573.1054949>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.8525 M:99.4056 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:24.9757)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <colby@toad.net> forward (good recip)

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining. Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised, and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:parks@parks.org>>Maurice Schwartz

To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

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maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

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Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the

beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I

should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for

the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM
Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural

resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes sy little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not , will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 11:46:14 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051718252.inmta007.8574.1026462>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com (Unverified)
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.0328 M:94.5022 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.2328)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good
recip)

This is a good question: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization?" The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..."

Now, there's a hoot. Iraq has what is often hailed as the oldest civilization. Yikes!

Claude Levi-Straus, in *Tristes Tropiques*, his account of his observations on Amazon indigenous people, that all human societies are equally evolved. And if you want to read about a truly civilized society, by the standards of the American Heritage Dictionary, read Colin Turnbull's accounts of the Pygmies in his books *The Forest People* or *The Human Cycle*.

Last I heard, Pygmy culture was being destroyed by the chaos in the 'civilized' Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I just wish I could eat irony.

This is a good discussion. Thank you,

Robie

=====
=====

At 10:11 AM 04/30/03 EDT, you wrote:

>>>>

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other

attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parcs.org>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:04:26 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051718686.inmta002.16113.1055458>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:98.6012 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108 S: 3.5891)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) PmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parcs@parcs.org> forward (good recip)

Bob, Joe, Gary, Don, Howard, Tim, et al

Hell'uva dilemma.

Bob has put the whole issue on the head of a pin. Civilization presents us with a Hell'uva dilemma.

Maurice

At 10:32 AM -0400 4/30/03, Leverett, Robert wrote:
Maurice, Joe, Gary, Don, et. al:

The extreme technological sophistication and education needed to maintain our vast urban infrastructures suggests that primitive cultures had little to offer. From a modern-day perspective, I suppose that is true except that now humanity is over-populating and extirpating species at an unprecedented pace. It is not apparent where all our technology, art, and comfortable living is going to lead us. I for one really don't want to give up Beethoven, baseball, digital cameras, laser rangefinders, e-mail, hot showers, and a good transportation system. Nor do I want to see us continue in the direction we're going. Hell'uva dilemma.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 9:31 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 8:51 AM

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Gary,

I admire and am comfortable with the extreme conciseness of your statement of criteria for recognizing a civilization.

specialized labor

government

art, culture, communication

religion

stable food production

I take it that your "communication" includes " the capability to write and to keep written record;" that your "stable food production" includes the "transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing;" that your "specialized labor" includes the "division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization;" and that your "culture" includes the "establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice."

How about the "transition from crude tools to elementary technology?"

Maurice

In the Paleolithic- old stone age- which is what Native Americans were in- people had no government as we know it and a barely stable food production and little in the way of specialized labor- all of which I think are positive attributes, not negative. The world was a much better place before those Mesopotamians started taming animals and plants- the Neolithic- the Biblical "Fall"- the beginning of the end of a healthy Earth. Since then, the naked apes have spread out over the planet like a skin cancer.

Joe

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

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From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:14:00 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051719910.inmta007.8573.1057185>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:98.6627 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:5.8651)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Tim,

Thanks for your questions and comments.. The kinships between civilization and environmental degradation merit lots of further consideration.

1. You asked: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized?"

No substantial concept (or maybe no non-mathematical concept whatsoever) fulfills all of the criteria that all scholars and lay people will attribute to it. Try the criteria for Democracy. So a people need not fulfill all of the meaningful criteria for a concept about them to be appropriate. With respect to your special case, it could well be that a group of people who did not make the switch could be considered a civilization. A cultural group that displayed all the other attributes could be considered civilized. I would bet, however, that if they displayed all the other attributes there is no way that they would not have switched from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing. Great mutualities exist among the criteria.

2. You wrote: "Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?"

No morality, fairness, ethics, or justice fit the line of thinking that is used as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. The misuse of concepts does not make them false or inappropriate, however.. Consider how tyrants misuse the concept "Peoples Democracy."

3. You charge "By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized".

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

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Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Cc:

Bcc:

X-Attachments:

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Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 13:12:33 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1051723192.inmta002.16113.1057381>

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X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:80.2266 M:98.8113 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108 S:
0.8970)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) PmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Joe,

Much as I share many of your views, I do not share your affection for life in the old stone age. As Bob put it, it's a Hell'uva dilemma.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

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From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 09:30:49 -0400

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How about the "transition from crude tools to elementary technology?"

Maurice

In the Paleolithic- old stone age- which is what Native Americans were in- people had no government as we know it and a barely stable food production and little in the way of specialized labor- all of which I think are positive attributes, not negative. The world was a much better place before those Mesopotamians started taming animals and plants- the Neolithic- the Biblical "Fall"- the beginning of the end of a healthy Earth. Since then, the naked apes have spread out over the planet like a skin cancer.

Joe

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

Joe,

Much as I share many of your views, I do not share your affection for life in the old stone age. As Bob put it, it's a Hell'uva dilemma.

Maurice

-----Original message-----
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 09:30:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 8:51 AM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Gary,

I admire and am comfortable with the extreme conciseness of your statement of criteria for recognizing a civilization.

specialized labor
government
art, culture, communication
religion
stable food production

I take it that your "communication" includes " the capability to write and to keep written record;" that your "stable food production" includes the "transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing;" that your "specialized labor" includes the "division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization;" and that your "culture" includes the "establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice."

How about the "transition from crude tools to elementary technology?"

Maurice

In the Paleolithic- old stone age- which is what Native Americans were in- people had no government as we know it and a barely stable food production and little in the way of specialized labor- all of which I think are positive attributes, not negative. The world was a much better place before those Mesopotamians started taming animals and plants- the Neolithic- the Biblical "Fall"- the

beginning of the end of a healthy Earth. Since then, the naked apes have spread out over the planet like a skin cancer.

Joe

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051722850.inmta002.16113.1057228>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: freli001@frel001.email.umn.edu
X-Umn-Remote-Mta: [N] x101-73-118.ej2357.umn.edu #+HF+LO
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:98.2169 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:43.7685)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <frel001@umn.edu> forward (good recip)

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

In fact, one could turn the argument completely around. Environmental degradation prevents high development or causes retrogression to a society that cannot be considered highly developed, and environmental degradation sure isn't conducive to intellectual advancement, and its not humane, ethical, or reasonable.

Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

Lee

At 12:14 PM 4/30/03 -0400, you wrote:
Tim,

Thanks for your questions and comments.. The kinships between civilization and environmental degradation merit lots of further consideration.

1. You asked: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized?"

No substantial concept (or maybe no non-mathematical concept whatsoever) fulfills all of the criteria that all scholars and lay people will attribute to it. Try the criteria for Democracy. So a people need not fulfill all of the meaningful criteria for a concept about them to be appropriate. With respect to your special case, it could well be that a group of people who did not make the switch could be considered a civilization. A cultural group that displayed all the other attributes could be considered civilized. I would bet, however, that if they displayed all the other attributes there is no way that they would not have switched from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing. Great mutualities exist among the criteria.

2. You wrote: "Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?"

No morality, fairness, ethics, or justice fit the line of thinking that is used as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands.

The misuse of concepts does not make them false or inappropriate, however.. Consider how tyrants misuse the concept "Peoples Democracy."

3. You charge "By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized".

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

Tim

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Or send an email to: ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 14:04:00 EDT

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1051725901.inmta004.27649.1056106>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>

List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>

X-pstn-levels: (C:88.1683 M:99.3458 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.6510)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <SHAMROCK94@aol.com> forward (good
recip)

In a message dated 4/30/2003 12:25:55 PM Eastern Daylight
Time, parks@parks.org writes:

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice,

To my way of seeing things, agriculture along with the domestication of animals (as practiced by most past and almost all present "civilized" cultures) was and is an effort to control and

dominate nature as opposed to cooperating and living with it. This has led to our present Hell'uva dilemma.

I'm not saying that we should all go back to the stone ages, though that just might happen if we continue our present course. It appears to me that our current experiment in civilization is on the verge of failure. We need to rethink some of the original premises we have been saddled with and start exploring some new paths. It is time to stop marching behind the slogans of morality, fairness, ethics and justice as well as those of progress, peace, happiness and security, etc. More often than not we see these concepts manipulated and corrupted by members of our "civilization" in order to further their own personal gain often at the great expense of most others.

Sometimes a machine becomes too broken to fix no matter how much duct tape you have to slap on it. This is especially true when the mechanics didn't bother to read the instruction manual before they started tinkering in the first place. I think it's time to finally open up that manual (as many of the members on this list are trying to do) and replace our past and present ideas of what a civilization is and should be with some more enlightened ones. We need a new invention that provides reasonable security and happiness for ourselves and the future generations to come.

So yes, I think we should replace the list. The current list is useful for recognizing civilizations that are a threat to themselves and the environments they depend on for their own survival. It does this so well because it is based on the concepts and definitions created by the same flawed civilizations it seeks to identify.

What I want is a new list that shows how people can develop a sustainable culture that provides the true essentials for a meaningful livelihood for all its members. A list based on the realities of our strengths and weaknesses, not one based on the idealisms of how wonderful we humans think we are.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 14:59:32 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051729203.inmta007.8573.1062270>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.8525 M:98.5141 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:28.5799)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parcs@parcs.org> forward (good recip)

Colby,

I do not know about our biodiversity, but I am learning a little about our interpretation diversity. It's a lot. We humans are very diverse in our interpretations of the same words. You, for example, suggest that I wrote that civilization is the enemy of the natural world. Actually I did no such thing nor did I have it in mind.. I merely referred to the "historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment." Those kinships are undeniable. Every civilization has severely damaged its natural environment. But civilized peoples have not been alone in wrecking havoc with their natural environments.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as you say, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

You'll have to write to Joe about your challenge of the Fall.

As to the prospective future, I see no sign of a "greater cultural advancement" that will remedy the range and depth of the modern world's fatuous degradation of our natural environments. It is not that we do not need a remarkable cultural advancement. It is that I see no sign of it. Indeed, forces are at work, for example, to bring the Nation's Forests back to about 1885. We are

still losing ground. Hearings will be held today on the seriously flawed McInnis bill.

I could not agree with you more than when you wrote that a "return to hunter-gatherer existence" is not "the path to living with our environment."

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:42:19 -0400

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining. Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised, and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology; they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Enuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively

benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I

am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney
<gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM
Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just rip off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes sÿ little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not , will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains

National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Cc:

Bcc:

X-Attachments:

Colby,

I do not know about our biodiversity, but I am learning a little about our interpretation diversity. It's a lot. We humans are very diverse in our interpretations of the same words. You, for example, suggest that I wrote that civilization is the enemy of the natural world. Actually I did no such thing nor did I have it in mind.. I merely referred to the "historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment." Those kinships are undeniable. Every civilization has severely damaged its natural environment. But civilized peoples have not been alone in wrecking havoc with their natural environments.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as you say, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

You'll have to write to Joe about your challenge of the Fall.

As to the prospective future, I see no sign of a "greater cultural advancement" that will remedy the range and depth of the modern world's fatuous degradation of our natural environments. It is not that we do not need a remarkable cultural advancement. It is that I see no sign of it. Indeed, forces are at work, for example, to bring the Nation's Forests back to about 1885. We are still losing ground. Hearings will be held today on the seriously flawed McInnis bill.

I could not agree with you more than when you wrote that a "return to hunter-gatherer existence" is not "the path to living with our environment."

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:42:19 -0400

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

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Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a

close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology; they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the

indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Eñuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern

Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and

the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest

on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many

forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes sy little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not , will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 15:10:30 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051729845.-f.16113.1061401>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.0328 M:94.6508 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.0867)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Robey,

The American Heritage Dictionary definition of civilized is very useful. No one definition will ever be universally acceptable.

I wish that the human rights group of the United Nations would fulfill its responsibilities for the pygmies and the many other peoples whose human rights are being trampled upon.

If ever you find a way to cook up pot of irony, please invite me to dinner.

Maurice

At 11:46 AM -0400 4/30/03, Robie Hubley wrote:

This is a good question: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization?" The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..."

Now, there's a hoot. Iraq has what is often hailed as the oldest civilization. Yikes!

Claude Levi-Straus, in *Tristes Tropiques*, his account of his observations on Amazon indigenous people, that all human societies are equally evolved. And if you want to read about a truly civilized society, by the standards of the American Heritage Dictionary, read Colin Turnbull's accounts of the Pygmies in his books *The Forest People* or *The Human Cycle*.

Last I heard, Pygmy culture was being destroyed by the chaos in the 'civilized' Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I just wish I could eat irony.

This is a good discussion. Thank you,

Robie

=====
=====

At 10:11 AM 04/30/03 EDT, you wrote:

>>>>

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Herb Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

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<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 16:07:08 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1051733243.inmta007.8573.1064613>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>

List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>

X-OriginalArrivalTime: 30 Apr 2003 20:07:08.0528 (UTC)

FILETIME=[1417CF00:01C30F54]

Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment.

Thread-Index: AcMPRw8cxeUhHt7SSKmfCder6Z2BmgABWziQ

X-pstn-levels: (C:93.6475 M:98.0684 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:5.3108)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good recip)

Tim, Maurice, et. al:

The ultimate problem lies not so much with the by-products of our civilization, as environmentally damaging as they may be, but with the very nature of our species. We create art of exquisite beauty while allowing despots like Nero, Atilla the Hun, Genghis Khan, Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Paul Pot, and Saddam Hussein to call the shots for hundreds of thousands to millions of us and now billions. We create engineering marvels and then summarily turn control of them over to the very worst of us. We are a Jekyll and Hyde species simultaneously capable of great good and horrendous destruction. The problem is that with or modern technology and oppressive numbers our collective actions just aren't balancing out. It is not a zero sum game and in one of our Jekyll swings we may literally obliterate life on the planet. We almost did in the 1960s.

Fine philosophies that appeal to gentle, responsible souls roll off the backs of the aggressive and ambitious. It is difficult to see how we're going to work ourselves out of the exponentially growing mess that we've created. But bad as it is, the current state of affairs doesn't mean that we've grown worse as a species. We may have gotten better. The only reason that primitives didn't extirpate more of the planet's plant and animal life is that they had limited means to do so. But dynamite in the hands of a nut can wreck more havoc than a sword or spear and with nuclear weapons proliferation, terrorists will acquire and use nuclear devices that at least spread radioactive material. It will happen.

Basically, I'd like to think that our good side still has a chance, albeit a dwindling one. During the zero population movement of the 60s and 70s and the rise of environmentalism, I had begun to think America was developing a real soul, an honest Earth-consciousness. But now as half of us battle to preserve the remaining wildlands, the other half seeks to reduce them to a pittance with modern machinery that actually moves mountains. Nobility and stupidity are seen to march side by side. Where the heck is that going to take us?

I need to go back to the forests of the Smokies. But how would I get there? Yes, in a gasoline drinking, environmentally polluting machine. Yikes! Sorry to sound so negative.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: TJ Sullivan [mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 2:04 PM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

In a message dated 4/30/2003 12:25:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time, parks@parks.org writes:

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice,

To my way of seeing things, agriculture along with the domestication of animals (as practiced by most past and almost all present "civilized" cultures) was and is an effort to control and dominate nature as opposed to cooperating and living with it. This has led to our present Hell'uva dilemma.

I'm not saying that we should all go back to the stone ages, though that just might happen if we continue our present course. It appears to me that our current experiment in civilization is on the verge of failure. We need to rethink some of the original premises we have been saddled with and start exploring some new paths. It is time to stop marching behind the slogans of morality, fairness, ethics and justice as well as those of progress, peace, happiness and security, etc. More often than not we see these concepts manipulated and corrupted by members of our "civilization" in order to further their own personal gain often at the great expense of most others.

Sometimes a machine becomes too broken to fix no matter how much duct tape you have to slap on it. This is especially true when the mechanics didn't bother to read the instruction manual before they started tinkering in the first place. I think it's time to finally open up that manual (as many of the members on this list are trying to do) and replace our past and present ideas of what a civilization is and should be with some more enlightened ones. We need a new invention that provides reasonable security and happiness for ourselves and the future generations to come.

So yes, I think we should replace the list. The current list is useful for recognizing civilizations that are a threat to themselves and the environments they depend on for their own survival. It does this so well because it is based on the concepts and definitions created by the same flawed civilizations it seeks to identify.

What I want is a new list that shows how people can develop a sustainable culture that provides the true essentials for a meaningful livelihood for all its members. A list based on the realities of our strengths and weaknesses, not one based on the idealisms of how wonderful we humans think we are.

Tim

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 16:40:40 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051735795.inmta007.8574.1030502>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:96.3115 M:94.3661 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.0174)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <mlforester@rcn.com> forward (good recip)

Maurice,

You're not serious about the United Nations are you? Cuba was just elected to the UN Human Rights Commission. Saudi Arabia,

Egypt, Nigeria, and other countries with poor human rights records are also on the Commission. Yesterday, the Commission blocked the discussion of "alleged" human rights violations in Zimbabwe by racist Dictator Robert Mugabe. They also ended scrutiny of Sudan where the Arab Muslims in the north have slaughtered 2 million Christian blacks in southern Sudan in the last few decades. So I guess if you're a Muslim(Indonesia, Sudan, etc.) or Commie(North Korea, Cuba, China) mass murderer, you get a free pass.

The United States should withdraw from the UN; it is a totally useless organization whose main purpose is to feed its huge bureaucracy and provide cover for the Muslim and Commie mass murderers by promoting a politically correct agenda which does nothing to solve the world's problems.

Mike Leonard

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 3:10 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 17:21:08 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051737788.inmta002.16113.1066164>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parcs@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:96.3115 M:92.8678 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.1479)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parcs@parcs.org> forward (good recip)

Mike,

I am serious in my wish but not in my expectations. A great example of wishful thinking. The wish was certainly father to the thought.

You are right in the reality -- The existing Human Rights Commission is intellectually and politically corrupt.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 16:40:40 -0400

Maurice,

You're not serious about the United Nations are you? Cuba was just elected to the UN Human Rights Commission. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Nigeria, and other countries with poor human rights records are also on the Commission.

Yesterday, the Commission blocked the discussion of "alleged" human rights violations in Zimbabwe by racist Dictator Robert Mugabe. They also ended scrutiny of Sudan where the Arab Muslims in the north have slaughtered 2 million Christian blacks in southern Sudan in the last few decades. So I guess if you're a Muslim (Indonesia, Sudan, etc.) or Commie (North Korea, Cuba, China) mass murderer, you get a free pass.

The United States should withdraw from the UN; it is a totally useless organization whose main purpose is to feed its huge bureaucracy and provide cover for the Muslim and Commie mass murderers by promoting a politically correct agenda which does nothing to solve the world's problems.

Mike Leonard

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 3:10 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Robey,

The American Heritage Dictionary definition of civilized is very useful. No one definition will ever be universally acceptable.

I wish that the human rights group of the United Nations would fulfill its responsibilities for the pygmies and the many other peoples whose human rights are being trampled upon.

If ever you find a way to cook up pot of irony, please invite me to dinner.

Maurice

At 11:46 AM -0400 4/30/03, Robie Hubley wrote:

This is a good question: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization?" The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..."

Now, there's a hoot. Iraq has what is often hailed as the oldest civilization. Yikes!

Claude Levi-Straus, in *Tristes Tropiques*, his account of his observations on Amazon indigenous people, that all human societies are equally evolved. And if you want to read about a truly civilized society, by the standards of the American Heritage Dictionary, read Colin Turnbull's accounts of the Pygmies in his books *The Forest People* or *The Human Cycle*.

Last I heard, Pygmy culture was being destroyed by the chaos in the 'civilized' Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I just wish I could eat irony.

This is a good discussion. Thank you,

Robie

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At 10:11 AM 04/30/03 EDT, you wrote:

>>>>

Maurice,

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By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

Mike,

I am serious in my wish but not in my expectations. A great example of wishful thinking. The wish was certainly father to the thought.

You are right in the reality -- The existing Human Rights Commission is intellectually and politically corrupt.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 16:40:40 -0400

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<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 17:49:43 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051739399.inmta002.16113.1066997>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:98.6627 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:11.2916)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Lee,

I apologize for causing a misleading interpretation of my original remarks. I should have been explicit about my objectives. I was acting as historian, not analyst. Since I caused several reliable persons to misread me, I have to confess to being the problem.

Your logic is impeccable. I realize that the relationship is not correlation. But surely you would agree that all of the societies of the past that we recognize as civilized did great damage to their natural environments -- without exception. So with existing societies that we recognize as civilized. We are civilized. Sadly, we share with all past and present civilized societies the record of severe impacts to our natural environments. Moreover, as I said in another post, a society does not need to be civilized to degrade its natural environment.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as Colby Rucker was the first to note, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

When we contemplate the historical record, as did George Perkins Marsh, we cannot summarize that record better than did Bob with his Hell'uva dilemma. It's another love - hate relationship..

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

In fact, one could turn the argument completely around. Environmental degradation prevents high development or causes retrogression to a society that cannot be considered highly developed, and environmental degradation sure isn't conducive to intellectual advancement, and its not humane, ethical, or reasonable.

Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

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At 12:14 PM 4/30/03 -0400, you wrote:
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Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

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From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

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Tim

EASY UNSUBSCRIBE click here:
<http://topica.com/u/?a2iZlX.a5Z1Kh.cGFya3NA>
Or send an email to: ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: lef <lef@goldengate.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 18:19:09 -0500
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051746666.inmta002.16113.1071705>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: lef@pop.goldengate.net
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.7028 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:22.9144)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <lef@goldengate.net> forward (good recip)

Maurice:

No apology is really necessary. Following the logic of any situation is always fun, at least for scientists.

We can probably agree that if civilized societies continue to degrade their environment at some point they will slip into an uncivilized state.

Lee

At 04:49 PM 4/30/03, you wrote:

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Tim

>

From: Satya@aol.com
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 21:45:35 EDT
Subject: Re: Public Lands Committee
To: parks@parks.org
X-pstn-levels: (C:91.2567 M:97.5268 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
2.2026)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <Satya@aol.com>

In a message dated 4/30/2003 1:05:58 PM Eastern Daylight Time, parks@parks.org writes:

Louis,

I understand that you have dropped my name from the list of members of the Public Lands Committee to whom you send copies of messages about PLC matters.

Hi Herb,

I did not, and would not want to drop your name from the list. The list I set up is the Yahoo Group called MDPublicLand. I left it up to people to join or subscribe to this on their own with the instructions I emailed out.

See below. If you don't sign up yourself, I will subscribe you tomorrow. However I like to let people join themselves so you can set up and manage your own Yahoo account and numerous options.

To join, go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MDPublicLand/>

Group Email Addresses

Post message: MDPublicLand@yahoogroups.com

Subscribe: MDPublicLand-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Unsubscribe: MDPublicLand-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

I see that you just changed your email address from
parks@his.com
to

parks@parks.org

Which should we use?

So far only 5 people have joined the Yahoo group. Joan keeps a manual list of everyone to send emails out to. She should still have you.

Louis

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Don Bertollette <dbertollette@unneedspeed.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 21:35:54 -0700

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1051763800.inmta006.29928.1122714>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>

List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>

X-Priority: 3

X-pstn-levels: (C:93.8525 M:99.4056 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:37.6411)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertollette@unneedspeed.net> forward
(good recip)

Colby-

Back to the original question...in the history of man, can you name one civilization that didn't fall as a result of their consumption of available natural resources? And a follow-up question. Is there any reason to believe that our civilization is any different? While it may sound like I'm being purposely fatalistic, I am more about finding reason for optimism.

-Don

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:colby@toad.net>Colby Rucker

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 7:42 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining. Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised, and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology; they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

maurice

-----Original message-----
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Eñuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of

the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of

environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertolette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of

ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know

nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes sy little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not , will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Don Bertolette <dbertolette@unedspeed.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 21:38:28 -0700
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1051763916.inmta007.8573.1083909>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:98.0298 M:96.2853 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.3296)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertolette@uneedspeed.net> forward
(good recip)

Robie-

If anyone can verify an earlier claim from this listserve that Iraq still has old-growth ecosystems intact in it's mountains, I'll agree that Iraq is an exception to the rule.

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:rhubley@crocker.com>>Robie Hubley
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 8:46 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

This is a good question: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization?" The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..."

Now, there's a hoot. Iraq has what is often hailed as the oldest civilization. Yikes!

Claude Levi-Straus, in *Tristes Tropiques*, his account of his observations on Amazon indigenous people, that all human societies are equally evolved. And if you want to read about a truly civilized society, by the standards of the American Heritage Dictionary, read Colin Turnbull's accounts of the Pygmies in his books *The Forest People* or *The Human Cycle*.

Last I heard, Pygmy culture was being destroyed by the chaos in the 'civilized' Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I just wish I could eat irony.

This is a good discussion. Thank you,

Robie

=====
=====

At 10:11 AM 04/30/03 EDT, you wrote:

>>>>

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Don Bertolette <dbertolette@uneedspeed.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 21:58:59 -0700
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051765144.inmta007.8573.1084714>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.8514 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:15.6335)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertolette@unneedspeed.net> forward
(good recip)

Lee-
And ultimately that uncivilized state fails, by definition?
-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:lef@goldengate.net>>lef
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 4:19 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Maurice:

No apology is really necessary. Following the logic of any situation is always fun, at least for scientists.

We can probably agree that if civilized societies continue to degrade their environment at some point they will slip into an uncivilized state.

Lee

At 04:49 PM 4/30/03, you wrote:

Lee,

I apologize for causing a misleading interpretation of my original remarks. I should have been explicit about my objectives. I was acting as historian, not analyst. Since I caused several reliable persons to misread me, I have to confess to being the problem.

Your logic is impeccable. I realize that the relationship is not correlation. But surely you would agree that all of the societies of the past that we recognize as civilized did great damage to their natural environments -- without exception. So with existing societies that we recognize as civilized. We are civilized. Sadly, we share with all past and present civilized societies the record of severe impacts to our natural environments. Moreover, as I said in another post, a society does not need to be civilized to degrade its natural environment.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as Colby Rucker was the first to note, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

When we contemplate the historical record, as did George Perkins Marsh, we cannot summarize that record better than did Bob with his Hell'uva dilemma. It's another love - hate relationship..

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

In fact, one could turn the argument completely around. Environmental degradation prevents high development or causes retrogression to a society that cannot be considered highly

developed, and environmental degradation sure isn't conducive to intellectual advancement, and its not humane, ethical, or reasonable.

Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

Lee

At 12:14 PM 4/30/03 -0400, you wrote:

Tim,

Thanks for your questions and comments.. The kinships between civilization and environmental degradation merit lots of further consideration.

1. You asked: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized?"

No substantial concept (or maybe no non-mathematical concept whatsoever) fulfills all of the criteria that all scholars and lay people will attribute to it. Try the criteria for Democracy. So a people need not fulfill all of the meaningful criteria for a concept about them to be appropriate. With respect to your special case, it could well be that a group of people who did not make the switch could be considered a civilization. A cultural group that displayed all the other attributes could be considered civilized. I would bet, however, that if they displayed all the other attributes there is no way that they would not have switched from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing. Great mutualities exist among the criteria.

2. You wrote: "Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved"

their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?"

No morality, fairness, ethics, or justice fit the line of thinking that is used as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. The misuse of concepts does not make them false or inappropriate, however.. Consider how tyrants misuse the concept "Peoples Democracy."

3. You charge "By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized".

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I

have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

Tim

>

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 02:49:09 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051771757.inmta002.16113.1087497>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:57.1911 M:96.0111 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:21.8512)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <colby@toad.net> forward (good recip)

Don,

The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics regarding the definition of civilization, society, culture, etc., and the "original question" seems to be equally unfortunate. Asking for a civilization that didn't fall as the result of the consumption of natural resources creates a presumption that such consumption has been held to account for the fall of numerous societies, but I fail to recall that Gibbons or others put much weight on that factor. While the growth of a society creates an increased demand for resources, the success of many societies has been measured by their ability to obtain resources through organization, improved

land routes, control of maritime commerce, control of satellite societies, advantageous conquest, and so forth.

While the maintenance and expansion of a society may place great stress on natural resources, such as the removal of the English forests to build great fleets, I do not see any reliable correlation between the collapse of a society and their consumption of natural resources. The collapse of societies in the Americas appears to stem from drought, conquest, epidemics and other factors as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome.

I think the original question makes wholesale assumptions that unfairly color the discussion. The initial negativity also creates a fatalistic atmosphere, which is unfortunate. While the scope of our society does raise serious concerns, a certain optimism is essential to find new solutions. Therefore, I would ask, can you name civilizations that fell due to consumption of natural resources, and are those examples, if any, relevant to our situation?

I have doubts about the validity of the subject matter, but I applaud your interest in "finding reasons for optimism." Perhaps we need to remember that our greatest enemy is "fear itself" and move on.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>Don Bertolette
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 12:35 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Colby-

Back to the original question...in the history of man, can you name one civilization that didn't fall as a result of their consumption of available natural resources? And a follow-up question. Is there any reason to believe that our civilization is any different? While it may sound like I'm being purposely fatalistic, I am more about finding reason for optimism.

-Don

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:colby@toad.net>Colby Rucker

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 7:42 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining. Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised, and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology; they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Eñuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

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Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was

devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

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----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in

both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney
<gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial

use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over

because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes sy little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not , will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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Any views expressed in this message are those of the individual sender, except where the sender specifies and with authority, states them to be the views of Sisters of Providence Health System.

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 04:34:07 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051778061.inmta007.8573.1092748>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3

X-pstn-levels: (C:87.1744 M:95.9241 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:3.3826)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good recip)

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 10:32 AM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Maurice, Joe, Gary, Don, et. al:

The extreme technological sophistication and education needed to maintain our vast urban infrastructures suggests that primitive cultures had little to offer. From a modern-day perspective, I suppose that is true . except that now humanity is over-populating and extirpating species at an unprecedented pace. It is not apparent where all our technology, art, and comfortable living is going to lead us. I for one really donât want to give up Beethoven, baseball, digital cameras, laser rangefinders, e-mail, hot showers, and a good transportation system. Nor do I want to see us continue in the direction weâre going. Hellâuva dilemma.

Bob

Aye, there's the rub! We can't very well go back to the Paleolithic. But, it's the fact that everyone wanting stuff that drives the machinery of destruction. Thoreau's solution was to personally live a very frugal lifestyle and thus not be part of the problem. I seriously believe Thoreau, if he had been a choice, would have given up all those things you don't want to give up. I don't think many of us are willing to live in a tiny shack- I certainly don't as I

spent a decade living in a shack apartment no bigger than his cabin and I don't care to go back.

But we're all going to have to decide to give up some of these modern "needs". Of course if just a few folks take a volunteer step backwards- that won't solve the problem, but it will earn you a lot of good karma points.

The reason a lot of us got into forestry was because we didn't want the fancy American lifestyle- and some of us have succeeded in this renunciation, thanks to the help of the forestry establishment.
<G>

Joe

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 04:42:35 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051778599.inmta004.27649.1087263>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:86.4719 M:98.3376 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.9622)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good recip)

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:colby@toad.net>Colby Rucker

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 10:42 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining.

Well, you mean the infamous "Paleolithic megafauna destruction"?? Yuh, but that happened over thousands of years and it's not yet proven that those species would have survived if there were no humans. It was certainly not done intentionally. The Paleolithic lasted hundreds of thousands of years with very little effect on the environment by humans. There were of course very few humans- but I see nothing wrong with that. Perhaps that's the natural carrying capacity of the human race in such a way as to avoid massive destruction- keep the numbers down.

Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

Supposedly we're a highly advanced civilization and our protection of natural resources is abysmal. I see little hope of any improvement; especially with the calibre of politicians we now have.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised,

Well, primitives once inhabited the finest parts of the world too- it must have been nice- like in California for example- a wonderful climate, abundant food and not many people- paradise on Earth.

and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Yuh, but perhaps it's nothing but a myth that such a thing can happen. Witness the current incredible resistance by the forestry establishment in America to any serious progress. That establishment has no "cultural advancement". Of course I've called for greatly increasing the education of forestry people to put them up with doctors and lawyers- but I've found no followers of that idea.

Colby

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 04:54:10 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051779270.inmta006.29928.1136132>
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List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
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1.3156)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) Pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good
recip)

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:parks@parks.org>>Maurice Schwartz
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 1:12 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Joe,

Much as I share many of your views, I do not share your affection
for life in the old stone age. As Bob put it, it's a Hell'uva dilemma.

Maurice

The real question though is do the naked apes have a right to do
to the Earth what they've done? I think not- and therefore the
conclusion is that the stone age is good enough for these
egomaniacal naked apes. What have we really gained?

In one book on cultural anthropology I have- the author indicates
that in the old stone age, life was easy- typically the equivalent of
a day's work per week would suffice to get the food they need.
They lived outdoors since there was no indoors- a healthy life-
clean air, clean water, clean food, no taxes, no military- very little
infectious disease. A good deal of time was spent telling stories,

and at night dancing around the fire. When hunting, I seriously doubt that it was considered work. It was their bliss!

So they had no science or history and little knowledge about other folks a few hundred miles away. All of this knowledge hasn't done us much good. It may be exciting- nobody loves to read more than I do, but I can't say it's done me much good either.

I can't prove it, but I'd bet that the vast majority of people in the old stone age were a lot happier than most people today.

And, I've seen the near infinite resistance to progressive thinking regarding natural resources- in particular in the forestry field. At least in the old stone age, the potential for doing damage to the Earth was minimal.

Any way you look at it- leaving the old stone age was indeed the biblical fall of man.

Joe

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 05:48:06 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051782775.inmta006.29928.1138869>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:96.3115 M:93.9172 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.0423)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <mlforester@rcn.com> forward (good recip)

Maurice,

The UN Environmental policies are also bankrupt. The Kyoto Acoords, which would have forced a big reduction in greenhouse gases, would have killed our economy, while India and China would have no limits! So I guess their solution is to move what's left of our industry overseas!

Global Warming is a fact, but there are better ways to reduce our fossil fuel use such as with an oil import fee, which would spur the development of biomass, wind, nuclear, etc. Unfortunately, President Bush's energy policy is to simply drill in the Arctic.

Mike L.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 5:21 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Mike,

I am serious in my wish but not in my expectations. A great example of wishful thinking. The wish was certainly father to the thought.

You are right in the reality -- The existing Human Rights Commission is intellectually and politically corrupt.

Maurice

-----Origianl message-----

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 16:40:40 -0400

Maurice,

You're not serious about the United Nations are you? Cuba was just elected to the UN Human Rights Commission. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Nigeria, and other countries with poor human rights records are also on the Commission.

Yesterday, the Commission blocked the discussion of "alleged" human rights violations in Zimbabwe by racist Dictator Robert

Mugabe. They also ended scrutiny of Sudan where the Arab Muslims in the north have slaughtered 2 million Christian blacks in southern Sudan in the last few decades. So I guess if you're a Muslim(Indonesia, Sudan, etc.) or Commie(North Korea, Cuba, China) mass murderer, you get a free pass.

The United States should withdraw from the UN; it is a totally useless organization whose main purpose is to feed its huge bureaucracy and provide cover for the Muslim and Commie mass murderers by promoting a politically correct agenda which does nothing to solve the world's problems.

Mike Leonard

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 3:10 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Robey,

The American Heritage Dictionary definition of civilized is very useful. No one definition will ever be universally acceptable.

I wish that the human rights group of the United Nations would fulfill its responsibilities for the pygmies and the many other peoples whose human rights are being trampled upon.

If ever you find a way to cook up pot of irony, please invite me to dinner.

Maurice

At 11:46 AM -0400 4/30/03, Robie Hubley wrote:

This is a good question: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization?" The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..."

Now, there's a hoot. Iraq has what is often hailed as the oldest civilization. Yikes!

Claude Levi-Straus, in *Tristes Tropiques*, his account of his observations on Amazon indigenous people, that all human societies are equally evolved. And if you want to read about a truly civilized society, by the standards of the American Heritage Dictionary, read Colin Turnbull's accounts of the Pygmies in his books *The Forest People* or *The Human Cycle*.

Last I heard, Pygmy culture was being destroyed by the chaos in the 'civilized' Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I just wish I could eat irony.

This is a good discussion. Thank you,

Robie

=====
=====

At 10:11 AM 04/30/03 EDT, you wrote:

>>>>

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 06:02:30 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051783368.inmta004.27649.1089885>

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List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
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0.2683)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good
recip)

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:mlforester@rcn.com>>Mike Leonard
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 5:48 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Maurice,

The UN Environmental policies are also bankrupt. The Kyoto Acoords, which would have forced a big reduction in greenhouse gases, would have killed our economy, while India and China would have no limits!

I wasn't aware of that. Perhaps the solution is to put those 2 countries under the same rules! Why did they get that exemption? Is the exemption temporary or permanent?

So I guess their solution is to move what's left of our industry overseas!
Global Warming is a fact, but there are better ways to reduce our fossil fuel use such as with an oil import fee, which would spur the development of biomass, wind, nuclear, etc. Unfortunately, President Bush's energy policy is to simply drill in the Arctic.

Mike L.

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robert Leverett <dbhguru@attbi.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 07:21:03 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051790342.inmta006.29928.1144981>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:96.3115 M:93.9172 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.2005)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbhguru@attbi.com> forward (good recip)

Mike:

I don't think Bush ever saw a resource he didn't want to exploit. I suspect that one of Bush's underlying motivations is control. He wants to insure corporate control over resources, which fits with his education.

Bob

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:mlforester@rcn.com>>Mike Leonard
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Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 16:40:40 -0400

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To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 3:10 PM

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Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: Rapping resources
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 08:30:13 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051792219.inmta004.27649.1095233>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 01 May 2003 12:30:13.0518 (UTC)
FILETIME=[69E302E0:01C30FDD]
Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment.
Thread-Index:
AcMPsZVH8naOs51mTIC8BKYmdOdZwQAKDwzg
X-pstn-levels: (C:51.8443 M:97.7432 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.9235)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good recip)

Colby:

I'm forced to concede that you make many telling points. In terms of historical precedent, climate change and deforestation may have reduced otherwise locally powerful societies in the middle east, America, and elsewhere, but stronger societies have always been able to draw from more distant resources, as you suggest. Great Britain is an example we all recognize as a geographically small country that in its hay-day successfully drew resources from the distant parts of the globe to create an empire. But Great Britain is still with us – not so globally dominate, but no lightweight either. So falls by past dynasties from power into obscurity based on resource exhaustion was probably weighted toward primitive societies that had no infrastructures to use to draw distant resources. Rich and powerful societies often fell through military conquest. They got too big for their britches. But in general, civilized societies have maintained a survivability born of their advanced states rather than the opposite, which I think is a central point of yours.

How survivable we'll be in the future, as we push the limits of the planet to absorb our numbers and our toxins, remains to be seen. Nobody can deny that other speices are taking a devastaing hit and to the degree we value those species, discussions such as these can be gloomy, but it doesn't all portend the demise of humanity. Maintaining optimism is the healthier option and I'm glad you point that out.

In our real or pseudo-real global economy, cultural rise and fall may take very different routes than just exhaustion of local resources. Japan illustrates how an incredibly productive populous can more than offset lack of natural resources. So, yes, it is a complicated mix.

For those who blink at our entertaining of subjects other than big trees and forestry, well, that's who we are. Now where is my Bach CD? Time to debug some medical software to the rhythm of Bach's intimitable orchestral suites.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Colby Rucker [mailto:colby@toad.net]

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 2:49 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics regarding the definition of civilization, society, culture, etc., and the "original question" seems to be equally unfortunate. Asking for a civilization that didn't fall as the result of the consumption of natural resources creates a presumption that such consumption has been held to account for the fall of numerous societies, but I fail to recall that Gibbons or others put much weight on that factor. While the growth of a society creates an increased demand for resources, the success of many societies has been measured by their ability to obtain resources through organization, improved land routes, control of maritime commerce, control of satellite societies, advantageous conquest, and so forth.

While the maintenance and expansion of a society may place great stress on natural resources, such as the removal of the English forests to build great fleets, I do not see any reliable correlation between the collapse of a society and their consumption of natural resources. The collapse of societies in the Americas appears to stem from drought, conquest, epidemics and other factors as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome.

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 08:44:26 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051793105.inmta007.8573.1101546>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:51.8443 M:97.3254 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:1.8750)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr

X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Tim,

Subject to your "on the verge" being on the time scale of history, not immediately current "on the verge," I agree with your thought that "It appears to me that our current experiment in civilization is on the verge of failure."

Until I see solid bases for optimism, I consider optimism to be either an innate personal characteristic or what i have heard called "denial."

To challenge optimism about the natural environment and natural resources does not mean that we give up the effort to do better. Hardly that.

Until I am presented with better evidence, I share Lee's summation: "We can probably agree that if civilized societies continue to degrade their environment at some point they will slip into an uncivilized state.."

I must confess that I do not have the slightest idea about fulfilling your quest for a new civilization.

What is your response to Colby's sweeping statement? I quote it below.

Maurice

=====

-----Colby's message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 02:49:09 -0400

Don,

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for a civilization that didn't fall as the result of the consumption of natural resources creates a presumption that such consumption has been held to account for the fall of numerous societies, but I fail to recall that Gibbons or others put much weight on that factor. While the growth of a society creates an increased demand for resources, the success of many societies has been measured by their ability to obtain resources through organization, improved land routes, control of maritime commerce, control of satellite societies, advantageous conquest, and so forth.

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I think the original question makes wholesale assumptions that unfairly color the discussion. The initial negativity also creates a fatalistic atmosphere, which is unfortunate. While the scope of our society does raise serious concerns, a certain optimism is essential to find new solutions. Therefore, I would ask, can you name civilizations that fell due to consumption of natural resources, and are those examples, if any, relevant to our situation?

I have doubts about the validity of the subject matter, but I applaud your interest in "finding reasons for optimism." Perhaps we need to remember that our greatest enemy is "fear itself" and move on.

Colby

=====

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 14:04:00 EDT

In a message dated 4/30/2003 12:25:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time, parks@parks.org writes:

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice,

To my way of seeing things, agriculture along with the domestication of animals (as practiced by most past and almost all present "civilized" cultures) was and is an effort to control and dominate nature as opposed to cooperating and living with it. This has led to our present Hell'uva dilemma.

I'm not saying that we should all go back to the stone ages, though that just might happen if we continue our present course. It appears to me that our current experiment in civilization is on the verge of failure. We need to rethink some of the original premises we have been saddled with and start exploring some new paths. It is time to stop marching behind the slogans of morality, fairness, ethics and justice as well as those of progress, peace, happiness and security, etc. More often than not we see these concepts manipulated and corrupted by members of our "civilization" in order to further their own personal gain often at the great expense of most others.

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So yes, I think we should replace the list. The current list is useful for recognizing civilizations that are a threat to themselves and the environments they depend on for their own survival. It does

this so well because it is based on the concepts and definitions created by the same flawed civilizations it seeks to identify.

What I want is a new list that shows how people can develop a sustainable culture that provides the true essentials for a meaningful livelihood for all its members. A list based on the realities of our strengths and weaknesses, not one based on the idealisms of how wonderful we humans think we are.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

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Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 02:49:09 -0400

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=====

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 14:04:00 EDT

In a message dated 4/30/2003 12:25:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time, parks@parks.org writes:

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Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 10:36:19 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051799782.inmta006.29928.1154294>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.6475 M:96.8499 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:38.8860)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Bob,

I certainly agree with your "The ultimate problem lies not so much with the by-products of our civilization, as environmentally damaging as they may be, but with the very nature of our species." Issues of the natural environment and natural resources are immediate, not ultimate.

I regret that I must also agree with your "It will happen.." ("The only reason that primitives didn't extirpate more of the planet's plant and animal life is that they had limited means to do so. But dynamite in the hands of a nut can wreck more havoc than a sword or spear and with nuclear weapons proliferation, terrorists will acquire and use nuclear devices that at least spread radioactive material. It will happen.")

As I wrote earlier this morning to Tim, Until I see solid bases for optimism, I consider optimism to be either an innate personal characteristic or what I have heard called "denial." To challenge optimism about the natural environment and natural resources does not mean that we give up the effort to do better. Hardly that.

But what to do? Once again, Hell'uva dilemma.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 16:07:08 -0400

Tim, Maurice, et. al:

The ultimate problem lies not so much with the by-products of our civilization, as environmentally damaging as they may be, but with the very nature of our species. We create art of exquisite beauty while allowing despots like Nero, Atilla the Hun, Genghis Khan, Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Paul Pot, and Saddam Hussein to call the shots for hundreds of thousands to millions of us and now billions. We create engineering marvels and then summarily turn control of them over to the very worst of us. We are a Jekyll and Hyde species simultaneously capable of great good and horrendous destruction. The problem is that with or modern technology and oppressive numbers our collective actions just aren't balancing out. It is not a zero sum game and in one of our Jekyll swings we may literally obliterate life on the planet. We almost did in the 1960s.

Fine philosophies that appeal to gentle, responsible souls roll off the backs of the aggressive and ambitious. It is difficult to see how we're going to work ourselves out of the exponentially growing mess that we've created. But bad as it is, the current state of affairs doesn't mean that we've grown worse as a species. We may have gotten better. The only reason that primitives didn't extirpate more of the planet's plant and animal life is that they had limited means to do so. But dynamite in the hands of a nut can wreck more havoc than a sword or spear and with nuclear weapons proliferation, terrorists will acquire and use nuclear devices that at least spread radioactive material. It will happen.

Basically, I'd like to think that our good side still has a chance, albeit a dwindling one. During the zero population movement of the 60s and 70s and the rise of environmentalism, I had begun to think America was developing a real soul, an honest Earth-consciousness. But now as half of us battle to preserve the remaining wildlands, the other half seeks to reduce them to a pittance with modern machinery that actually moves mountains. Nobility and stupidity are seen to march side by side. Where the heck is that going to take us?

I need to go back to the forests of the Smokies. But how would I get there? Yes, in a gasoline drinking, environmentally polluting machine. Yikes! Sorry to sound so negative.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: TJ Sullivan [mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 2:04 PM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

In a message dated 4/30/2003 12:25:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time, parks@parks.org writes:

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Tim

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

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From: TJ Sullivan [mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 2:04 PM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 10:48:54 EDT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051800563.inmta002.16113.1104683>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:96.4339 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:7.7992)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
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Maurice,

Yes, my "on the verge" referred to a historical time scale. But I truly believe the choices we are making in this decade will directly

and heavily influence the success or failure of our experiment in civilization.

I have been chewing on Colby's statement this morning. I think on the surface it is an accurate one. I can think of no technologically advanced civilization that has fallen directly because of over consumption. But then again no tree has ever died directly as the result of acid rain.

So far, successful civilizations faced with a lack of resources have managed to obtain new resources, often through coercion or outright theft from those less capable of protecting or exploiting their own. But when these quests for more resources lead to the wars and corruption that ultimately result in a civilizations demise can't we extrapolate that the lack of resources (or at least the perceived lack) was a significant causative factor in their demise?

Our definition of civilization seems to more readily recognize those who's economies are based on growth. Probably because the cultures that did not grow were absorbed by those that grew into empires. But every one of those mega empires eventually collapsed of its own weight.

Recent history has seen a period of relative peace that has allowed several collapsed empires (such as the UK, Japan and Germany) to survive and even thrive to a certain extent. But I think this has been more due to the threat of nuclear war that any empire bent on military expansion would have to contend with than to any enlightened evolution of our species.

We here in the US have found a way around the nuclear threat by waging an economic war of conquest. We now enjoy the largest empire in recorded history, dominating the entire globe to at least some degree. But to do that we have coerced and manipulated millions if not billions of people out of their own natural resources in an attempt to keep up with our insatiable appetite. Now we are fat and overripe. Eventually it will be our turn to fall. And as long as we keep acting solely for our own profit at the expense of others it will be the "less civilized" nations and peoples we are presently exploiting that will be the direct cause of our demise. And they are quite likely to use the same nuclear weapons that have maintained this false peace for the last 50 years. Then history will say we fell to the "barbarians" just as the Roman empire did, thus

once again ignoring the factor of human greed (which I believe is largely based on our fear and insecurities) and the over consumption it inevitably creates.

That is of course if nature doesn't get tired of us ignoring all her warnings and decides to take care of us first.

But despite all this I am still very optimistic, believe it or not. If I was a pessimist I would have given up and moved to a shack in the mountains long ago. We humans have developed the ability to think, reason and recognize our place in the natural order. Why else have we done this if not to enable us to rise above our primal instincts and define our own place in the natural balance instead of relying on nature's tried and true boom/bust cycle to keep us in check?

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 10:53:13 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051800804.inmta004.27650.1052045>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.5542 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:8.1033)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Lee,

I regret that I must agree with your "We can probably agree that if civilized societies continue to degrade their environment at some point they will slip into an uncivilized state.

I would take your summary statement one notch further -- I am convinced that the evidence is in favor of the inevitability of that slippage. Bob put it well when he wrote: "Fine philosophies that appeal to gentle, responsible souls roll off the backs of the aggressive and ambitious. It is difficult to see how we're going to work ourselves out of the exponentially growing mess that we've created."

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: lef <lef@goldengate.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 18:19:09 -0500

Maurice:

No apology is really necessary. Following the logic of any situation is always fun, at least for scientists.

We can probably agree that if civilized societies continue to degrade their environment at some point they will slip into an uncivilized state.

Lee

At 04:49 PM 4/30/03, you wrote:

Lee,

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Your logic is impeccable. I realize that the relationship is not correlation. But surely you would agree that all of the societies of the past that we recognize as civilized did great damage to their natural environments -- without exception. So with existing societies that we recognize as civilized. We are civilized. Sadly, we share with all past and present civilized societies the record of

severe impacts to our natural environments. Moreover, as I said in another post, a society does not need to be civilized to degrade its natural environment.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as Colby Rucker was the first to note, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

When we contemplate the historical record, as did George Perkins Marsh, we cannot summarize that record better than did Bob with his Hell'uva dilemma. It's another love - hate relationship..

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

In fact, one could turn the argument completely around. Environmental degradation prevents high development or causes retrogression to a society that cannot be considered highly developed, and environmental degradation sure isn't conducive to intellectual advancement, and its not humane, ethical, or reasonable.

Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there

is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

Lee

At 12:14 PM 4/30/03 -0400, you wrote:

Tim,

Thanks for your questions and comments.. The kinships between civilization and environmental degradation merit lots of further consideration.

1. You asked: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized?"

No substantial concept (or maybe no non-mathematical concept whatsoever) fulfills all of the criteria that all scholars and lay people will attribute to it. Try the criteria for Democracy. So a people need not fulfill all of the meaningful criteria for a concept about them to be appropriate. With respect to your special case, it could well be that a group of people who did not make the switch could be considered a civilization. A cultural group that displayed all the other attributes could be considered civilized. I would bet, however, that if they displayed all the other attributes there is no way that they would not have switched from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing. Great mutualities exist among the criteria.

2. You wrote: "Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?"

No morality, fairness, ethics, or justice fit the line of thinking that is used as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. The misuse of concepts does not make them false or inappropriate,

however.. Consider how tyrants misuse the concept "Peoples Democracy."

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Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

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Tim

>

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

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From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

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Tim

>

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 01 May 2003 12:33:04 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051808751.inmta004.27649.1105579>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.5542 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:78.4142)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr

X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

I believe that it is reasonable to argue that "a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long", and "...the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be."

However, I don't see anything that convinces me that the human species, as a whole, is acting any more rationally than any other species. Rather, the human species appears to be another evolutionary experiment, and the eventual outcome seems as inscrutable now, a priori, as evolution has always been. It seems to me that natural selection is a process that has effectively dealt as well as possible with an insurmountably unsure future; it has always been that way and there are no signs that it has or will change. Evolution by natural selection is essentially a truism: what succeeds is what succeeds, or continues, or survives--all of these words mean the same thing. Misconstructions of evolution, such as Social Darwinism, result from the unwarranted assumption that, for example, you win by beating the other guy, when lichens have been successful for a very long time by two organisms coexisting, not by rationally working together, but because each blindly provides benefits to the other.

All this being as it is, it seems to me that there is no apparent compulsion for us to be tearing each other and ourselves to pieces. There is at least as much chance that we might succeed by cooperating and helping each other. Many of the differences that we kill each other over, such as race and religion, seem to me to be chimera, and I believe our wars, in the present state of growth of the world human population and the accompanying press against natural resources, seem to be an unnecessary rush toward extinction. Extinction is inevitable, but it seems unnecessary for us to make it so miserable instead of making our existence as pleasant as possible, and it seems stupid to rush extinction since we could have lots of fun while we remain, and we'll be a long time gone.

Besides all that, there's my grand-children.

Robie

=====
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At 05:49 PM 04/30/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>

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Maurice

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

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Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

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Tim

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: windbear@juno.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 16:34:40 GMT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051806932.inmta007.8573.1110457>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Originating-IP: [207.198.18.10]
X-Original-From: windbear@juno.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:51.8443 M:96.4339 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:2.3197)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <windbear@juno.com> forward (good recip)

"Fine philosophies that appeal to gentle, responsible souls roll off the backs of the aggressive and ambitious. It is difficult to see how we're going to work ourselves out of the exponentially growing mess that we've created."

I suggest one person at a time. After a time, "morphic resonance" will kick in and the "agressive and Ambitious" will find themselves suddenly uncomfortable. But if we say it can't be done, it never will be.
Dennis

The best thing to hit the internet in years - Juno SpeedBand!
Surf the web up to FIVE TIMES FASTER!
Only \$14.95/ month - visit www.juno.com to sign up today!

EASY UNSUBSCRIBE click here:
<http://topica.com/u/?a2iZlX.a5Z1Kh.cGFya3NA>
Or send an email to: ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 01 May 2003 12:43:07 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051808754.inmta006.29928.1162963>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:98.0298 M:94.5022 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:39.5869)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

I don't think old-growth ecosystems are evidence of an ethical and humane culture where people are repressed and hideously tortured, and resources, such as the oil fields and the Tigris/Euphrates swamps, are damaged or destroyed with a Devil-may-care attitude.

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At 09:38 PM 04/30/03 -0700, you wrote:

>>>>

Robie-

If anyone can verify an earlier claim from this listserve that Iraq still has old-growth ecosystems intact in it's mountains, I'll agree that Iraq is an exception to the rule.

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:rhuble@crocker.com>Robie Huble

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 8:46 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

This is a good question: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization?" The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..."

Now, there's a hoot. Iraq has what is often hailed as the oldest civilization. Yikes!

Claude Levi-Straus, in *Tristes Tropiques*, his account of his observations on Amazon indigenous people, that all human societies are equally evolved. And if you want to read about a truly civilized society, by the standards of the American Heritage Dictionary, read Colin Turnbull's accounts of the Pygmies in his books *The Forest People* or *The Human Cycle*.

Last I heard, Pygmy culture was being destroyed by the chaos in the 'civilized' Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I just wish I could eat irony.

This is a good discussion. Thank you,

Robie

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At 10:11 AM 04/30/03 EDT, you wrote:

>>>>

Maurice,

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From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 01 May 2003 12:44:09 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051808758.inmta002.16114.1050211>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.5542 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:72.0952)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

Wish t'were so, but there seems to be no such logic. Chance seems rife.

=====
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At 09:58 PM 04/30/03 -0700, you wrote:

>>>>

Lee-

And ultimately that uncivilized state fails, by definition?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 4:19 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Maurice:

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Lee,

I apologize for causing a misleading interpretation of my original remarks. I should have been explicit about my objectives. I was acting as historian, not analyst. Since I caused several reliable persons to misread me, I have to confess to being the problem.

Your logic is impeccable. I realize that the relationship is not correlation. But surely you would agree that all of the societies of the past that we recognize as civilized did great damage to their natural environments -- without exception. So with existing societies that we recognize as civilized. We are civilized. Sadly, we share with all past and present civilized societies the record of severe impacts to our natural environments. Moreover, as I said

in another post, a society does not need to be civilized to degrade its natural environment.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as Colby Rucker was the first to note, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

When we contemplate the historical record, as did George Perkins Marsh, we cannot summarize that record better than did Bob with his Hell'uva dilemma. It's another love - hate relationship..

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

In fact, one could turn the argument completely around. Environmental degradation prevents high development or causes retrogression to a society that cannot be considered highly developed, and environmental degradation sure isn't conducive to intellectual advancement, and its not humane, ethical, or reasonable.

Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there

is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

Lee

At 12:14 PM 4/30/03 -0400, you wrote:

Tim,

Thanks for your questions and comments.. The kinships between civilization and environmental degradation merit lots of further consideration.

1. You asked: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized?"

No substantial concept (or maybe no non-mathematical concept whatsoever) fulfills all of the criteria that all scholars and lay people will attribute to it. Try the criteria for Democracy. So a people need not fulfill all of the meaningful criteria for a concept about them to be appropriate. With respect to your special case, it could well be that a group of people who did not make the switch could be considered a civilization. A cultural group that displayed all the other attributes could be considered civilized. I would bet, however, that if they displayed all the other attributes there is no way that they would not have switched from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing. Great mutualities exist among the criteria.

2. You wrote: "Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?"

No morality, fairness, ethics, or justice fit the line of thinking that is used as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. The misuse of concepts does not make them false or inappropriate, however.. Consider how tyrants misuse the concept "Peoples Democracy."

3. You charge "By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized".

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

Tim

>

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 01 May 2003 12:52:37 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051808760.inmta006.29928.1162968>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:86.0574 M:94.8282 P: 0.0000 R:95.9108
S:57.1327)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) Pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good
recip)

What does it mean to ask "do the naked apes have a right to do to the Earth what they've done?" What are 'rights', and who grants or enforces them? The question is much like asking: Did Tyrannosaurus have the 'right' to tear all those poor little herbivores to pieces just to fill its grotesque appetite?

Seems to me that the only sensible discussion of 'rights' has to do with social conventions by normative agreements within human societies.

=====
=====

At 04:54 AM 05/01/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:parks@parks.org>>Maurice Schwartz
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 1:12 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Joe,

Much as I share many of your views, I do not share your affection for life in the old stone age. As Bob put it, it's a Hell'uva dilemma.

Maurice

The real question though is do the naked apes have a right to do to the Earth what they've done? I think not- and therefore the conclusion is that the stone age is good enough for these egomaniacal naked apes. What have we really gained?

In one book on cultural anthropology I have- the author indicates that in the old stone age, life was easy- typically the equivalent of a day's work per week would suffice to get the food they need. They lived outdoors since there was no indoors- a healthy life- clean air, clean water, clean food, no taxes, no military- very little infectious disease. A good deal of time was spent telling stories, and at night dancing around the fire. When hunting, I seriously doubt that it was considered work. It was their bliss!

So they had no science or history and little knowledge about other folks a few hundred miles away. All of this knowledge hasn't done us much good. It may be exciting- nobody loves to read more than I do, but I can't say it's done me much good either.

I can't prove it, but I'd bet that the vast majority of people in the old stone age were a lot happier than most people today.

And, I've seen the near infinite resistance to progressive thinking regarding natural resources- in particular in the forestry field. At least in the old stone age, the potential for doing damage to the Earth was minimal.

Any way you look at it- leaving the old stone age was indeed the biblical fall of man.

Joe

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 14:35:08 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051814139.inmta002.16113.1113755>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 01 May 2003 18:35:08.0439 (UTC)
FILETIME=[6446D270:01C31010]
Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment.
Thread-Index: AcMQBsrL4rvGji1DQDCv3uy+4OMoCQAAvhGg
X-pstn-levels: (C:51.8443 M:94.3536 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:53.7740)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good recip)

Dennis:

I'm open to the possibility of "morphic resonance", but even with such forces at our disposal, we've got one heck of an uphill struggle. So, we'd all better get to resonating, because aggressive, greedy behavior is rewarded in our society far too much and its perpetrators are often admired by people that you'd think would know better. I think it all goes back to our dual nature, though misinterpretations of the duality are more the rule than exception.

Those who approach the aggressive nature of humans from a religious perspective see our predicament as the classic struggle of good against evil. I see it more as a consequence of the survival of the fittest behavior that is deeply programmed into our genes. In nature, an aggressive lion cub gets more milk and increases its chances of survival. In modern human society, aggressive behavior leads to wealth and power. At some point aggressive behavior threatens too many or the wrong parties and becomes counterproductive to the personal survival of the aggressor, but whole nations can be ruled mercilessly and thousands or even millions perish in the process before imbalances in power are corrected. Believe it or not, there are idiots in Russia who long for a Stalin-like figure to return, never mind that he purged several million of their fellow citizens.

I'd like to believe that love, enlightenment, pacifism, etc. are the answers, but if prolonged and intense meditation and prayer were the answer, I doubt that Tibet would have been so brutalized by

Communist China. Buddhists over there were devout, pacific, and prayed as intensely as any group. Of course, if everybody were genuinely religious, we wouldn't be in such a fix, but that clearly isn't the case. Nonetheless, I do believe that your point deserves consideration and further discussion and that upwellings of good will and positive thinking do have positive impacts.

Putting the discussion thread on a more academic level, as you know, one school of philosophical-religious thought sees this world as a perpetual battleground, a place of unavoidable conflict that provides a testing ground for us. If we meet the challenge, we progress spiritually into realms beyond or if we fail, we stay stuck here until lessons are learned. Some have proven themselves to be slow learners. In the view of this sect, there will always be war in the earthly plane, though its nature, intensity, and form is not pre-ordained to be holocaustic. But this gets beyond my simple brain to sort out. I just end up with a headache.

I know one thing that would go a long way to lifting my spirits - confirming a 130-foot cottonwood in Massachusetts this weekend. I should be satisfied with the one I measured in Zoar Valley a couple of years ago, but I want one in Massachusetts or at least New England. Loona may have one in Vermont, a whopper. But as I see it now, my buddy Will Blozan is ahead of me with his Michigan cottonwood. Cool tree! Big sucker! Gotta find one locally. That's real Zen.

Bob

-----Original Message-----
From: windbear@juno.com [mailto:windbear@juno.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 12:35 PM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

"Fine philosophies that appeal to gentle, responsible souls roll off the backs of the aggressive and ambitious. It is difficult to see how we're going to work ourselves out of the exponentially growing mess that we've created."

I suggest one person at a time. After a time, "morphic resonance" will kick in and the "agressive and Ambitious" will find themselves suddenly uncomfortable. But if we say it can't be done, it never will be.

Dennis

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 14:53:43 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051815510.inmta002.16113.1114612>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:99.7951 M:88.1236 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.0314)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <mlforester@rcn.com> forward (good recip)

Hey Joe!

I believe India and China cried for the exemption because they are classified as "developing countries" rather than "developed" and they need it to feed their great multitudes of people. China burns a lot of coal and they plan on greatly increasing its use in the future despite the construction of the massive 3 Gorges Dam which will provide lots of hydropower. So the bottom line is that the Kyoto Accords are one-sided and aren't going to solve anything. Much more pragmatic would be to learn how to ADAPT to the coming changes rather than wasting time trying to prevent it. For instance, in the Berkshires, you might lose sugar maple as its range moves north, so you might think about trying to regenerate species with a more southerly range like oak and other hardwoods.

To many "environmentalists", learning to adapt to climate change is anathema because many of them would like to see a one-world-government with millions of those UN people wearing little blue helmets running around telling you how to live. And you thought our little band of local burros was bad!

Mike Leonard, Consulting Forester
Petersham, MA

"Live Free Or Die" - NH Motto

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:forester@forestmeister.com>>Joseph Zorzin
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 6:02 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:mlforester@rcn.com>Mike Leonard

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 5:48 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Maurice,

The UN Environmental policies are also bankrupt. The Kyoto Acoords, which would have forced a big reduction in greenhouse gases, would have killed our economy, while India and China would have no limits!

I wasn't aware of that. Perhaps the solution is to put those 2 countries under the same rules! Why did they get that exemption? Is the exemption temporary or permanent?

So I guess their solution is to move what's left of our industry overseas!

Global Warming is a fact, but there are better ways to reduce our fossil fuel use such as with an oil import fee, which would spur the development of biomass, wind, nuclear, etc. Unfortunately, President Bush's energy policy is to simply drill in the Arctic.

Mike L.

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 17:36:48 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1051825022.inmta002.16113.1120828>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:57.1911 M:95.5837 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:27.6361)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

Colby,

Your first two points merit further consideration.

1." The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics."

"Distorted" is a strong negative. Getting into the semantics was at the heart of the early discussion, hardly a distortion.. Meanings do count. Participants worked hard to get onto the same wave length. They made reasonably sure that they weren't talking past one another. They avoided semantic delusions. I suggest that you re-read *The Tyranny of Words*." While maybe more than 60 years old, the book is still relevant.

2. "the 'original question' seems to be equally unfortunate."

"Unfortunate" is another strong negative. The vision of a conceptual or physical thing is a matter of personal perspective. I have a different perspective of Don's question from yours. Don's original question was "Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to its failure to conserve natural resources?" Following Robie's example, I went to the dictionary. I found two definitions of "unfortunate.". I am sure that you did not mean the first. It referred to "resulting in misfortune." You must have meant one of the second meanings, "a. unsuitable, infelicitous"; "b. deplorable.". I take it that you meant "unsuitable ... for discussion." The diverse content and extent of the discussion suggest otherwise.

Gibbons would have done better had he had the benefit of George Perkins Marsh's *MAN AND NATURE*. It is not whether natural resources were the only or the prime factor, but whether they played a significant part in the fading of ancient civilizations. Civilizations are too complex to rise or fall on a single cause. It's a

mosaic of causes, as you noted in your remark "as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome." That Gibbons was blind to the environmental issue should not surprise us. He lived before the British innovated significant environmental ethics and established public parks, public forests, and public gardens.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 02:49:09 -0400

Don,

The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics regarding the definition of civilization, society, culture, etc., and the "original question" seems to be equally unfortunate. Asking for a civilization that didn't fall as the result of the consumption of natural resources creates a presumption that such consumption has been held to account for the fall of numerous societies, but I fail to recall that Gibbons or others put much weight on that factor. While the growth of a society creates an increased demand for resources, the success of many societies has been measured by their ability to obtain resources through organization, improved land routes, control of maritime commerce, control of satellite societies, advantageous conquest, and so forth.

While the maintenance and expansion of a society may place great stress on natural resources, such as the removal of the English forests to build great fleets, I do not see any reliable correlation between the collapse of a society and their consumption of natural resources. The collapse of societies in the Americas appears to stem from drought, conquest, epidemics and other factors as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome.

I think the original question makes wholesale assumptions that unfairly color the discussion. The initial negativity also creates a fatalistic atmosphere, which is unfortunate. While the scope of our society does raise serious concerns, a certain optimism is essential to find new solutions. Therefore, I would ask, can you name

civilizations that fell due to consumption of natural resources, and are those examples, if any, relevant to our situation?

I have doubts about the validity of the subject matter, but I applaud your interest in "finding reasons for optimism." Perhaps we need to remember that our greatest enemy is "fear itself" and move on.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>Don Bertolette
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 12:35 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Colby-

Back to the original question...in the history of man, can you name one civilization that didn't fall as a result of their consumption of available natural resources? And a follow-up question. Is there any reason to believe that our civilization is any different? While it may sound like I'm being purposely fatalistic, I am more about finding reason for optimism.

-Don

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:colby@toad.net>Colby Rucker
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 7:42 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining. Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised, and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:parks@parks.org>>Maurice Schwartz

To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write

and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology; they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics, and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Eñuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertolette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an

enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable

streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE temperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will

make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about his in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes sy little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not , will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

Colby,

Your first two points merit further consideration.

1. "The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics."

"Distorted" is a strong negative. Getting into the semantics was at the heart of the early discussion, hardly a distortion.. Meanings do count. Participants worked hard to get onto the same wave length. They made reasonably sure that they weren't talking past one another. They avoided semantic delusions. I suggest that you re-read *The Tyranny of Words*." While maybe more than 60 years old, the book is still relevant.

2. "the 'original question' seems to be equally unfortunate."

"Unfortunate" is another strong negative. The vision of a conceptual or physical thing is a matter of personal perspective. I have a different perspective of Don's question from yours. Don's original question was "Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to its failure to conserve natural resources?"

Following Robie's example, I went to the dictionary. I found two definitions of "unfortunate.". I am sure that you did not mean the first. It referred to "resulting in misfortune." You must have meant one of the second meanings, "a. unsuitable, infelicitous"; "b. deplorable.". I take it that you meant "unsuitable ... for discussion." The diverse content and extent of the discussion suggest otherwise.

Gibbons would have done better had he had the benefit of George Perkins Marsh's MAN AND NATURE. It is not whether natural resources were the only or the prime factor, but whether they played a significant part in the fading of ancient civilizations. Civilizations are too complex to rise or fall on a single cause. It's a mosaic of causes, as you noted in your remark "as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome." That Gibbons was blind to the environmental issue should not surprise us. He lived before the British innovated significant environmental ethics and established public parks, public forests, and public gardens.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 02:49:09 -0400

Don,

The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics regarding the definition of civilization, society, culture, etc., and the "original question" seems to be equally unfortunate. Asking for a civilization that didn't fall as the result of the consumption of natural resources creates a presumption that such consumption has been held to account for the fall of numerous societies, but I fail to recall that Gibbons or others put much weight on that factor. While the growth of a society creates an increased demand for resources, the success of many societies has been measured by their ability to obtain resources through organization, improved land routes, control of maritime commerce, control of satellite societies, advantageous conquest, and so forth.

While the maintenance and expansion of a society may place great stress on natural resources, such as the removal of the English forests to build great fleets, I do not see any reliable correlation between the collapse of a society and their consumption of natural resources. The collapse of societies in the Americas appears to stem from drought, conquest, epidemics and other factors as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome.

I think the original question makes wholesale assumptions that unfairly color the discussion. The initial negativity also creates a fatalistic atmosphere, which is unfortunate. While the scope of our society does raise serious concerns, a certain optimism is essential to find new solutions. Therefore, I would ask, can you name civilizations that fell due to consumption of natural resources, and are those examples, if any, relevant to our situation?

I have doubts about the validity of the subject matter, but I applaud your interest in "finding reasons for optimism." Perhaps we need to remember that our greatest enemy is "fear itself" and move on.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>Don Bertolette
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 12:35 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Colby-

Back to the original question...in the history of man, can you name one civilization that didn't fall as a result of their consumption of available natural resources? And a follow-up question. Is there any reason to believe that our civilization is any different? While it may sound like I'm being purposely fatalistic, I am more about finding reason for optimism.

-Don

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:colby@toad.net>Colby Rucker
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 7:42 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining. Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised, and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver

is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology; they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their

environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Enuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern

Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and

the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

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on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

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It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

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If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes - little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not, will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Jim Rassman <James.Rassman@state.ma.us>

From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 18:25:59 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

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S:11.2760)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:3.7500) Pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good recip)
Status: U

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:rhubley@crocker.com>Robie Hubley
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 12:52 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

What does it mean to ask "do the naked apes have a right to do to the Earth what they've done?" What are 'rights', and who grants or enforces them?

I should have said, "moral right". And who grants moral rights? Moses? Meditation? Confucious? Jesus? Where does this thing called morality come from? How is it that the naked apes have scratched their head over this issue for untold millenium. How did evolution create a moral creature- or at least one pondering such a profound mystery? Ain't it amazing that we even ask such questions? Surely before the rise of the naked aped there was no such item- it was nothing more than survival of the fittest. The attempt at creating morality is a rebellion against that fundamental force of nature where the strong eat the weak. A major new item in evolution- one whose complexity seems to have no clear description. But you know it when you see it.

Which reminds me- at one Guild event- I was talking to state service forester Jim Rassman- we were talking about events put on by the Guild and he suggested one on ethics- a subset of the topic of morality. That was one of the best ideas ever to come out of a state forestry employee. Perhaps the Guild can do such an event- or perhaps the subject of ethics if not morality can be a subset of the Greatest Forestry Event on Planet Earth in 2003- hosted of course by good old Burly-belly himself- The Forest Summit. <G>

The question is much like asking: Did Tyrannosaurus have the 'right' to tear all those poor little herbivores to pieces just to fill its grotesque appetite?

absolutely- pain and suffering were OK until the human brain got smart enough to see that it need not be part of our behavior- that next step on the way to the evolutionary Omega Point- as described by Teilhard De Chardin, the famous Jesuit paleontologist of a century go- and a brilliant thinker on the subject of evolution

Seems to me that the only sensible discussion of 'rights' has to do with social conventions by normative agreements within human societies.

=====
=====

At 04:54 AM 05/01/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 1:12 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Joe,

Much as I share many of your views, I do not share your affection for life in the old stone age. As Bob put it, it's a Hell'uva dilemma.

Maurice

The real question though is do the naked apes have a right to do to the Earth what they've done? I think not- and therefore the conclusion is that the stone age is good enough for these egomaniacal naked apes. What have we really gained?

In one book on cultural anthropology I have- the author indicates that in the old stone age, life was easy- typically the equivalent of a day's work per week would suffice to get the food they need. They lived outdoors since there was no indoors- a healthy life- clean air, clean water, clean food, no taxes, no military- very little infectious disease. A good deal of time was spent telling stories, and at night dancing around the fire. When hunting, I seriously doubt that it was considered work. It was their bliss!

So they had no science or history and little knowledge about other folks a few hundred miles away. All of this knowledge hasn't done us much good. It may be exciting- nobody loves to read more than I do, but I can't say it's done me much good either.

I can't prove it, but I'd bet that the vast majority of people in the old stone age were a lot happier than most people today.

And, I've seen the near infinite resistance to progressive thinking regarding natural resources- in particular in the forestry field. At least in the old stone age, the potential for doing damage to the Earth was minimal.

Any way you look at it- leaving the old stone age was indeed the biblical fall of man.

Joe

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: lef <lef@goldengate.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 01 May 2003 18:52:04 -0500
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051833383.inmta004.27650.1064652>
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X-Sender: lef@pop.goldengate.net
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:98.8113 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:44.3933)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <lef@goldengate.net> forward (good recip)

Robie and Don:

Yes, uncivilized states always fail, at least at the time scale at which a paleoecologist views the world.

On the other hand, other organisms that have dominated the world also fail on long time scales, and the concept of civilized or not civilized is not applicable to them. Take for example anaerobic bacteria. They were the dominant life form for billions of years, but ultimately poisoned themselves out of dominance by filling the atmosphere with their waste product--oxygen. Now they are confined to mud at the bottom of ponds where there is no oxygen. They are still the most successful organisms in the history of the world, since we aerobics have only been dominant for the last 500 million years.

One would hope that humans would develop an exception to this pattern through civilization, allow themselves and other lifeforms to continue to coexist indefinitely.

Lee

At 11:44 AM 5/1/03, you wrote:

Wish t'were so, but there seems to be no such logic. Chance seems rife.

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At 09:58 PM 04/30/03 -0700, you wrote:

>>>>

Lee-

And ultimately that uncivilized state fails, by definition?
-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:lef@goldengate.net>mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef
To:
<<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>E
NTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 4:19 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Maurice:

No apology is really necessary. Following the logic of any situation is always fun, at least for scientists.

We can probably agree that if civilized societies continue to degrade their environment at some point they will slip into an uncivilized state.

Lee

At 04:49 PM 4/30/03, you wrote:

Lee,

I apologize for causing a misleading interpretation of my original remarks. I should have been explicit about my objectives. I was acting as historian, not analyst. Since I caused several reliable persons to misread me, I have to confess to being the problem.

Your logic is impeccable. I realize that the relationship is not correlation. But surely you would agree that all of the societies of the past that we recognize as civilized did great damage to their natural environments -- without exception. So with existing societies that we recognize as civilized. We are civilized. Sadly, we share with all past and present civilized societies the record of severe impacts to our natural environments. Moreover, as I said in another post, a society does not need to be civilized to degrade its natural environment.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as Colby Rucker was the first to note, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

When we contemplate the historical record, as did George Perkins Marsh, we cannot summarize that record better than did Bob with his Hell'uva dilemma. It's another love - hate relationship..

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

In fact, one could turn the argument completely around. Environmental degradation prevents high development or causes retrogression to a society that cannot be considered highly developed, and environmental degradation sure isn't conducive to intellectual advancement, and its not humane, ethical, or reasonable.

Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

Lee

At 12:14 PM 4/30/03 -0400, you wrote:

Tim,

Thanks for your questions and comments.. The kinships between civilization and environmental degradation merit lots of further consideration.

1. You asked: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized?"

No substantial concept (or maybe no non-mathematical concept whatsoever) fulfills all of the criteria that all scholars and lay people will attribute to it. Try the criteria for Democracy. So a people need not fulfill all of the meaningful criteria for a concept about them to be appropriate. With respect to your special case, it could well be that a group of people who did not make the switch could be considered a civilization. A cultural group that displayed all the other attributes could be considered civilized. I would bet, however, that if they displayed all the other attributes there is no way that they would not have switched from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing. Great mutualities exist among the criteria.

2. You wrote: "Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?"

No morality, fairness, ethics, or justice fit the line of thinking that is used as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. The misuse of concepts does not make them false or inappropriate, however.. Consider how tyrants misuse the concept "Peoples Democracy."

3. You charge "By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized".

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

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By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

Tim

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</blockquote></x-html>

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 21:05:41 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051837560.inmta006.29928.1195835>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:99.2571 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:16.5168)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <forester@forestmeister.com> forward (good
recip)

One of Stephen Jay Gould's last books- forgot the name- but it was sort of on this very subject- that is the subject of bacteria. He offered a strange idea- that evolution beyond that level could just as easily not have happened at all. For life to get to the level of bacteria was the really tough part, all the rest was just some shape shifting to fill empty niches- not really a big deal. I may be misrepresenting his thoughts- perhaps one of the professors here can elucidate Gould's thinking. At first that really threw me- but the more I think about it the more sense it makes. Either way, evolution is one serious topic. Too bad Gould has dissolved back into the Cosmos and can't further stimulate us. He and Carl Sagan, 2 of my scientific heroes and Big Thinkers are now with the rock of ages.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Robie and Don:

Yes, uncivilized states always fail, at least at the time scale at which a paleoecologist views the world.

On the other hand, other organisms that have dominated the world also fail on long time scales, and the concept of civilized or not civilized is not applicable to them. Take for example anaerobic bacteria. They were the dominant life form for billions of years, but ultimately poisoned themselves out of dominance by filling the atmosphere with their waste product--oxygen. Now they are confined to mud at the bottom of ponds where there is no oxygen. They are still the most successful organisms in the history of the world, since we aerobics have only been dominant for the last 500 million years.

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Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

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Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

Maurice,

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Tim

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</blockquote></x-html>

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parcs@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

Tim,

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 10:48:54 EDT

Maurice,

Yes, my "on the verge" referred to a historical time scale. But I truly believe the choices we are making in this decade will directly and heavily influence the success or failure of our experiment in civilization.

I have been chewing on Colby's statement this morning. I think on the surface it is an accurate one. I can think of no technologically advanced civilization that has fallen directly because of over consumption. But then again no tree has ever died directly as the result of acid rain.

So far, succesful civilizations faced with a lack of resources have managed to obtain new resources, often through coercion or outright theft from those less capable of protecting or exploiting their own. But when these quests for more resources lead to the

wars and corruption that ultimately result in a civilization's demise can't we extrapolate that the lack of resources (or at least the perceived lack) was a significant causative factor in their demise?

Our definition of civilization seems to more readily recognize those whose economies are based on growth. Probably because the cultures that did not grow were absorbed by those that grew into empires. But every one of those mega empires eventually collapsed of its own weight.

Recent history has seen a period of relative peace that has allowed several collapsed empires (such as the UK, Japan and Germany) to survive and even thrive to a certain extent. But I think this has been more due to the threat of nuclear war than any empire bent on military expansion would have to contend with than to any enlightened evolution of our species.

We here in the US have found a way around the nuclear threat by waging an economic war of conquest. We now enjoy the largest empire in recorded history, dominating the entire globe to at least some degree. But to do that we have coerced and manipulated millions if not billions of people out of their own natural resources in an attempt to keep up with our insatiable appetite. Now we are fat and overripe. Eventually it will be our turn to fall. And as long as we keep acting solely for our own profit at the expense of others it will be the "less civilized" nations and peoples we are presently exploiting that will be the direct cause of our demise. And they are quite likely to use the same nuclear weapons that have maintained this false peace for the last 50 years. Then history will say we fell to the "barbarians" just as the Roman empire did, thus once again ignoring the factor of human greed (which I believe is largely based on our fear and insecurities) and the over consumption it inevitably creates.

That is of course if nature doesn't get tired of us ignoring all her warnings and decides to take care of us first.

But despite all this I am still very optimistic, believe it or not. If I was a pessimist I would have given up and moved to a shack in the mountains long ago. We humans have developed the ability to think, reason and recognize our place in the natural order. Why else have we done this if not to enable us to rise above our primal instincts and define our own place in the natural balance instead

of relying on nature's tried and true boom/bust cycle to keep us in check?

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 22:11:27 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051841497.inmta002.16114.1063009>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.8525 M:98.6627 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:14.9124)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <colby@toad.net> forward (good recip)

Herb,

Since your present observations deal with whether my use of the words "distorted" and "unfortunate" were unduly negative, and the definition of those words, it appears the discussion has again been distorted by semantics, as I said initially. I'll rest my case on that one.

The word "unfortunate" is hardly a strong negative, being a gentle, if somewhat oblique, way of describing a major shortcoming of the initial question. I might have said infelicitous or inapt, but I'll stick with unfortunate.

You'll note that the question was somewhat loaded: "Can you offer up a past civilization that didn't fade due to its failure to conserve natural resources?" That's akin to asking, "Have you stopped beating your wife?" Both set up a presumption that something wrong has occurred, and request a comment on that condition. If I say "No," it appears that civilizations faded as

suggested, and if I say "Rome," all the other civilizations are still candidates.

So, I said that such a loaded question was "unfortunate." Is that too strong a negative?

It appears some of our friends have accepted the loaded question; therefore, I suggested that someone name a civilization that faded as described. There have been no candidates.

I also said that the question was negative, leading to a fatalistic assessment. Therefore I was negative regarding negativity, and concluded by endorsing optimism. Without some optimism for the future, there will be no reason to try to make our world a bit better. I

Lastly, I suggested we move on; therefore, I apologize for this foray into semantics. We all agree that there are problems, and we need to seek positive solutions, not become mired in the negative side of issues.

What's springtime up to over your way, my good friend?

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 5:36 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Colby,

Your first two points merit further consideration.

1." The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics."

"Distorted" is a strong negative. Getting into the semantics was at the heart of the early discussion, hardly a distortion.. Meanings do count. Participants worked hard to get onto the same wave length. They made reasonably sure that they weren't talking past one another. They avoided semantic delusions. I suggest that you re-

read *The Tyranny of Words*." While maybe more than 60 years old, the book is still relevant.

2. "the 'original question' seems to be equally unfortunate."

"Unfortunate" is another strong negative. The vision of a conceptual or physical thing is a matter of personal perspective. I have a different perspective of Don's question from yours. Don's original question was "Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to its failure to conserve natural resources?" Following Robie's example, I went to the dictionary. I found two definitions of "unfortunate.". I am sure that you did not mean the first. It referred to "resulting in misfortune." You must have meant one of the second meanings, "a. unsuitable, infelicitous"; "b. deplorable.". I take it that you meant "unsuitable ... for discussion." The diverse content and extent of the discussion suggest otherwise.

Gibbons would have done better had he had the benefit of George Perkins Marsh's *MAN AND NATURE*. It is not whether natural resources were the only or the prime factor, but whether they played a significant part in the fading of ancient civilizations. Civilizations are too complex to rise or fall on a single cause. It's a mosaic of causes, as you noted in your remark "as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome." That Gibbons was blind to the environmental issue should not surprise us. He lived before the British innovated significant environmental ethics and established public parks, public forests, and public gardens.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 02:49:09 -0400

Don,

The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics regarding the definition of civilization, society, culture, etc., and the "original question" seems to be equally unfortunate. Asking

for a civilization that didn't fall as the result of the consumption of natural resources creates a presumption that such consumption has been held to account for the fall of numerous societies, but I fail to recall that Gibbons or others put much weight on that factor. While the growth of a society creates an increased demand for resources, the success of many societies has been measured by their ability to obtain resources through organization, improved land routes, control of maritime commerce, control of satellite societies, advantageous conquest, and so forth.

While the maintenance and expansion of a society may place great stress on natural resources, such as the removal of the English forests to build great fleets, I do not see any reliable correlation between the collapse of a society and their consumption of natural resources. The collapse of societies in the Americas appears to stem from drought, conquest, epidemics and other factors as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome.

I think the original question makes wholesale assumptions that unfairly color the discussion. The initial negativity also creates a fatalistic atmosphere, which is unfortunate. While the scope of our society does raise serious concerns, a certain optimism is essential to find new solutions. Therefore, I would ask, can you name civilizations that fell due to consumption of natural resources, and are those examples, if any, relevant to our situation?

I have doubts about the validity of the subject matter, but I applaud your interest in "finding reasons for optimism." Perhaps we need to remember that our greatest enemy is "fear itself" and move on.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>Don Bertolette

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 12:35 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Colby-

Back to the original question...in the history of man, can you name one civilization that didn't fall as a result of their consumption of available natural resources? And a follow-up question. Is there any reason to believe that our civilization is any different? While it may sound like I'm being purposely fatalistic, I am more about finding reason for optimism.

-Don

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:colby@toad.net>Colby Rucker

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 7:42 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining. Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed

artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised, and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than

primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology;

they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Eñuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious

weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface,

and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and

the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>
From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE temperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use

areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes sØ little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not , will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature...s grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: Eastern Native Tree Society <ENTSTrees@topica.com>

From: edniz <edniz@prodigy.net>

Subject: Civilization and the Environment

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 22:25:32 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051842554.inmta002.16113.1133775>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
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X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:99.5902 M:85.6485 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:29.9239)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <edniz@prodigy.net> forward (good recip)

Hello,

I'm quite fascinated by this topic and very glad that it comes up on this listserv quite frequently. I think that it stems from all of us wondering where are the "roots" of the environmental degradation, indifference and destruction that we currently see in the world.

For myself it started when I began to understand the character of the pristine forests of the Southern Tier of New York. After reading Cronon's book, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*, I realized that the pioneers of the Southern Tier knew that the environmental practices they had inherited from New England left something to be desired. In turn, the pioneers of New England, knew that the environmental practices of the mother country were also deficient by nearly any standard you would want to use as a yardstick, but there was virtually no change in the way forest resources were treated. I began to realize that here was a thread of environmental destruction and obtuse philosophy that

had many centuries of momentum and inertia sustaining it. I just finished reading Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut. He puts it this way: "And so it goes."

I've included some quotes that I especially liked from The Forest by Walter Kumarly and Forests The Shadow of Civilization by Robert Pogue Harrison. I've also included some pertinent information from Cronon's book along with a few specific quotes. It is sobering reading to say the least.

Ed Nizalowski

Ø "The mountains from the Syrian Lebanon and the Anatolian Dagh to the Sierras of Andalusia and the Rif of Morocco were well covered with trees. All these mountains have long been denuded. And together with the forests, famous granaries have disappeared in historical times"

Ø "Clearly Venice realized about 1600 what effects deforestation could have. Venice, as a great power in the Mediterranean, required countless trees for its powerful navy and these could be obtained only from the mountains of Dalmatia. . . . The fleet built from those forests helped establish the glory of Venice but the Dalmatian mountains were turned into

arid karst, a term that has become synonymous with denuded, desiccated, hard and perforated rocky ground where forests can never grow again. . . In Albania the once vast forests have likewise been destroyed. Unrestricted cutting of timber totally upset the water budget; fierce torrents came into being with the disappearance of the rain-retaining forests, causing inundations and turning fertile land into swamps."

Ø "Cyprus, too, has its forest story. . . . St. Helena, perhaps the clearest illustration of the effect of uncontrolled grazing. [goats introduced in 1502] When the tragic fact was understood, an extermination of the goats was begun in 1730; but by then it was too late to save the forest."

Ø "Gaul, according to ancient accounts, was so densely wooded that squirrels were said to be able to jump from tree to tree in an unbroken forest from Toulouse all the way to Normandy"

Ø "Goat grazing has also contributed to the denudation of Spain over the centuries"

Ø Algerian forests: 2,224,000 acres of forest were burnt between 1875 and 1897.

Ø The U.S.A. between 1780 and 1930, i.e. in 150 years, cleared 346 million acres of forest, European Russia about 74 million acres in the 19th century, and Rumania 2.5 millions acres between 1920 and 1930 alone.

Ø Freidrich Schiller, whose son became a chief forester: "You are great men: you work in anonymity, without reward, free from the tyranny of selfishness, and the fruits of your devotion will ripen for a distant posterity." Schiller had viewed foresters as huntsmen and killers of wildlife. Germany was probably the first country to establish forestry management plans which date back to 1790.

Kumarly, Walter. The Forest. Translated from the German. New York: Robert B. Luce Co., Inc, 1973 pp. 259-271

Ø "In their drives to promote their civilizations both the Greeks and the Romans also promoted a mindless deforestation of the Mediterranean. Already by the fourth century B. C. Plato recalls with nostalgia a time when forests still covered much of Attica. Speaking of the hills surrounding Athens, Plato writes in the Critias: 'In comparison of what then was, there are remaining only the bones of the wasted body . . .all the richer and

softer parts of the soil having fallen away, and the mere skeleton of the land being left.' p. 55

Ø "We know, for example, that the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries in Europe witnessed the widespread extermination of those species of wild animals which could neither be tamed nor utilized, and that deforestation took place on unprecedented scales around the Mediterranean and in England. . . . Never before had an ideology so thoroughly divorced the human from the animal species and considered the earth as a whole the former's natural inheritance." p. 92

Ø "England had already been heavily deforested by the time William arrived in the 11th century, but the clearing of woodlands (not royal forests) continued indiscriminately during Tudor and Stuart times. It was not until the 17th century, thanks largely to the publication of John Evelyn's *Silva* (1664), that the problem of timber shortage for navy ships forced a new awareness on the administration about the vital economic and national importance of woodlands. Until then the English had generally congratulated themselves on their razing efforts, considering woodlands obstacles to progress or a haven for thieves and other degenerates." (p. 100)

Ø "We could say that a war is being waged today in the United States between Monsieur le Roy and John Manwood. The war is between two fundamentally opposed concepts of the forest. One is the concept of the forest as resource; the other of the forest as sanctuary." (p. 123)

"The sacred groves of Europe's barbarian prehistory give a new meaning to the phrase 'cathedral forest,' which has become something of a commonplace these days. The Gothic cathedral visibly reproduces the ancient scenes of worship in its lofty interior, which rises vertically toward the sky and then curves into a vault from all sides, like so many tree crowns converging into a canopy overhead. Like breaks in the foliage, windows let in light from beyond the enclosure. In other words, the phrase 'cathedral forest' entails more than just a casual analogy; or better, the analogy has its basis in an ancient correspondence between forests and the dwelling place of a god. . . .

"The correspondence between columns and trees leads one to suspect that the archaic Greek temple is not unlike the Gothic cathedral in its religious symbolism. Why, after all, is the Greek temple dense with columns? What purpose do the columns serve beyond their architectural function? If a single column once symbolized a sacred tree, a cluster of columns may well have symbolized a sacred grove." (p. 178)

Forests The Shadow of Civilization (Harrison) University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1992.

Benjamin Rush described a three part process for "taming" the wilderness:

- 1) Settlers lived almost identical to Indians
- 2) Settlers have Indian manners but these are more diluted
- 3) Settlers have tamed the land; farmers have brought civilization (p. 5)

q Indians had altered ecosystems; Europeans did not enter a forest "primeval". (p. 12)

q Indians lived off the surplus of the land to a very large degree

q Fire was a way of altering the ecosystem to the benefit of the natives: returned nutrients to the soil very quickly, encouraged grass and berry growth, helped kill fleas and vermin, increased the population of deer, elk, beaver and turkey (p. 50)

q Changes in the fauna: beaver gone in South New England by the 1680's, by late 18th century turkey and passenger pigeons were gone

q Massachusetts had its first deer season in 1694; in 1718 there was a three year ban on the hunting of deer (pp. 99-100)

Taking of the Forest

q The first vessel back to England in 1621 had two barrels of fur and as many clapboards as it could hold

q Laws against cutting white pine in 1691 and 1704; British navy wanted these trees for masts

q Earliest suggestion for forest preserve go back to 1790's

q Trees could be an indicator of soil (pp. 109-115)

q "We can be hardly more hostile to our woods in Sweden and Finland than they are here: their eyes are fixed upon the present gain, and they are blind to the future." Peter Kalm, 1749 (p. 121)

q "As in the process of clearing, colonial farmers treated their land as a resource to be mined until it was exhausted, rather than one to be conserved for less intense but more perennial use." (pp. 152-3)

"You know, our fathers had plenty of deer and skins, our plains were full of deer, as also our woods, and turkies, and our coves full of fish and fowl.

But these English having gotten our land, they with scythes cut down the grass, and with axes fell the trees; their cows and horses eat the grass, and their hogs spoil our clam banks, and we shall all be starved." Spoken by Miantonomo, a Narrangansett sachem, in 1642, a few years after English colonists began to settle near his people's villages. (p. 162)

q The result was an economy which used natural resources in a way which often appeared to European visitors as terribly wasteful. "In a word, the grain fields, the meadows, the forest, the cattle, etc. are treated with equal carelessness." Peter Kalm

"There is, perhaps, no country in the world, where the situations, nature, and circumstances of things, seem to point out husbandry as the most essential and proper business, more than our own; and yet, there is scarcely one where it is less attended to. Joseph Warren, American physician (1787) "Warren attributed this apparent paradox to several factors: the Americans' tendency to farm overlarge tracts of land, their 'rage for commerce,' their investment of little capital in their farmlands, and their wasteful practices in feeding livestock" (p 168)

Notes from

Changes in the Land

Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England

by William Cronon. New York: Hill & Wang, 1983.

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Don Bertollette <dbertollette@unneedspeed.net>

Subject: Re: Rapping resources

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 20:09:36 -0700

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1051848478.inmta006.29928.1206807>

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X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr

X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertollette@unneedspeed.net> forward (good recip)

Bob/Colby-

It's probably worth noting that the exceptions seem to require external sources to meet their need for resources...the first sign that self-sufficiency/self-sustaining ethics were amiss.

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>>Leverett, Robert

To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 5:30 AM

Subject: Rapping resources

Colby:

Iâm forced to concede that you make many telling points. In terms of historical precedent, climate change and deforestation may have reduced otherwise locally powerful societies in the middle east, America, and elsewhere, but stronger societies have always been able to draw from more distant resources, as you suggest. Great Britain is an example we all recognize as a geographically small country that in its hay-day successfully drew resources from the distant parts of the globe to create an empire. But Great Britain is still with us ò not so globally dominate, but no lightweight either. So falls by past dynasties from power into obscurity based on resource exhaustion was probably weighted toward primitive societies that had no infrastructures to use to draw distant resources. Rich and powerful societies often fell through military conquest. They got too big for their britches. But in general, civilized societies have maintained a survivability born of their advanced states rather than the opposite, which I think is a central point of yours.

How survivable weâll be in the future, as we push the limits of the planet to absorb our numbers and our toxins, remains to be seen. Nobody can deny that other speices are taking a devastaing hit and to the degree we value those species, discussions such as these can be gloomy, but it doesnât all portend the demise of humanity. Maintaining optimism is the healthier option and Iâm glad you point that out.

In our real or pseudo-real global economy, cultural rise and fall may take very different routes than just exhaustion of local resources. Japan illustrates how an incredibly productive populous can more than offset lack of natural resources. So, yes, it is a complicated mix.

For those who blink at our entertaining of subjects other than big trees and forestry, well, thatâs who we are. Now where is

my Bach CD? Time to debug some medical software to the rhythm of Bach's intimitable orchestral suites.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Colby Rucker [mailto:colby@toad.net]

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 2:49 AM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics regarding the definition of civilization, society, culture, etc., and the "original question" seems to be equally unfortunate. Asking for a civilization that didn't fall as the result of the consumption of natural resources creates a presumption that such consumption has been held to account for the fall of numerous societies, but I fail to recall that Gibbons or others put much weight on that factor. While the growth of a society creates an increased demand for resources, the success of many societies has been measured by their ability to obtain resources through organization, improved land routes, control of maritime commerce, control of satellite societies, advantageous conquest, and so forth.

While the maintenance and expansion of a society may place great stress on natural resources, such as the removal of the English forests to build great fleets, I do not see any reliable correlation between the collapse of a society and their consumption of natural resources. The collapse of societies in the Americas appears to stem

from drought, conquest, epidemics and other factors as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome.

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Don Bertollette <dbertollette@uneedspeed.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 21:04:27 -0700
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051848277.inmta006.29928.1206535>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:98.0298 M:96.2853 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.5203)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertollette@uneedspeed.net> forward (good recip)

Robie-

In your inimitable way, I believe you answered my question in the negative?
-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:rhubley@crocker.com>Robie Hubley
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 9:43 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

I don't think old-growth ecosystems are evidence of an ethical and humane culture where people are repressed and hideously tortured, and resources, such as the oil fields and the Tigris/Euphrates swamps, are damaged or destroyed with a Devil-may-care attitude.

=====
=====

At 09:38 PM 04/30/03 -0700, you wrote:

>>>>

Robie-

If anyone can verify an earlier claim from this listserve that Iraq still has old-growth ecosystems intact in it's mountains, I'll agree that Iraq is an exception to the rule.

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:rhubley@crocker.com>Robie Hubley
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 8:46 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

This is a good question: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization?" The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..."

Now, there's a hoot. Iraq has what is often hailed as the oldest civilization. Yikes!

Claude Levi-Straus, in *Tristes Tropiques*, his account of his observations on Amazon indigenous people, that all human societies are equally evolved. And if you want to read about a truly civilized society, by the standards of the American Heritage Dictionary, read Colin Turnbull's accounts of the Pygmies in his books *The Forest People* or *The Human Cycle*.

Last I heard, Pygmy culture was being destroyed by the chaos in the 'civilized' Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I just wish I could eat irony.

This is a good discussion. Thank you,

Robie

=====
=====

At 10:11 AM 04/30/03 EDT, you wrote:

>>>>

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

<<<<

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Don Bertollette <dbertollette@uneedspeed.net>
Subject: Civilizations...
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 21:54:31 -0700
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051851277.inmta007.8573.1142271>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:83.1967 M:99.5542 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.3956)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertollette@uneedspeed.net> forward
(good recip)

Maurice, Lee, Colby, Bob, and others in this civilized discussion-

I am cutting and pasting an excerpt from an interesting web page
(<http://www.csrnet.org/csrnet/Trees/sustainable_forestry.html>
http://www.csrnet.org/csrnet/Trees/sustainable_forestry.html), that
cuts to the chase that started from my inability to recall a text that
extolled the message that follows:

Lessons from the Past

Many great civilizations have fallen by failing to live sustainably,
within their economic and ecological means.

Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia is considered the cradle of civilization. The "Fertile Crescent," of present day Iraq, is where Western Civilization first emerged. At times of rapid growth in Mesopotamia, the value of wood was equal to precious gems, stones, and metals. Neighboring states were conquered for wood, gold and silver. By 2000 B.C. the last Mesopotamian empire had collapsed. The connection between their decline and deforestation is well supported. Excessive amounts of timber were felled around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and their tributaries. This caused increased siltation and salinity which compromised the water quality and soil productivity. Irrigation canals filled with sediment and the water ways required constant dredging. Barley was the staple food of the Mesopotamians, and as crops diminished the great cities fell. They realized too late what had happened.

Greece

The late Bronze Age saw a great surge in the population and economic strength of Mycenaean Greece. In the thirteenth century B.C. large tracts of forests were cleared to accommodate the needs of the rapidly growing population. The wood was used for construction and to feed the great bronze furnaces. The harvested land was heavily grazed, hampering natural regeneration of the forest. The decline of ancient Greek civilization was directly linked to deforestation and soil depletion.

Rome

In the 1st century A.D. Rome already devoured its own forests for fuel, shelter and transportation. The fuel wood was used to heat, cook, smelt metals and fire the public baths.

Rome's monetary system was based on silver which required huge quantities of wood, a renewable resource, to convert ore into metal, a non-renewable resource. As wood became scarce the silver content of the metal was drastically reduced. This created a monetary crisis and a shift back to the bartering system. The public baths were used to appease the masses and also used huge quantities of wood.

The deforestation of their own lands caused decreased soil stability, which resulted in decreased agricultural production. The

gap between wood and agricultural needs and domestic supply was an impetus for Rome's conquests throughout the Mediterranean region. These conquests employed Rome's fleet of 60 wooden ships. The decline of the Romans was directly linked to their failure to manage their resources sustainably. The same pattern repeated itself throughout history all over the world. Growing populations, excessive consumption, the use of wood for energy to process non-renewable resources, deforestation, soil depletion, watershed destruction, and the resulting problems of famine, led to economic and social collapse. When societies fail to live sustainably they come crashing down, even the greatest ones.

Hopefully a lesson learned...

-DonB

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Fri, 02 May 2003 07:03:41 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051877086.inmta004.23532.1005319>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:51.8443 M:97.0282 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:66.4334)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

Yeah. I've spent my whole life at it. What else is there to do.

You're exactly correct, that it certainly won't happen if no one tries. And who knows what will happen? So we should all keep

trying. But the hedge factor is that unless most people tried real hard, it won't happen, and the political, social, cultural, national, governmental, economic, and conceptual worlds are set up against success. So one might as well take some time to enjoy the life we have, rather than spending all one's time and resources on trying to save the world. In fact, enjoying the world, and taking care of family and community might be as important or more than the effort to save the world as such.

=====
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At 04:34 PM 05/01/03 GMT, you wrote:

>
> "Fine philosophies that appeal to gentle, responsible souls roll off the backs of the aggressive and ambitious. It is difficult to see how we're going to work ourselves out of the exponentially growing mess that we've created."

>
> I suggest one person at a time. After a time, "morphic resonance" will kick in and the "aggressive and Ambitious" will find themselves suddenly uncomfortable. But if we say it can't be done, it never will be.

> Dennis

>

>

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>

>

>

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Fri, 02 May 2003 07:10:48 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051876932.inmta006.19748.1015032>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com

X-pstn-levels: (C:51.8443 M:94.3536 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:60.9437)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhuble@crocker.com> forward (good
recip)

Bob,

You're great: you're thinking about and guided by the general
aspects of
life, but you're involved and animated by the real and specific
events!

Robie

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At 02:35 PM 05/01/03 -0400, you wrote:

>Dennis:

>

>I'm open to the possibility of "morphic resonance", but even with
such
forces at our disposal, we've got one heck of an uphill struggle. So,
we'd
all better get to resonating, because aggressive, greedy behavior is
rewarded in our society far too much and its perpetrators are often
admired
by people that you'd think would know better. I think it all goes
back to
our dual nature, though misinterpretations of the duality are more
the rule
than exception.

>

>Those who approach the aggressive nature of humans from a
religious
perspective see our predicament as the classic struggle of good
against
evil. I see it more as a consequence of the survival of the fittest
behavior that is deeply programmed into our genes. In nature, an
aggressive
lion cub gets more milk and increases its chances of survival. In
modern

human society, aggressive behavior leads to wealth and power. At some point aggressive behavior threatens too many or the wrong parties and becomes counterproductive to the personal survival of the aggressor, but whole nations can be ruled mercilessly and thousands or even millions perish in the process before imbalances in power are corrected. Believe it or not, there are idiots in Russia who long for a Stalin-like figure to return, never mind that he purged several million of their fellow citizens.

>
> I'd like to believe that love, enlightenment, pacifism, etc. are the answers, but if prolonged and intense meditation and prayer were the answer, I doubt that Tibet would have been so brutalized by Communist China. Buddhists over there were devout, pacific, and prayed as intensely as any group. Of course, if everybody were genuinely religious, we wouldn't be in such a fix, but that clearly isn't the case. Nonetheless, I do believe that your point deserves consideration and further discussion and that upwellings of good will and positive thinking do have positive impacts.

>
> Putting the discussion thread on a more academic level, as you know, one school of philosophical-religious thought sees this world as a perpetual battleground, a place of unavoidable conflict that provides a testing ground for us. If we meet the challenge, we progress spiritually into realms beyond or if we fail, we stay stuck here until lessons are learned. Some have proven themselves to be slow learners. In the view of this sect, there will always be war in the earthly plane, though its nature,

intensity, and form is not pre-ordained to be holocaustic. But this gets beyond my simple brain to sort out. I just end up with a headache.

>

> I know one thing that would go a long way to lifting my spirits - confirming a 130-foot cottonwood in Massachusetts this weekend. I should be

satisfied with the one I measured in Zoar Valley a couple of years ago, but

I want one in Massachusetts or at least New England. Loona may have one in

Vermont, a whopper. But as I see it now, my buddy Will Blozan is ahead of

me with his Michigan cottonwood. Cool tree! Big sucker! Gotta find one

locally. That's real Zen.

>

>Bob

>

>

>

>

> -----Original Message-----

>From: windbear@juno.com [mailto:windbear@juno.com]

>Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 12:35 PM

>To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

>Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

>

>

> "Fine philosophies that appeal to gentle, responsible souls roll off the

backs of the aggressive and ambitious. It is difficult to see how we're

going to work ourselves out of the exponentially growing mess that we've

created."

>

>I suggest one person at a time. After a time, "morphic resonance" will

kick in and the "agressive and Ambitious" will find themselves suddenly

uncomfortable. But if we say it can't be done, it never will be.

>Dennis

>
>

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Fri, 02 May 2003 07:43:36 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051876942.inmta002.21473.1009858>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
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X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:99.0629 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:77.3737)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

Lynn Margulis has much to say on this subject. See:

Lynn Margulis, Dorion Sagan, Microcosmos. Four billion years of microbial evolution. Foreword by Lewis Thomas. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. 1986.

Lynn Margulis, Dorion Sagan, What Is Life? Foreword by Niles Eldridge. A Peter N. Nevraumont Book, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY. 1995. 207 pp.

Lynn Margulis, Symbiotic Planet [A New Look at Evolution]. Basic Books, New York, NY. 1998.

=====
=====

At 09:05 PM 05/01/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>

One of Stephen Jay Gould's last books- forgot the name- but it was sort of on this very subject- that is the subject of bacteria. He offered a strange idea- that evolution beyond that level could just as easily not have happened at all. For life to get to the level of bacteria was the really tough part, all the rest was just some shape shifting to fill empty niches- not really a big deal. I may be misrepresenting his thoughts- perhaps one of the professors here can elucidate Gould's thinking. At first that really threw me- but the more I think about it the more sense it makes. Either way, evolution is one serious topic. Too bad Gould has dissolved back into the Cosmos and can't further stimulate us. He and Carl Sagan, 2 of my scientific heroes and Big Thinkers are now with the rock of ages.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Robie and Don:

Yes, uncivilized states always fail, at least at the time scale at which a paleoecologist views the world.

On the other hand, other organisms that have dominated the world also fail on long time scales, and the concept of civilized or not civilized is not applicable to them. Take for example anaerobic bacteria. They were the dominant life form for billions of years, but ultimately poisoned themselves out of dominance by filling the atmosphere with their waste product--oxygen. Now they are confined to mud at the bottom of ponds where there is no oxygen. They are still the most successful organisms in the history of the world, since we aerobics have only been dominant for the last 500 million years.

One would hope that humans would develop an exception to this pattern through civilization, allow themselves and other lifeforms to continue to coexist indefinitely.

Lee

At 11:44 AM 5/1/03, you wrote:

Wish t'were so, but there seems to be no such logic. Chance seems rife.

=====
=====

At 09:58 PM 04/30/03 -0700, you wrote:

>>>>

Lee-

And ultimately that uncivilized state fails, by definition?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:lef@goldengate.net>mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef
To:
<<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>E
NTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 4:19 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Maurice:

No apology is really necessary. Following the logic of any situation is always fun, at least for scientists.

We can probably agree that if civilized societies continue to degrade their environment at some point they will slip into an uncivilized state.

Lee

At 04:49 PM 4/30/03, you wrote:

Lee,

I apologize for causing a misleading interpretation of my original remarks. I should have been explicit about my objectives. I was acting as historian, not analyst. Since I caused several reliable persons to misread me, I have to confess to being the problem.

Your logic is impeccable. I realize that the relationship is not correlation. But surely you would agree that all of the societies of the past that we recognize as civilized did great damage to their natural environments -- without exception. So with existing societies that we recognize as civilized. We are civilized. Sadly, we share with all past and present civilized societies the record of severe impacts to our natural environments. Moreover, as I said in another post, a society does not need to be civilized to degrade its natural environment.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as Colby Rucker was the first to note, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

When we contemplate the historical record, as did George Perkins Marsh, we cannot summarize that record better than did Bob with his Hell'uva dilemma. It's another love - hate relationship..

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

In fact, one could turn the argument completely around. Environmental degradation prevents high development or causes retrogression to a society that cannot be considered highly developed, and environmental degradation sure isn't conducive to intellectual advancement, and its not humane, ethical, or reasonable.

Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

Lee

At 12:14 PM 4/30/03 -0400, you wrote:

Tim,

Thanks for your questions and comments.. The kinships between civilization and environmental degradation merit lots of further consideration.

1. You asked: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized?"

No substantial concept (or maybe no non-mathematical concept whatsoever) fulfills all of the criteria that all scholars and lay people will attribute to it. Try the criteria for Democracy. So a people need not fulfill all of the meaningful criteria for a concept about them to be appropriate. With respect to your special case, it could well be that a group of people who did not make the switch could be considered a civilization. A cultural group that displayed all the other attributes could be considered civilized. I would bet, however, that if they displayed all the other attributes there is no way that they would not have switched from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing. Great mutualities exist among the criteria.

2. You wrote: "Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?"

No morality, fairness, ethics, or justice fit the line of thinking that is used as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. The misuse of concepts does not make them false or inappropriate, however.. Consider how tyrants misuse the concept "Peoples Democracy."

3. You charge "By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized".

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations.

We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

Tim

>

<<<<

</blockquote></x-html>

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Fri, 02 May 2003 07:53:02 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051876946.inmta006.19748.1015040>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
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X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.8525 M:98.5141 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:83.3877)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

Ludwig Wittgenstein, a primary philosopher of the twentieth century, held that "...all representations must share a common logical form and instead relates the meanings of sentences to their uses in particular contexts: philosophical problems are attributed to misuses of language." (New American Desk Encyclopedia, New American Library, 1984).

Still seems to be the case here. He died in 1951. So what's new?

=====
=====

At 10:11 PM 05/01/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>
Herb,

Since your present observations deal with whether my use of the words "distorted" and "unfortunate" were unduly negative, and the definition of those words, it appears the discussion has again been distorted by semantics, as I said initially. I'll rest my case on that one.

The word "unfortunate" is hardly a strong negative, being a gentle, if somewhat oblique, way of describing a major shortcoming of the initial question. I might have said infelicitous or inapt, but I'll stick with unfortunate.

You'll note that the question was somewhat loaded: "Can you offer up a past civilization that didn't fade due to its failure to conserve natural resources?" That's akin to asking, "Have you

stopped beating your wife?" Both set up a presumption that something wrong has occurred, and request a comment on that condition. If I say "No," it appears that civilizations faded as suggested, and if I say "Rome," all the other civilizations are still candidates.

So, I said that such a loaded question was "unfortunate." Is that too strong a negative?

It appears some of our friends have accepted the loaded question; therefore, I suggested that someone name a civilization that faded as described. There have been no candidates.

I also said that the question was negative, leading to a fatalistic assessment. Therefore I was negative regarding negativity, and concluded by endorsing optimism. Without some optimism for the future, there will be no reason to try to make our world a bit better. I

Lastly, I suggested we move on; therefore, I apologize for this foray into semantics. We all agree that there are problems, and we need to seek positive solutions, not become mired in the negative side of issues.

What's springtime up to over your way, my good friend?

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 5:36 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Colby,

Your first two points merit further consideration.

1." The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics."

"Distorted" is a strong negative. Getting into the semantics was at the heart of the early discussion, hardly a distortion.. Meanings do count. Participants worked hard to get onto the same wave length.

They made reasonably sure that they weren't talking past one another. They avoided semantic delusions. I suggest that you re-read *The Tyranny of Words*." While maybe more than 60 years old, the book is still relevant.

2. "the 'original question' seems to be equally unfortunate."

"Unfortunate" is another strong negative. The vision of a conceptual or physical thing is a matter of personal perspective. I have a different perspective of Don's question from yours. Don's original question was "Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to its failure to conserve natural resources?" Following Robie's example, I went to the dictionary. I found two definitions of "unfortunate.". I am sure that you did not mean the first. It referred to "resulting in misfortune." You must have meant one of the second meanings, "a. unsuitable, infelicitous"; "b. deplorable.". I take it that you meant "unsuitable ... for discussion." The diverse content and extent of the discussion suggest otherwise.

Gibbons would have done better had he had the benefit of George Perkins Marsh's *MAN AND NATURE*. It is not whether natural resources were the only or the prime factor, but whether they played a significant part in the fading of ancient civilizations. Civilizations are too complex to rise or fall on a single cause. It's a mosaic of causes, as you noted in your remark "as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome." That Gibbons was blind to the environmental issue should not surprise us. He lived before the British innovated significant environmental ethics and established public parks, public forests, and public gardens.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Colby Rucker <colby@toad.net>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 02:49:09 -0400

Don,

The discussion has been distorted by excursions into semantics regarding the definition of civilization, society, culture, etc., and the "original question" seems to be equally unfortunate. Asking for a civilization that didn't fall as the result of the consumption of natural resources creates a presumption that such consumption has been held to account for the fall of numerous societies, but I fail to recall that Gibbons or others put much weight on that factor. While the growth of a society creates an increased demand for resources, the success of many societies has been measured by their ability to obtain resources through organization, improved land routes, control of maritime commerce, control of satellite societies, advantageous conquest, and so forth.

While the maintenance and expansion of a society may place great stress on natural resources, such as the removal of the English forests to build great fleets, I do not see any reliable correlation between the collapse of a society and their consumption of natural resources. The collapse of societies in the Americas appears to stem from drought, conquest, epidemics and other factors as varied as those responsible for the decline of ancient Rome.

I think the original question makes wholesale assumptions that unfairly color the discussion. The initial negativity also creates a fatalistic atmosphere, which is unfortunate. While the scope of our society does raise serious concerns, a certain optimism is essential to find new solutions. Therefore, I would ask, can you name civilizations that fell due to consumption of natural resources, and are those examples, if any, relevant to our situation?

I have doubts about the validity of the subject matter, but I applaud your interest in "finding reasons for optimism." Perhaps we need to remember that our greatest enemy is "fear itself" and move on.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:dbertolette@uneedspeed.net>Don Bertolette
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 12:35 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Colby-

Back to the original question...in the history of man, can you name one civilization that didn't fall as a result of their consumption of available natural resources? And a follow-up question. Is there any reason to believe that our civilization is any different? While it may sound like I'm being purposely fatalistic, I am more about finding reason for optimism.

-Don

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:colby@toad.net>Colby Rucker

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 7:42 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Herb,

I would suggest that the perceived correlation between civilization and environmental degradation is flawed. Organization, technology and plant and animal husbandry permit greater security and support increased population levels. Increased population can stress environmental balances, but civilization per se is not the enemy of the natural world.

The more primitive societies have extinguished numerous animal species, often for trivial purposes, and continue to threaten those remaining. Protection of natural resources can only come from highly civilized societies, especially those having developed artificial fibers, etc., and therefore not impelled to further degrade their immediate environment.

To condemn human progress as "the fall," and to hold that the life style of primitive people inhabiting the most desolate parts of the earth is an example to be praised, and perhaps emulated, is foolishness.

While our society needs to "simplify, simplify," the path to living with our environment will be the result of greater cultural advancement, not any reversion to a hunter-gatherer existence, even were that possible. Such should be obvious.

Colby

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:23 PM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob, Joe, Don, Howard,

Thoughts on environmentally benign primitive peoples are very relevant but do not challenge the authenticity of the charge of a close kinship between civilization and environmental degradation. In a way, they undergird the kinship. The all encompassing driver is the advance of civilization. When primitive peoples became civilized, they advanced the degree of environmental degradation side by side with their political, social and economic advances...Joe's possible candidate was civilized rather than primitive and whether they would sooner or later have over fished the source of their lives is guesswork..But I'll guess that they would have.

Since we are using civilization as a basing point, I would like to resurrect my ancient notes and suggest them as criteria for distinguishing between primitive people and civilized people. The major points are that civilized people have the capability to write and to keep written records; they have made the transition from gathering to agriculture, from herding to pasturing, and from crude tools to elementary technology; they have established a division of labor that provides for economic, political, military, and religious specialization; and, among other additional attributes, they have begun to establish concepts and practices of morality, fairness, ethics. and justice along with intrigue, corruption, hypocrisy, and dealmaking. By this time, overrunning their natural environments is inevitable and universal.

Back to Don's question, I doubt that any civilized society did not severely degrade its natural environment if only to feed itself. Joe's candidate is a possible exception though I doubt its probability.

maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2003 13:30:36 -0400

Joe, Don, Maurice:

When we think of civilizations, we usually think of the technically advanced ones, past or present. However, let's not forget that the Australian aboriginal peoples existed for 40,000 years without degrading their environment - so far as we know. Some of the indigenous Indians of the Amazon also had little impact on their environment. I think the bushmen of the Kalahari would fit in well into the environmentally benign. Some Native American cultures were relatively benign toward the environment, though by no means all. The Eñuit lived in relative harmony before we changed the balance.

We call all the above primitive cultures and technologically they were/are, but given what we're doing to the planet, perhaps some redefinitions are needed.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 10:31 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Cc: Mike Mauri; Dave Gafney
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

There may not be, but I do have one possible candidate- the sea faring Minoan civilization of the second millennium BC on Crete and nearby islands. We don't really know for sure what land management was like- but I wouldn't be surprised it was relatively benign. You can tell a lot by a civilization's art. Much of the art of the ancient world was about armies and macho guys with serious weapons on big horses. The Minoan art, all of it, was about the beauties of nature- porpoises, fish, birds, athletes doing flips over

bulls rather than killing them, and topless women. <G> Such a culture is not likely to have despoiled its environment as much as the more macho civilizations. Unfortunately this civilization was devastated by the explosion of the island of Thera (around the fifteenth century BC), which was the cultural and religious center of the civilization- the island was volcanic and was almost entirely destroyed- causing massive tsunamis across the eastern Mediterranean which devastated many coastal area- and the volcanic ash also caused fires and buried cities on Crete.

Perhaps such a culture could have become the dominant one in Europe. Certainly Europe would have developed differently.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parks@parks.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2003 9:20 AM

Subject: Civilization and the natural environment.

Don,

No! I thank you for the challenge. I do not remember whether Marsh or any of the other leading environmental historians described an advanced civilization that did not gravely degrade its natural environment. Obviously I have to return to square one.

I have been referring in my seminars for about 30 years to the kinship between the advance of civilization and the advance of environmental degradation. You are the very first reader or listener to raise the question about contrary experience that I should have ready knowledge about. I'll get back to you after I do the necessary research.

Meanwhile, some other ENT may be able to respond to your question.

Maurice

At 8:14 PM -0700 4/28/03, Don Bertollette wrote:

Maurice-

Can you offer up a past civilization that DIDN'T fade due to it's failure to conserve natural resources?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:parcs@parcs.org>Maurice Schwartz

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 12:44 PM

Subject: Re: OOPS! [and the natural environment]

Joe,

When you wrote

even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok

you were much too kind to human history.

Human beings have been running amok with the natural environment beginning no later than the first civilizations some 8 to 10 thousand years ago. You have apparently forgotten for the moment that in 1864, in his *MAN AND NATURE; OR, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS MODIFIED BY HUMAN ACTION*, George Perkins Marsh eloquently analyzed the historical kinships between successive civilizations and degradations of the natural environment.

He devoted a paragraph of his short preface to forests. "The extension of agricultural and pastoral industry involves an enlargement of the sphere of man's domain, by encroachment upon the forests which once covered the greater part of the earth's surface otherwise adapted to his occupation. The felling of the

woods has been attended with momentous consequences to the drainage of the soil, to the external configuration of its surface, and probably, also, to local climate; and the importance of human life as a transforming power is, perhaps, more clearly demonstrable in the influence man has thus exerted upon superficial geography than in any other result of his material effort."

In contrasting the lands of "The Roman Empire, at the period of its greatest expansion, [that] comprised the regions of the earth most distinguished by a happy combination of physical advantages" to their condition in the early 1960s, he wrote: "If we compare the present physical condition of the countries of which I am speaking, with the descriptions that ancient historians and geographers have given of their fertility and general capability of ministering to human uses, we shall find that more than one half of their whole extent-including the provinces most celebrated for the profusion and variety of their spontaneous and their cultivated products, and for the wealth and social advancement of their inhabitants-is either deserted by civilized man and surrendered to hopeless desolation, or at least greatly reduced in both productiveness and population. Vast forests have disappeared from mountain spurs and ridges; the vegetable earth accumulated beneath the trees by the decay of leaves and fallen trunks, the soil of the alpine pastures which skirted and indented the woods, and the mould of the upland fields, are washed away; meadows, once fertilized by irrigation, are waste and unproductive, because the cisterns and reservoirs that supplied the ancient canals are broken, or the springs that fed them dried up; rivers famous in history and song have shrunk to humble brooklets; the willows that ornamented and protected the banks of the lesser watercourses are gone, and the rivulets have ceased to exist as perennial currents, because the little water that finds its way into their old channels is evaporated by the droughts of summer, or absorbed by the parched earth, before it reaches the lowlands; the beds of the brooks have widened into broad expanses of pebbles and gravel, over which, though in the hot season passed dryshod, in winter sealike torrents thunder; the entrances of navigable streams are obstructed by sandbars, and harbors, once marts of an extensive commerce, are shoaled by the deposits of the rivers at whose mouths they lie; the elevation of the beds of estuaries, and

the consequently diminished velocity of the streams which flow into them, have converted thousands of leagues of shallow sea and fertile lowland into unproductive and miasmatic morasses."

In short, humans have been degrading their natural environment since the beginnings of civilization. What is different about recent centuries are the dimensions of modern attacks on the natural environment, not their fundamental character.

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Cc: Mike Mauri <mikemaur@crocker.com>, Dave Gafney <gafney@wild-earth.net>

From: Joseph Zorzin <forester@forestmeister.com>

Subject: Re: OOPS!

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2003 11:55:49 -0400

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Monday, April 28, 2003 10:37 AM

Subject: OOPS!

ENTS:

In my last e-mail I had intended to make the observation that the Smokies may well be THE t! emperate deciduous-dominated rain-forest against which all others are compared. That is sometimes asserted by reputable scientists and I think with relatively good reason. Arthur Stupka, former Park naturalist, once said that vegetation is to the Smokies as geysers are to Yellowstone and waterfalls are to Yosemite. I think that is an accurate characterization. I know of no serious naturalist who after a

prolonged visit fails to recognize the Smokies as the superlative place that it is. What is especially exciting is that the botanical treasures of the Smokies have yet to be all identified. The species count continues to rise.

The Smokies superbly illustrate how nature creates immensely complicated webs of life, tests many designs, and in the process produces resilient ecosystems that endure for millennia. Places like the Smokies cannot be meaningfully compared to the simple systems that humans create to favor a few species for commercial use and this is a lesson that has to be continually relearned. Every generation seems to have to make the discovery on its own. If nothing else, we need places like the Smokies to allow us to keep our bearings. John, Rob, and I observed one heck of a lot of forest on our trek to the Smokies and back via Pennsylvania and the Smokies continue to illustrate best the value of retaining large blocks of unmanaged forest in the East. It isn't about scenery, historical reference, or even champion trees. It IS about biodiversity. Real biodiversity. The autopoietic forest system that Professor Gary Beluzo talks about. Such self-maintaining systems are just not possible in human-saturated areas or in multi-use areas manipulated for a few species to insure that every hunter can bag his/her trophy, and in the process, literally destroy the forest understory.

And, with the practice of ecoforestry, we can have relatively more biodiversity than we have currently- in the non protected, non wilderness areas. And, if we really wanted to get revolutionary, we'd push 1,000 times harder to get massive reform of zoning laws and far better regional planning.

It's a good scientific and philosophic question as to the maximum potential for biodiversity in human dominated areas. Some enviros just right off the vast habitats of naked apes reconstructed with asphalt and cement and glass and steel. But perhaps, without going back to the Paleolithic, the naked ape zones could be relatively naturalized. I'd like to think that in 100 years- the goal isn't just to lock up as much good land as possible, but to finally figure out how the naked apes can live on this planet indefinitely, for millions of years!

We'll have protected forests of many kinds, parks and wilderness areas. But, we must also do a far better management of non protected forests- which get periodically hammered by a "know nothing" wood industry with full approval of the "natural resource" academics, state and federal agencies, the forestry "professional orgs". When the enviros just write off all that "exploited forest" as merely "commercial forest land" that they can have no influence over, or don't care to have any influence over because such forest isn't perceived as "natural"- then we all lose by not struggling for reform of such "forest mgt".

I've attempted to argue in the past that human dominated forests don't have to be perceived as non autopoietic. The forest has many forces at work- just because some "thought" may be one of those vectors, doesn't make such input necessarily unnatural- as humans evolved on this planet too, even though in recent centuries they've begun to run amok. Once they grow up as a species and realize that they have immense potential to help make the Earth a better place- they really could do so.

If forest mgt. is done by "going with the flow" of all those forces that make up a forest- rather than attempting to turn a forest into a factory- such mgt., if not qualified as autopoietic, is still a vast improvement over what we have now- and since such forests will make up most of the forests of the Earth- such progress is essential, not a luxury. I will write more about this in a future essay, "The Zen of Silviculture".

I sympathize with people who thirst for natural areas in close proximity to their homes sy little wetlands, stately woodlands, scenic spots. However, highly fragmented natural areas on the fringes of urban America should not , will not, cannot take the place of large intact reserves. It is only in the latter where we see Mother Nature at her finest and I needed this past trip to remind me that the Smokies remain as one of Mother Nature's grandest creations which we in the year 2003 can visit and enjoy. I feel a deep debt to all those thoughtful souls who, in the 1930s had the vision to fight for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Had they settled for less, today we would not have the jewel of the eastern national parks to enjoy, study, and keep us somewhat aware that nature is still the grand designer.

Bob

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<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Fri, 2 May 2003 08:51:20 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1051879884.inmta007.28823.1011899>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 02 May 2003 12:51:20.0649 (UTC)
FILETIME=[87919B90:01C310A9]
Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment.
Thread-Index: AcMQo77sHXyO5j6hRHKEGSir7P87rwAAm/2A
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.6475 M:95.0720 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:67.2335)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good recip)

Robie:

Thanks. Years spent in very diverse occupations/fields i.e. military, business world, academia, computers, medicine, and environmentalism while constantly needing and loving the natural world has motivated me to be doggedly pragmatic without losing touch with gifted thinkers who always challenge us all to reach for greater levels of understanding. Seeking a balance between the theoretical and practical manifests itself personally as the "burl-belly oscillation factor"; i.e a dance between the theoretical and the concrete. The process has produced unpredictable outcomes. For example, what is an X-hillbilly from the southern Appalachians doing in cultured, thickly settled Massachusetts looking for old growth forest and exceptional stands of trees and finding them under the watchful eyes of professionals who then have to be wooed to be receptive to their very existence. Well, okay, OG and exceptional trees are my passion and that can erase otherwise formidable barriers, but it! still seems darn strange.

Are you going to join us tomorrow at Arcadia and then on to Mount Tom Reservation?

Bob

-----Original Message-----
From: Robie Hubley [mailto:rhubley@crocker.com]
Sent: Friday, May 02, 2003 7:11 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Bob,

You're great: you're thinking about and guided by the general aspects of life, but you're involved and animated by the real and specific events!

Robie

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=====
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At 02:35 PM 05/01/03 -0400, you wrote:

>Dennis:

>

>I'm open to the possibility of "morphic resonance", but even with such forces at our disposal, we've got one heck of an uphill struggle. So, we'd all better get to resonating, because aggressive, greedy behavior is rewarded in our society far too much and its perpetrators are often admired by people that you'd think would know better. I think it all goes back to our dual nature, though misinterpretations of the duality are more the rule than exception.

>

>Those who approach the aggressive nature of humans from a religious perspective see our predicament as the classic struggle of good against evil. I see it more as a consequence of the survival of the fittest behavior that is deeply programmed into our genes. In nature, an aggressive lion cub gets more milk and increases its chances of survival. In modern human society, aggressive behavior leads to wealth and power. At some point aggressive behavior threatens too many or the wrong parties and becomes counterproductive to the personal survival of the aggressor, but whole nations can be ruled mercilessly and thousands or even millions perish in the process before imbalances in power are corrected. Believe it or not, there are idiots in Russia who long for a Stalin-like figure to return, never mind that he purged several million of their fellow citizens.

>

> I'd like to believe that love, enlightenment, pacifism, etc. are the answers, but if prolonged and intense meditation and prayer were the answer, I doubt that Tibet would have been so brutalized by Communist

China. Buddhists over there were devout, pacific, and prayed as intensely as any group. Of course, if everybody were genuinely religious, we wouldn't be in such a fix, but that clearly isn't the case. Nonetheless, I do believe that your point deserves consideration and further discussion and that upwellings of good will and positive thinking do have positive impacts.

>

> Putting the discussion thread on a more academic level, as you know, one school of philosophical-religious thought sees this world as a perpetual battleground, a place of unavoidable conflict that provides a testing ground for us. If we meet the challenge, we progress spiritually into realms beyond or if we fail, we stay stuck here until lessons are learned.

Some have proven themselves to be slow learners. In the view of this sect, there will always be war in the earthly plane, though its nature, intensity, and form is not pre-ordained to be holocaustic. But this gets beyond my simple brain to sort out. I just end up with a headache.

>

> I know one thing that would go a long way to lifting my spirits - confirming a 130-foot cottonwood in Massachusetts this weekend. I should be satisfied with the one I measured in Zoar Valley a couple of years ago, but I want one in Massachusetts or at least New England. Loona may have one in Vermont, a whopper. But as I see it now, my buddy Will Blozan is ahead of me with his Michigan cottonwood. Cool tree! Big sucker! Gotta find one locally. That's real Zen.

>

>Bob

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Fri, 02 May 2003 08:32:07 -0500

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1051882421.inmta007.28824.1006403>

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X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:98.6627 P:95.9108 R:95.9108

S:60.0232)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <frel001@umn.edu> forward (good recip)

Joe:

I have been reading Gould's works for years. Yes, its true that evolution beyond bacteria may not have occurred except by

accident. Also, evolution beyond bacteria could have led to many other life forms other than humans dominating the world at this point. Just imagine if the comet had not hit the earth 69 million years ago and dinosaurs still ruled, or imagine what the world and its forests would be like today if one of the other intelligent life forms had developed civilization (for example whales, dolphins, octopus or elephants) before primates evolved.

Lee

At 09:05 PM 5/1/03 -0400, you wrote:

One of Stephen Jay Gould's last books- forgot the name- but it was sort of on this very subject- that is the subject of bacteria. He offered a strange idea- that evolution beyond that level could just as easily not have happened at all. For life to get to the level of bacteria was the really tough part, all the rest was just some shape shifting to fill empty niches- not really a big deal. I may be misrepresenting his thoughts- perhaps one of the professors here can elucidate Gould's thinking. At first that really threw me- but the more I think about it the more sense it makes. Either way, evolution is one serious topic. Too bad Gould has dissolved back into the Cosmos and can't further stimulate us. He and Carl Sagan, 2 of my scientific heroes and Big Thinkers are now with the rock of ages.

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Robie and Don:

Yes, uncivilized states always fail, at least at the time scale at which a paleoecologist views the world.

On the other hand, other organisms that have dominated the world also fail on long time scales, and the concept of civilized or not civilized is not applicable to them. Take for example anaerobic bacteria. They were the dominant life form for billions of years, but ultimately poisoned themselves out of dominance by filling the atmosphere with their waste product--oxygen. Now they are confined to mud at the bottom of ponds where there is no oxygen. They are still the most successful organisms in the history of the

world, since we aerobics have only been dominant for the last 500 million years.

One would hope that humans would develop an exception to this pattern through civilization, allow themselves and other lifeforms to continue to coexist indefinitely.

Lee

At 11:44 AM 5/1/03, you wrote:

Wish t'were so, but there seems to be no such logic. Chance seems rife.

=====
=====

At 09:58 PM 04/30/03 -0700, you wrote:

>>>>

Lee-

And ultimately that uncivilized state fails, by definition?

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:lef@goldengate.net>mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef

To:

<<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>E
NTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 4:19 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Maurice:

No apology is really necessary. Following the logic of any situation is always fun, at least for scientists.

We can probably agree that if civilized societies continue to degrade their environment at some point they will slip into an uncivilized state.

Lee

At 04:49 PM 4/30/03, you wrote:

Lee,

I apologize for causing a misleading interpretation of my original remarks. I should have been explicit about my objectives. I was acting as historian, not analyst. Since I caused several reliable persons to misread me, I have to confess to being the problem.

Your logic is impeccable. I realize that the relationship is not correlation. But surely you would agree that all of the societies of the past that we recognize as civilized did great damage to their natural environments -- without exception. So with existing societies that we recognize as civilized. We are civilized. Sadly, we share with all past and present civilized societies the record of severe impacts to our natural environments. Moreover, as I said in another post, a society does not need to be civilized to degrade its natural environment.

To establish a case for correlation was never my objective. If civilization and environmental degradation were correlated, uncivilized peoples would generally not degrade their natural environments. But, as Colby Rucker was the first to note, they did and they do. I agree that the correlation is not true.

When we contemplate the historical record, as did George Perkins Marsh, we cannot summarize that record better than did Bob with his Hell'uva dilemma. It's another love - hate relationship..

Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

In fact, one could turn the argument completely around. Environmental degradation prevents high development or causes retrogression to a society that cannot be considered highly developed, and environmental degradation sure isn't conducive to intellectual advancement, and its not humane, ethical, or reasonable.

Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

Lee

At 12:14 PM 4/30/03 -0400, you wrote:
Tim,

Thanks for your questions and comments.. The kinships between civilization and environmental degradation merit lots of further consideration.

1. You asked: "Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized?"

No substantial concept (or maybe no non-mathematical concept whatsoever) fulfills all of the criteria that all scholars and lay people will attribute to it. Try the criteria for Democracy. So a

people need not fulfill all of the meaningful criteria for a concept about them to be appropriate. With respect to your special case, it could well be that a group of people who did not make the switch could be considered a civilization. A cultural group that displayed all the other attributes could be considered civilized. I would bet, however, that if they displayed all the other attributes there is no way that they would not have switched from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing. Great mutualities exist among the criteria.

2. You wrote: "Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?"

No morality, fairness, ethics, or justice fit the line of thinking that is used as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. The misuse of concepts does not make them false or inappropriate, however.. Consider how tyrants misuse the concept "Peoples Democracy."

3. You charge "By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized".

Where does the list of criteria make that assertion? The criteria say nothing about seeking to control and dominate nature. Should that be added to the list? Should the list be replaced? Remember that we are trying to characterize past and existing civilizations. We have not yet been trying to set forth a body of future objectives.

Maurice

-----Original message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

Maurice,

Why must a group of people switch from gathering to agriculture and from herding to pasturing in order to be considered a civilization? Would a cultural group that displayed all the other attributes not be civilized? And for that matter why would communication have to be written as opposed to having a strong oral history?

Your definitions seem similar to the arguments used by early settlers as an excuse for removing native peoples from their lands. Since they were not "civilized" and had not "improved" their lands they must not really belong there. Where is the morality, fairness, ethics and justice in that line of thinking?

By your definition only peoples who seek to control and dominate nature, as opposed to living with it and accepting its providence, could be "civilized". I strongly disagree. Though unfortunately I have to accept that history has proven that such groups will always be overrun and often completely destroyed by the more "advanced" and "civilized" resource dominating cultures. At least in the short term.

Tim

>

<<<<

</blockquote></x-html>

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: jarred trout <jarredtrout@yahoo.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Fri, 2 May 2003 11:02:21 -0700 (PDT)

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<http://us.rd.yahoo.com/search/mailemailsig/*http://search.yahoo.com>The New Yahoo! Search - Faster. Easier. Bingo.

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Gary A. Beluzo" <gaian2002@attbi.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Sun, 4 May 2003 15:53:37 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1052080987.inmta006.19748.1190450>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>

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X-Priority: 3 (Normal)

Importance: Normal

X-pstn-levels: (C:96.3115 M:96.4339 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:11.9620)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <gaian2002@attbi.com> forward (good recip)

Robie, et al,

In her latest book "Acquiring Genomes: A New Theory of Evolution" (2003), Lynn lambasts the neoDarwinian view (i.e. most evolutionary change occurs through accumulated random mutations under the direction of natural selection) and promotes her Serial Endosymbiotic Theory (SET), and symbiogenesis in general, to account for evolution, particularly those big jumps at the higher taxa level..her discussion at the Jeffrey Amherst bookstore was illuminating..and I believe Robie was there?

I saw Margulis and Gould present their ideas side-by-side at the Darwin Festival at Salem State College a few years ago...IMHO, Lynn was much more persuasive in her argument and logically consistent; very explicit. In contrast, Gould would often get himself entangled in his own parenthetical style of communicating.

Incidentally, Lynn Margulis was my primary advisor and mentor when I was in graduate school (Environmental Evolution)..and I would be happy to dialog with anyone that is interested in her work...

Gary

Gary A. Beluzo
Professor of Environmental Science/GIS
Holyoke Community College

-----Original Message-----

From: Robie Hubley [mailto:rhubley@crocker.com]
Sent: Friday, May 02, 2003 7:44 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Lynn Margulis has much to say on this subject. See:

Lynn Margulis, Dorion Sagan, Microcosmos. Four billion years of microbial evolution. Foreword by Lewis Thomas. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. 1986.

Lynn Margulis, Dorion Sagan, What Is Life? Foreword by Niles Eldridge. A Peter N. Nevraumont Book, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY. 1995. 207 pp.

Lynn Margulis, Symbiotic Planet [A New Look at Evolution]. Basic Books, New York, NY. 1998.

=====
=====

At 09:05 PM 05/01/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>

One of Stephen Jay Gould's last books- forgot the name- but it was sort of on this very subject- that is the subject of bacteria. He offered a strange idea- that evolution beyond that level could just as easily not have happened at all. For life to get to the level of bacteria was the really tough part, all the rest was just some shape shifting to fill empty niches- not really a big deal. I may be misrepresenting his thoughts- perhaps one of the professors here can elucidate Gould's thinking. At first that really threw me- but the more I think about it the more sense it makes. Either way, evolution is one serious topic. Too bad Gould has dissolved back into the Cosmos and can't further stimulate us. He and Carl

Sagan, 2 of my scientific heroes and Big Thinkers are now with the rock of ages.

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Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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From: <<mailto:lef@goldengate.net>mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef
To:
<<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>E
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Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2003 4:19 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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Maurice

-----Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 12:18:31 -0500

Maurice et al.:

If you follow the definition (from Robie's post) The American Heritage Dictionary defines civilized as, "1. Having a highly developed society and culture. 2. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable..." , then one can see that Colby is right, there is not any positive correlation between civilization and environmental degradation, since none of the terms used in the definition require environmental degradation to exist.

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Therefore, a society that causes environmental degradation cannot be considered civilized, or least it won't remain civilized for long. That's simple logic that flows straight from the definition. If there is a correlation it should be negative (i.e. the more civilized a society is the less environmental degradation there should be).

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

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</blockquote></x-html>

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Date: Sun, 4 May 2003 16:02:54 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052081681.inmta002.21473.1128842>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3 (Normal)
Importance: Normal
X-pstn-levels: (C:86.7145 M:99.2571 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
5.6590)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <gaian2002@attbi.com> forward (good
recip)

Yeah but we have Lynn Margulis, the champion of the Kingdom Monera...Lynn says "it's all bacteria and nothing else". After all, the only significant part of the human body is the gametes (those are the only cells that have a continuous, seamless connection to the first protocell), everything else is just an elaborate multicellular vehicle with which to ensure the survival of the genes....

If you disagree with the importance of bacteria, you need only consider the origins of 1) chloroplasts in oxygenic photosynthetic cells, 2) mitochondria in nearly ALL non-bacteria cells, 3) the endosymbiotic bacteria within root nodules on nitrogen-fixing

"plants", and 4) the microtubules that make up every neuron in your gray matter!

Gary

-----Original Message-----

From: Joseph Zorzin [mailto:forester@forestmeister.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 9:06 PM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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Date: Wed, 30 Apr 2003 10:11:05 EDT

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</blockquote></x-html>

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Gary A. Beluzo" <gaian2002@attbi.com>
Subject: RE: Civilizations...
Date: Sun, 4 May 2003 16:07:03 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1052080989.inmta006.19748.1190452>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3 (Normal)
Importance: Normal
X-pstn-levels: (C:79.3741 M:99.5542 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.1703)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <gaian2002@attbi.com> forward (good
recip)

Don,

I couldn't agree more...."Let's be economical - Be Ecological!" A wonderful book discussed the role of environment in the rise of human civilizations and cultural evolution is "Guns, Germs, and Steel", a Pulitzer Prize winner, written by Jared Diamond.

Gary

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Bertolette [<mailto:dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>]
Sent: Friday, May 02, 2003 12:55 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Civilizations...

Maurice, Lee, Colby, Bob, and others in this civilized discussion-

I am cutting and pasting an excerpt from an interesting web page (http://www.csrnet.org/csrnet/Trees/sustainable_forestry.html), that cuts to the chase that started from my inability to recall a text that extolled the message that follows:

Lessons from the Past

Many great civilizations have fallen by failing to live sustainably, within their economic and ecological means.

Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia is considered the cradle of civilization. The "Fertile Crescent," of present day Iraq, is where Western Civilization first emerged. At times of rapid growth in Mesopotamia, the value of wood was equal to precious gems, stones, and metals. Neighboring states were conquered for wood, gold and silver. By 2000 B.C. the last Mesopotamian empire had collapsed. The connection between their decline and deforestation is well supported. Excessive amounts of timber were felled around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and their tributaries. This caused increased siltation and salinity which compromised the water quality and soil productivity. Irrigation canals filled with sediment and the water ways required constant dredging. Barley was the staple food of the Mesopotamians, and as crops diminished the great cities fell. They realized too late what had happened.

Greece

The late Bronze Age saw a great surge in the population and economic strength of Mycenaean Greece. In the thirteenth century B.C. large tracts of forests were cleared to accommodate the needs of the rapidly growing population. The wood was used for construction and to feed the great bronze furnaces. The harvested land was heavily grazed, hampering natural regeneration of the forest. The decline of ancient Greek civilization was directly linked to deforestation and soil depletion.

Rome

In the 1st century A.D. Rome already devoured its own forests for fuel, shelter and transportation. The fuel wood was used to heat, cook, smelt metals and fire the public baths.

Rome's monetary system was based on silver which required huge quantities of wood, a renewable resource, to convert ore into metal, a non-renewable resource. As wood became scarce the silver content of the metal was drastically reduced. This created a monetary crisis and a shift back to the bartering system. The public baths were used to appease the masses and also used huge quantities of wood.

The deforestation of their own lands caused decreased soil stability, which resulted in decreased agricultural production. The gap between wood and agricultural needs and domestic supply

was an impetus for Rome's conquests throughout the Mediterranean region. These conquests employed Rome's fleet of 60 wooden ships. The decline of the Romans was directly linked to their failure to manage their resources sustainably. The same pattern repeated itself throughout history all over the world. Growing populations, excessive consumption, the use of wood for energy to process non-renewable resources, deforestation, soil depletion, watershed destruction, and the resulting problems of famine, led to economic and social collapse. When societies fail to live sustainably they come crashing down, even the greatest ones.

Hopefully a lesson learned...

-DonB

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robert Leverett <dbhguru@attbi.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.
Date: Sun, 4 May 2003 17:33:43 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052090982.inmta006.19748.1199238>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:96.3115 M:96.4339 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:18.3245)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbhguru@attbi.com> forward (good recip)

Gary:

I suspect that we all are interested in Lynn's work. For the group can you outline her most revolutionary ideas?

Bob

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:gaian2002@attbi.com>Gary A. Beluzo
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Sunday, May 04, 2003 3:53 PM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment.

Robie, et al,

In her latest book "Acquiring Genomes: A New Theory of Evolution" (2003), Lynn lambasts the neoDarwinian view (i.e. most evolutionary change occurs through accumulated random mutations under the direction of natural selection) and promotes her Serial Endosymbiotic Theory (SET), and symbiogenesis in general, to account for evolution, particularly those big jumps at the higher taxa level..her discussion at the Jeffrey Amherst bookstore was illuminating..and I believe Robie was there?

I saw Margulis and Gould present their ideas side-by-side at the Darwin Festival at Salem State College a few years ago...IMHO, Lynn was much more persuasive in her argument and logically consistent; very explicit. In contrast, Gould would often get himself entangled in his own parenthetical style of communicating.

Incidentally, Lynn Margulis was my primary advisor and mentor when I was in graduate school (Environmental Evolution)..and I would be happy to dialog with anyone that is interested in her work...

Gary

Gary A. Beluzo
Professor of Environmental Science/GIS
Holyoke Community College

-----Original Message-----

From: Robie Hublely [mailto:rhublely@crocker.com]
Sent: Friday, May 02, 2003 7:44 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Lynn Margulis has much to say on this subject. See:

Lynn Margulis, Dorion Sagan, *Microcosmos. Four billion years of microbial evolution.* Foreword by Lewis Thomas. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA. 1986.

Lynn Margulis, Dorion Sagan, *What Is Life?* Foreword by Niles Eldridge. A Peter N. Nevraumont Book, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY. 1995. 207 pp.

Lynn Margulis, *Symbiotic Planet [A New Look at Evolution].* Basic Books, New York, NY. 1998.

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To: ENTSTrees <ENTSTrees@topica.com>
From: David Yarrow <championtrees@msn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Mon, 5 May 2003 22:04:37 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052188297.inmta007.28823.1345410>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Originating-IP: [207.94.112.113]
X-Originating-Email: [championtrees@msn.com]
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 06 May 2003 02:09:06.0394 (UTC)
FILETIME=[7903EBA0:01C31374]
X-pstn-levels: (C:86.5330 M:96.5825 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:32.7094)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <championtrees@msn.com> forward (good recip)

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~David Yarrow
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518-477-6100; fax 477-1346
www.championtrees.org
www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

----- Original Message -----

From:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef>mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef

To:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>
ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

To: ENTSTrees <ENTSTrees@topica.com>
From: David Yarrow <championtrees@msn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Tue, 6 May 2003 07:22:53 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052243721.inmta006.19748.1356558>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Originating-IP: [207.94.112.112]
X-Originating-Email: [championtrees@msn.com]
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 06 May 2003 12:25:52.0352 (UTC)
FILETIME=[A248FE00:01C313CA]
X-pstn-levels: (C:88.7295 M:98.6627 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
2.4099)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <championtrees@msn.com> forward (good
recip)

Joe Zorzin wrote:

>> Because what you are describing seems to be the trajectory we are on - that's why we must take a more militant stand to prevent that from happening. But, the second any of us use some really rough language to describe what's really going on- especially in the forestry world- the party liners all stand up (the only time they stand up) and scream that we're "ranting and raving". Polite discourse never brought any progress to American civilization and it won't save the planet. I'm not proposing violence- but there's a huge gap between violence on the one hand and timid polite discourse on the other.

you're quite right, but i'm never one to shout or argue. i've seen we're on the road to extinction for 30 years, and quietly gone about doing what i can to forge a different path into the future. besides, all that happens if you rant and r! ave is the

knuckleheads will ostracize, blacklist and ignore you, and vote you out of office. and withdraw deeper into denial and self righteousness. or sink into numb, paralytic, helpless, hopelessness. most average folks are terrified of confrontation with the consequences of their consumptive exploitation of nature.

then there's the evangelical crowd waiting for the rapture and armageddon..... nature is just more deception of the flesh and satan.....

meanwhile, nature is speaking more and more loudly. towns in the midwest look worse than bhagdad after the bombing. don't even try to rival that "ranting and raving." the consequences of global warming as the planetary heat engine rachets up into overdrive. better to offer folks an alternative avenue of escape than to shout into their face and deepen their fear. besides, who is really listening?

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www.championtrees.org

www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/

www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>

Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment

Date: Tue, 6 May 2003 08:14:26 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1052223274.inmta007.28824.1242299>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>

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X-OriginalArrivalTime: 06 May 2003 12:14:27.0037 (UTC)

FILETIME=[09CE38D0:01C313C9]

Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment

Thread-Index: AcMTeHij6/XRetimR52i+UcZBGd4wwAUFodA

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S:17.4167)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good
recip)

Holy smokes, David, you've laid a real heavy on us – and early in
the AM. Now you're really in Gary Beluzo's world. Gareeeeeeeeeee!
Help!

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: David Yarrow [mailto:championtrees@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, May 05, 2003 10:05 PM
To: ENTSTrees
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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From:

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To:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com%3EENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Gary A. Beluzo" <gaian2002@attbi.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Tue, 6 May 2003 13:47:46 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052244436.inmta002.21473.1421408>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3 (Normal)
Importance: Normal
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.0328 M:95.8395 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:16.3106)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <gaian2002@attbi.com> forward (good recip)

Just a couple of quick comments regarding David's post:

bluegreen algae are not primitive plants ("metacellular" eukaryotic photosynthetic organisms with stems, leaves, and roots (with minor exception))nor are they bluegreen algae (unicellular and multicellular eukaryotic photosynthetic organisms without an organ or tissue level of anatomy)...they are cyanobacteria-prokaryotes with primitive photopigments arranged in simple structures called thylakoids...not the chloroplasts that the eukaryotic algae have..Indeed, the chloroplasts in eukaryotic cells are remnant bacteria with their own DNA and if removed from the alga in the proper environment they can live and reproduce on their own!

Actually anoxygenic photosynthetic bacteria (using H₂ or H₂S without the liberation of oxygen) came before the cyanobacteria...and interestingly cyanobacteria are facultative oxygenic photosynthesizers...under some conditions they do not produce oxygen.

I agree with your paragraph on the banded iron formations or BIFS...

Regarding stromatolites, they are actually much more common than folks once thought...in 1992 I had a grant from NASA to sample and characterize stromatolites (and the living microbial mats that produce them) in San Salvador, the eastern most Bahamian Island (and putative landfall of Columbus). There are even microbial mats in Fayetteville Lake in New York state, a meromictic temperate lake. Lynn Margulis and I believe that microbial mats and other prokaryotic communities may be largely responsible for the regulation of oceanic salinity (not enough time to get into that right now) worldwide. The oldest stromatolites found to date are nearly 3.9 BILLION years old. Lynn Margulis has several stromatolites in her laboratory that have been dated to over 2.5 BILLION years BP.

I have an entire file cabinet at the College filled to the brim with literature regarding microbial mats, stromatolites, and environmental evolution in general if anyone is interested. I have been working on an Earth Timeline that some of you may find interesting.

The book ISHMAEL by Daniel Quinn speaks to your final question...

Gary

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From: David Yarrow [mailto:championtrees@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, May 05, 2003 10:05 PM

To: ENTSTrees

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

----- Original Message -----

From:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef>mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef

To:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Gary A. Beluzo" <gaian2002@attbi.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Tue, 6 May 2003 13:56:52 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052246983.inmta004.23531.1327074>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3 (Normal)

Importance: Normal

X-pstn-levels: (C:86.5330 M:97.0282 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:26.0534)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <gaian2002@attbi.com> forward (good
recip)

An interesting tidbit regarding the evolution of forests is this: terrestrial life (specifically forests 400 million years ago) was not possible until the ozone layer developed from the excess oxygen that cyanobacteria produced during the Proterozoic. DNA has an optimum absorption of energy in the UV area of the EMR spectrum. Unattenuated UV in the pre-ozone days would have "fried" any terrestrial organisms...ExCEPT perhaps microbial mat communities which in some cases produce their own "sunblock"--Cool!

Gary

-----Original Message-----

From: David Yarrow [mailto:championtrees@msn.com]

Sent: Monday, May 05, 2003 10:05 PM

To: ENTSTrees

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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From:

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To:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Lee E. Frelich" <frel001@umn.edu>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Tue, 06 May 2003 13:45:28 -0500
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052246560.inmta002.21473.1422544>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
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X-Sender: freli001@frel001.email.umn.edu
X-Umn-Remote-Mta: [N] x101-73-118.ej2357.umn.edu #+HF+LO
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.0328 M:94.5022 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:56.4015)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <frel001@umn.edu> forward (good recip)

Gary:

Can't wait to see your timeline for these major events in the evolution of the earth's history. An update by someone with expertise in that area is always welcome.

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At 01:47 PM 5/6/03 -0400, you wrote:
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so, my question is, if humans with our technological civilization create a global ecological crash that results in massive species extinction and the extreme curtailment of our own populations, what organism might arise to supplant us? and what new alliances must humanity form with other lifeforms to avoid extinction and assure our continued presence on the planet? trees, maybe?

~David Yarrow
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518-477-6100; fax 477-1346
www.championtrees.org
www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

----- Original Message -----

From:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef>mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef

To:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Robie and Don:

Yes, uncivilized states always fail, at least at the time scale at

which a paleoecologist views the world.

On the other hand, other organisms that have dominated the world also fail on long time scales, and the concept of civilized or not civilized is not applicable to them. Take for example anaerobic bacteria. They were the dominant life form for billions of years, but ultimately poisoned themselves out of dominance by filling the atmosphere with their waste product--oxygen. Now they are confined to mud at the bottom of ponds where there is no oxygen. They are still the most successful organisms in the history of the world, since we aerobics have only been dominant for the last 500 million years.

One would hope that humans would develop an exception to this pattern through civilization, allow themselves and other lifeforms to continue to coexist indefinitely.

Lee

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Or send an email to: ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Tue, 6 May 2003 15:50:39 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052250644.inmta007.28824.1247471>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 06 May 2003 19:50:39.0888 (UTC)
FILETIME=[C54BD100:01C31408]
Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment
Thread-Index: AcMT+lslQyh7IrJOSa2mvZFmSeY+bgADk1zw
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.0328 M:95.8395 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:15.5059)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good
recip)

Gary:

Heavy, Man! Heavy! But good.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Gary A. Beluzo [<mailto:gaian2002@attbi.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2003 1:48 PM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment

Just a couple of quick comments regarding David's post:

bluegreen algae are not primitive plants ("metacellular" eukaryotic photosynthetic organisms with stems, leaves, and roots (with minor exception))nor are they bluegreen algae (unicellular and multicellular eukaryotic photosynthetic organisms without an organ or tissue level of anatomy)...they are cyanobacteria-prokaryotes with primitive photopigments arranged in simple structures called thylakoids...not the chloroplasts that the eukaryotic algae have..Indeed, the chloroplasts in eukaryotic cells are remnant bacteria with their own DNA and if removed from the alga in the proper environment they can live and reproduce on their own!

Actually anoxygenic photosynthetic bacteria (using H₂ or H₂S without the liberation of oxygen) came before the cyanobacteria...and interestingly cyanobacteria are facultative oxygenic photosynthesizers...under some conditions they do not produce oxygen.

I agree with your paragraph on the banded iron formations or BIFS...

Regarding stromatolites, they are actually much more common than folks once thought...in 1992 I had a grant from NASA to sample and characterize stromatolites (and the living microbial mats that produce them) in San Salvador, the eastern most Bahamian Island (and putative landfall of Columbus). There are even microbial mats in Fayetteville Lake in New York state, a meromictic temperate lake. Lynn Margulis and I believe

that microbial mats and other prokaryotic communities may be largely responsible for the regulation of oceanic salinity (not enough time to get into that right now) worldwide. The oldest stromatolites found to date are nearly 3.9 BILLION years old. Lynn Margulis has several stromatolites in her laboratory that have been dated to over 2.5 BILLION years BP.

I have an entire file cabinet at the College filled to the brim with literature regarding microbial mats, stromatolites, and environmental evolution in general if anyone is interested. I have been working on an Earth Timeline that some of you may find interesting.

The book ISHMAEL by Daniel Quinn speaks to your final question...

Gary

-----Original Message-----
From: David Yarrow [mailto:championtrees@msn.com]
Sent: Monday, May 05, 2003 10:05 PM
To: ENTSTrees
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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anaerobes didn't pollute the early earthly atmosphere; bluegreen algae -- the first primitive plants did. this strain of bacteria in earth's early ocean learned to create chlorophyll to capture sunshine, using four photons to pry apart two water molecules, releasing four electrons, four protons and a molecule of oxygen. the free electrons and protons are used to braid carbon dioxide into a carbon chain that becomes carbohydrates: sugar, which is sunshine stored as chemical energy. life on earth was never the same.

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www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

----- Original Message -----

From:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:lef@goldengate.net%3Elef>mailto:lef@goldengate.net>lef

To:

<<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com%3EENTSTrees@topica.com>mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 01, 2003 7:52 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment.

Robie and Don:

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This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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Any views expressed in this message are those of the individual sender, except where the sender specifies and with authority, states them to be the views of Sisters of Providence Health System.

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Susan Benoit <sbenoit@map.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 01:06:05 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1052370124.inmta006.19748.1466990>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>

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X-Priority: 3

X-Note: This E-mail was scanned by Declude JunkMail (www.declude.com) for spam.

X-pstn-levels: (C:88.7295 M:97.8478 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:32.9649)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <sbenoit@map.com> forward (good recip)

David, and Colby, Bob, Maurice, Lee, Joe, Gary, Don, Howard, Tim, and everyone,

This is a fascinating discussion. David, you have me thinking back to Colby's earlier reference to cultural advances as hopefully offering solutions to our dilemma as posed by Bob, and I basically agree with your philosophy, as I understand it. I have to think that the "greater cultural advancement" will always ultimately do us in, since it must always entail taking care or better care of each other in various fundamental ways, which in turn means that more of us survive to the next generation, having babies of whom we take good care, etc., etc. The more ethical we become, the more of us there will be, and so...? We are back to our dilemma of limited natural resources and other species with "rights" (whatever that means) versus our own steadily increasing population.

Personally, I too think there is no way out, in any cultural or culture-wide sense, of Bob's dilemma or of the slide to extinction (the analogy to our individual lives, and deaths, is instructive). Civilization as we know it is worse than useless, as has been shown in this discussion. If egalitarianism (if I'm using the word correctly) is a no-thoroughfare over any long term, so is any sort of dictatorship, however beneficent (and, of course, they never have been beneficent), that could put us all on the right or the best course. If I'm not the one telling everyone what to do then I don't want anyone to be able to tell everyone what to do. I suspect I'm not alone in this feeling.

So I don't see where any of it can get us in any ultimate sense. And since nothing is going to get us anywhere in any ultimate sense, maybe the best we can do is literally to be as good to and as patient with each other (I know, Joe; I know) as we can; to remember that we none of us have the answers; and that the very best we can do is to enjoy the ride and to make it enjoyable. I hope I don't sound flip, or like a mere hedonist. I just don't see any other ultimate way out, but I also think the implications of that enjoyment can be profound, for ourselves, but also for all those around us -- human and non-human, more profound than anything else we can contemplate. Was there ever anything more worth living for, ultimately, or dying for, than love? So what are we waiting for? It is the waiting for others to be better, or to

deserve our forbearance and patience, that will do us in, and rob us of our chance to really do good in the world. And I don't mean love in any cute or cloying sense; I mean the genuine appreciation of our own gifts, and the willingness to allow the possibility for goodness in everyone else, in a hundred ways, every day.

Susan

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:championtrees@msn.com>David Yarrow

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees

Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2003 7:22 AM

Subject: ::SPAM?::Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Joe Zorzin wrote:

>> Because what you are describing seems to be the trajectory we are on - that's why we must take a more militant stand to prevent that from happening. But, the second any of us use some really rough language to describe what's really going on- especially in the forestry world- the party liners all stand up (the only time they stand up) and scream that we're "ranting and raving". Polite discourse never brought any progress to American civilization and it won't save the planet. I'm not proposing violence- but there's a huge gap between violence on the one hand and timid polite discourse on the other.

you're quite right, but i'm never one to shout or argue. i've seen we're on the road to extinction for 30 years, and quietly gone about doing what i can to forge a different path into the future. besides, all that happens if you rant and rave is the knuckleheads will ostracize, blacklist and ignore you, and vote you out of office. and withdraw deeper into denial and self righteousness. or sink into numb, paralytic, helpless, hopelessness. most average folks are terrified of confrontation with the consequences of their consumptive exploitation of nature.

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meanwhile, nature is speaking more and more loudly. towns in the midwest look worse than bhagdad after the bombing. don't

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www.championtrees.org
www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robert Leverett <dbhguru@attbi.com>
Subject: Civilization, the natural environment, and new lasers
Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 06:56:21 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052391558.inmta002.21473.1503012>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:93.8525 M:97.8478 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:30.8623)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbhguru@attbi.com> forward (good recip)

Susan:

You've started the day off with a fine message. For those of us who are activist by nature, it is easy to slip into negativity. Since death eventually takes us all, I suppose there is an ultimate justification to an underpinning of negativity, but being upbeat is more fun and I can't think of a better reason to be upbeat today than the arrival of my new Nikon laser.

Well, no sooner said than I have to contemplate the question raised by my good friend Don Bertollette, " Ah but do you have the Leica Laser Locator with 7x25 stereo vision and magnetic flux compass?". I'm suddenly depressed again. I can hear a conversation developing between me and my wife, Jani.

Janiiiiiiiiiiii, can I have a new new laser? Uh, what was that you said? Isn't a new laser coming today? Ur, uh, well, yes, but But what? Well, ur, uh, it isn't a Leica and Don's going to have one and I'm not. So can I have a new Leica, please, please, please? I'll buy you lots of nice presents.

Works every time.

Bob

From: <mailto:sbenoit@map.com>Susan Benoit
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 1:06 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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Susan

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From: <mailto:championtrees@msn.com>David Yarrow

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees

Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2003 7:22 AM

Subject: ::SPAM?:Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: windbear@juno.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 11:24:57 GMT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052393108.inmta007.28823.1457026>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Originating-IP: [207.198.18.10]
X-Original-From: windbear@juno.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:88.7295 M:97.0282 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:69.3026)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <windbear@juno.com> forward (good recip)

Susan,

I appreciate your comments on this subject. Especially this part:

"I just don't see any other ultimate way out, but I also think the implications of that enjoyment can be profound, for ourselves, but also for all those around us -- human and non-human, more profound than anything else we can contemplate. Was there ever anything more worth living for, ultimately, or dying for, than love? So what are we waiting for? It is the waiting for others to be better, or to deserve our forbearance and patience, that will do us in, and rob us of our chance to really do good in the world. And I don't mean love in any cute or cloying sense; I mean the genuine appreciation of our own gifts, and the willingness to allow the possibility for goodness in everyone else, in a hundred ways, every day."

You are right - we cannot keep waiting for others to be better. We each need to change ourselves, recognizing that we all together are the cause of our problems. What if we start now to recognize that ours is not the only way? Ours is just one way. What if we respect the other person's way? In that place there is no need of a defense. If we are defenseless, there is nothing in us for anyone to attack. We have a long way to go to get to that level of enlightenment, but as they say, the longest trip starts with the first step.

I believe that we each create our own reality -- based on our individual beliefs -- the things we focus on in our daily lives. We need to remember that we cannot create in someone else's reality -- but we can be an example. Many people do not even remember

Gandhi or what he accomplished any longer. And what is wrong with focusing on love? It is not just some vague concept that will not translate into action. There are only two basic emotions -- love and fear. Everything else is a variation on a theme. We have bought into the fear for too long now, and look at the actions that generates. It is fear that the "corporados" use to control us. Corporations are artificial persons. Perhaps they thrive best on fear. But Humans are natural persons and we are love, not fear. It has been said that God is love. If so, then Love is God. If God is All That Is, then so is Love. We are a part of All That Is -- and so we are Love. Perhaps we should start looking at the old growth as an examp!

le to us of what Love can accomplish in its physical manifestation. We who spend time there have an advantage. We can use it as a reminder. And -- as John Denver said in one of his songs, "If Peace is our mission -- let us begin!"

We each can begin with ourselves. It is not easy to overcome the old programming -- but if we keep love, and all its potential, lively in our consciousness we have a chance of creating our own "old growth" realm within us. We all know what it feels like to be in the old growth. Wouldn't it be fine to bring that home within us? And who says we can't? It's about time we evolve spiritually. Let us begin!

May the warmth and love of the old growth be with you all,
Dennis

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[10.140.24.65])

by maildeliver26.lax.unttd.com with SMTP id
AAA9MV3GXA5KUEHJ

for <windbear@juno.com> (sender <tex-discuss-
errors.800025543.806330673.821394046.008.0.0@boing.topica.com
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Wed, 7 May 2003 22:02:14 -0700 (PST)

Received: from out005.tpctex.com (out005.tpctex.com
[69.24.236.25])

by mx5.nyc.unttd.com with SMTP id AAA9MV3GXAGPZT4S
for <windbear@juno.com> (sender <tex-discuss-

errors.800025543.806330673.821394046.008.0.0@boing.topica.com
>);

Thu, 8 May 2003 01:02:13 -0400 (EST)

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Susan Benoit <sbenoit@map.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 01:06:05 -0400

Message-ID: <694940025-1463792638-
1052370125@boing.topica.com>

Errors-To: <tex-discuss-
errors.800025543.806330673.821394046.008.0.0@boing.topica.com
>

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1052370124.inmta006.19748.1466990>

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List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>

Return-Path: <sbenoit@map.com>

Received: (qmail 3713 invoked by alias); 8 May 2003 05:02:03
-0000

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-0000

Received: from unknown (HELO mail.map.com) (69.24.239.7)
by 0 with SMTP; 8 May 2003 05:02:03 -0000

Received: from oemcomputer [161.77.5.48] by mail.map.com

(SMTPD32-7.10) id A41648B00142; Thu, 08 May 2003 00:59:02
-0400

References: <1998348552-1463792382-1052243725@boing.topica.com>
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/alternative;
 boundary="----=_NextPart_000_008B_01C314FE.0074A900"
X-Priority: 3
X-MSMail-Priority: Normal
X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 6.00.2800.1158
X-MimeOLE: Produced By Microsoft MimeOLE V6.00.2800.1165
X-Note: This E-mail was scanned by Declude JunkMail
(www.declude.com) for spam.

David, and Colby, Bob, Maurice, Lee, Joe, Gary, Don, Howard, Tim, and everyone,

This is a fascinating discussion. David, you have me thinking back to Colby's earlier reference to cultural advances as hopefully offering solutions to our dilemma as posed by Bob, and I basically agree with your philosophy, as I understand it. I have to think that the "greater cultural advancement" will always ultimately do us in, since it must always entail taking care or better care of each other in various fundamental ways, which in turn means that more of us survive to the next generation, having babies of whom we take good care, etc., etc. The more ethical we become, the more of us there will be, and so...? We are back to our dilemma of limited natural resources and other species with "rights" (whatever that means) versus our own steadily increasing population.

Personally, I too think there is no way out, in any cultural or culture-wide sense, of Bob's dilemma or of the slide to extinction (the analogy to our individual lives, and deaths, is instructive). Civilization as we know it is worse than useless, as has been shown in this discussion. If egalitarianism (if I'm using the word correctly) is a no-thoroughfare over any long term, so is any sort of dictatorship, however beneficent (and, of course, they never have been beneficent), that could put us all on the right or the best course. If I'm not the one telling everyone what to do then I don't want anyone to be able to tell everyone what to do. I suspect I'm not alone in this feeling.

So I don't see where any of it can get us in any ultimate sense. And since nothing is going to get us anywhere in any ultimate sense, maybe the best we can do is literally to be as good to and as

patient with each other (I know, Joe; I know) as we can; to remember that we none of us have the answers; and that the very best we can do is to enjoy the ride and to make it enjoyable. I hope I don't sound flip, or like a mere hedonist. I just don't see any other ultimate way out, but I also think the implications of that enjoyment can be profound, for ourselves, but also for all those around us -- human and non-human, more profound than anything else we can contemplate. Was there ever anything more worth living for, ultimately, or dying for, than love? So what are we waiting for? It is the waiting for others to be better, or to deserve our forbearance and patience, that will do us in, and rob us of our chance to really do good in the world. And I don't mean love in any cute or cloying sense; I mean the genuine appreciation of our own gifts, and the willingness to allow the possibility for goodness in everyone else, in a hundred ways, every day.

Susan

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:championtrees@msn.com>David Yarrow

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees

Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2003 7:22 AM

Subject: ::SPAM?::Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Joe Zorzin wrote:

>> Because what you are describing seems to be the trajectory we are on - that's why we must take a more militant stand to prevent that from happening. But, the second any of us use some really rough language to describe what's really going on- especially in the forestry world- the party liners all stand up (the only time they stand up) and scream that we're "ranting and raving". Polite discourse never brought any progress to American civilization and it won't save the planet. I'm not proposing violence- but there's a huge gap between violence on the one hand and timid polite discourse on the other.

you're quite right, but i'm never one to shout or argue. i've seen we're on the road to extinction for 30 years, and quietly gone about doing what i can to forge a different path into the future. besides, all that happens if you rant and rave is the knuckleheads will ostracize, blacklist and ignore you, and vote you out of office. and withdraw deeper into denial and self righteousness. or sink

into numb, paralytic, helpless, hopelessness. most average folks are terrified of confrontation with the consequences of their consumptive exploitation of nature.

then there's the evangelical crowd waiting for the rapture and armageddon..... nature is just more deception of the flesh and satan.....

meanwhile, nature is speaking more and more loudly. towns in the midwest look worse than bhagdad after the bombing. don't even try to rival that "ranting and raving." the consequences of global warming as the planetary heat engine rachets up into overdrive. better to offer folks an alternative avenue of escape than to shout into their face and deepen their fear. besides, who is really listening?

David Yarrow

Turtle EyeLand Sanctuary

44 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY 12061

518-477-6100; fax 477-1346

www.championtrees.org

www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/

www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Robie Hublely <rhublely@crocker.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Date: Thu, 08 May 2003 10:32:59 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1052406213.inmta007.28824.1291769>

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>

List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>

X-Sender: rhublely@mail.crocker.com (Unverified)

X-pstn-levels: (C:94.8793 M:94.0565 P:95.9108 R:95.9108

S:82.8206)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <rhublely@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

I believe that what actually happens when we take better care of our people, especially when we advance the economic independence and freedom of women, provide opportunities for women's education, and give women control over their reproductive lives, is that the birth rate declines, often below

replacement levels. As it stands right now, this is the course that offers the best chance that humans might come to their senses, and gain some prospect that they might survive a little longer as a species.

You want some statistics? I can get you some statistics.

Besides, why shouldn't women be better off economically, be better educated, control more of their own finances, and have the right to control their reproductive lives?

I'm fer it!

Robie

=====
=====

At 01:06 AM 05/08/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>

David, and Colby, Bob, Maurice, Lee, Joe, Gary, Don, Howard, Tim, and everyone,

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Susan

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From: <mailto:championtrees@msn.com>David Yarrow

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees

Sent: Tuesday, May 06, 2003 7:22 AM

Subject: ::SPAM?::Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Joe Zorzin wrote:

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meanwhile, nature is speaking more and more loudly. towns in the midwest look worse than bhagdad after the bombing. don't even try to rival that "ranting and raving." the consequences of global warming as the planetary heat engine rachets up into overdrive. better to offer folks an alternative avenue of escape than to shout into their face and deepen their fear. besides, who is really listening?

David Yarrow
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518-477-6100; fax 477-1346
www.championtrees.org
www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 11:16:51 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052407016.inmta006.19748.1498571>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 08 May 2003 15:16:52.0014 (UTC)
FILETIME=[DA58ACE0:01C31574]

Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment
Thread-Index: AcMVdALj01gvO01bTgarpLBfloK4aQAAGV2g
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0.7670)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good
recip)

Robie:

So am I.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Robie Hubley [mailto:rhubley@crocker.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 10:33 AM
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

I believe that what actually happens when we take better care of our people, especially when we advance the economic independence and freedom of women, provide opportunities for women's education, and give women control over their reproductive lives, is that the birth rate declines, often below replacement levels. As it stands right now, this is the course that offers the best chance that humans might come to their senses, and gain some prospect that they might survive a little longer as a species.

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I'm fer it!

Robie

=====
=====

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**To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 12:00:28 EDT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052409721.inmta007.28823.1468410>**

List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-pstn-levels: (C:87.2912 M:95.8395 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.3646)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <SHAMROCK94@aol.com> forward (good
recip)

Hey Gang,

Over population seems to be the key factor in most of our problems. If our population was at a level that would allow us to live our extravagant lifestyles without overwhelming the available resources then all our other discussions would be moot. We could continue to live and function using our ancient instincts to manipulate, control and horde and the world could still easily find a way to maintain equilibrium despite our lack of enlightenment.

But with so many people, and more on the way, all intent on living the American dream; we are now way out of balance. Our only choice is to rise above our instincts of face the consequences. The world will return to balance whether we like its turn or not.

So yes we should live and love and be as happy as possible. But that does not mean we should turn our backs on the mess around us. The Germans ignored their governments transgressions, living their happy lives right up until the point where most of them were destroyed in a devastating war. Perhaps if more Germans had been aware and willing to take action in the beginning, we could have avoided 20 million deaths and the countless fractured lives and environmental damage that came to pass.

For me it comes down to balance. Finding the ways I can help without losing the joy of living. No, I do not have the answers to the worlds problems. But I do see the problems looming over us, clear as day. So I do feel responsible for helping others see the consequences of the path we are choosing as well as finding the ways that my small mind and body can contribute to making a better world for everyone. As long as there are fearful, needy, unhappy people living in an unbalanced world, my happiness will be harder to completely attain and beyond my control to maintain.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: "Leverett, Robert" <robert.leverett@sphs.com>
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 13:16:36 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052414202.inmta006.19748.1507208>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/entstrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:entstrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 08 May 2003 17:16:36.0872 (UTC)
FILETIME=[94DB0080:01C31585]
Thread-Topic: Civilization and the natural environment
Thread-Index: AcMVfJKSDPKFXFjxTjq0xhxTNh3LkAAAgO9g
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:97.0282 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
0.9472)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <robert.leverett@sphs.com> forward (good
recip)

Tim:

We understand your dilemma. Susan certainly does. She just wants us to not inflict too much emotional pain on ourselves resisting the inevitable. The human race is rushing pell-mell toward an unavoidable population crash, be it by disease, war, famine, or natural catastrophe. The sad part is that a species with so much potential and so many stellar accomplishments must meet with an ignominious end with no common will for avoidance.

With a Vivaldi CD playing 17th century Italian baroque music for lute and mandolin that evokes nostalgic scenes of the immortal classics - art, music, poetry, architecture, and sculpture, as a species, why can't we protect both our cultural and natural

heritages? To my simple mind, we are still too much a prisoner of our long evolutionary struggle for survival in a world once filled with large, dangerous animals and pestilence. Our modern romanticized view of a balanced nature has always involved a lot of death and decay, with ample suffering along the way from tooth decay among other things. But abstracting the beauty of mountains, oceans, and storms is no trifling accomplishment. Neither is making exquisite violins from native woods to challenge the musical skills of a Frelich, developing infrared lasers to satisfy the curiosity of a Blozan or Luthringer, or inventing e-mail to allow a burl-belly to wax not so poetic. Lots to ponder these days.

Musings of a laser-anticipating Burl-belly

-----Original Message-----

From: TJ Sullivan [mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com]

Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 12:00 PM

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Hey Gang,

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Tim

This email was sent to: robert.leverett@sphs.com

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 13:34:45 EDT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052415303.inmta006.19748.1508727>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-pstn-levels: (C:88.1683 M:99.4056 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.7131)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <SHAMROCK94@aol.com> forward (good recip)

Bob,

I'm not a big believer in inevitability. I've seen too much magic and too many good people in this world to believe it is all for nothing. Besides, resistance doe not need to be painful. Look at the Bread and Puppet folks. They seem to have an awful lot of fun resisting the powers that be. As do you when you are out measuring trees and showing people how special they are.

Going with the flow, stuck in traffic in a car that's gonna take 4 more years to pay off, while your trying to get to a job you'd rather not be doing, but have to do in order to pay of that car - now that's my idea of emmotional pain! No matter what wonderful music you may have playing on the radio.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Susan Benoit <sbenoit@map.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 22:44:34 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052448032.inmta006.19748.1541961>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-Note: This E-mail was scanned by Declude JunkMail
(www.declude.com) for spam.
X-pstn-levels: (C:94.8793 M:94.5022 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.2055)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <sbenoit@map.com> forward (good recip)

I don't understand how Robie's comment jibes with the present human population curve, statistics or no. Just looking at that curve for 2000 years before, and now since the nineteenth century....

Women in most parts of the world have far more of all those things -- certainly than they did pre-Industrial Revolution -- and yet look at that bloody curve. Sounds like too little remedy way too late. And focusing on women's rights is wrong, IMO, because the problems are human, not gender-based. If we can put women's and therefore the world's problems on men, then suddenly men have a very big problem, if you see what I'm driving at, so we are back to looking at EVERYBODY'S problems. Talk about divide and conquer! The imbalances and inequalities between the sexes are symptoms, they are not the disease, and, from an evolutionary standpoint and scale, they cut both ways. Neither sex can develop too much of an advantage over the other, because, as soon as the one does, the other dies off or dries up, and the whole show grinds to a halt, with the beleaguered sex suddenly at a premium by virtue of its scarcity.

I would really like to understand what is so fearful about death, which I would posit as the biggest, or the root, problem. Why is it so divorced from life, if you think about it, when it is as much a part of life as birth, and, indeed, gives life so much of its savor and all of its aching sweetness? (Death is why I try to take care of and enjoy everybody, and especially those I love.) Why is it so unacceptable, at ANY point in life, and at any cost in care and expense? And not only our own deaths, but anyone belonging to us? It can't be just the prospect of missing the beloved, or sorrow at the thought that they will miss something, can it? I had a 93-year-old neighbor who was recommended for a pacemaker. He was not interested, because he was nearly blind, mostly deaf, and unable to get around at all without a walker and supervision, but what kind of a system and larger culture drives those kinds of recommendations? Most people get zero support, from anywhere, for accepting and then embracing the inevitable, even once it is clearly inevitable.

It is our (apparently innate) fear of death, our inability to accept it -- in any phase of life -- that drives our population problem, secondo me. Would medical science have mushroomed the way it has if we were more philosophical, as it were, about death and its finality? We wanted to live forever, probably, all along, but it's only been since the germ theory of disease and the exponential advances in technology that we have been able to whittle away at the odds to such an extent. What are the consequences of eradicating smallpox and the plague, in the long term? Babies born with any degree of "illness" are admitted to the neonatal critical care unit, in many hospitals, and their parents and pediatricians officially lose all say in their treatment and all control over them until they are released. Will we paradoxically lengthen and multiply the human lifespan to such an extent that the quality and importance of it are nullified? If life becomes so 'cheap" and abundant, again paradoxically, like slave labor was considered in the days of Empire or the pharaohs, what will that do to our respect for it in other people? I have no idea, obviously, and I find all these questions completely baffling on any beyond the personal level; and that bafflement is really the foundation of my worry for the species. Any thoughts, ENTS?

But anyway, I'm going out into the woods this weekend!! Talk about lucky: the stiffes who get to spend all their time there. I

guess I should have been a forester, or an academic researcher.
Not that I have any regrets, mind... ;~)

Susan

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 11:16 AM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment

Robie:

So am I.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Robie Hubley [mailto:rhuble@crocker.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 10:33 AM
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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Robie

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Don Bertolette <dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 21:30:00 -0700
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052454614.inmta004.23531.1447650>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:87.2912 M:96.4339 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.1979)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertolette@unneedspeed.net> forward
(good recip)

Tim-
Time for us to start adopting instead of
procreating...ZeroPopulationGrowth is the first incremental step...
-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>>TJ Sullivan
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 9:00 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Hey Gang,

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Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 05:50:46 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052474223.inmta004.15819.1003797>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:86.7145 M:95.9494 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:1.1096)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <mlforester@rcn.com> forward (good recip)

Don B;

What you really mean is Immigration Control. There may be about 10 million illegal aliens in this country now. Another million might sneak into the country every year. When the numbers get

too high, Congress declares an amnesty and it never stops. Legal immigration is also huge - 1 million/year. It's time to take control over our own borders. If that means erecting a Berlin type wall, then so be it. This should be the number one priority for real environmentalists because our population growth is what is driving urban sprawl, increased greenhouse gases, pollution, etc. At current growth rates, the US population will be 500,000 million in 50 years. Sounds good huh? Forget about all the other environmental issues. This is the NUMBER 1 ISSUE. That is why I supported NAFTA and Free Trade Agreements in the Western Hemisphere. Let's help Mexico and other central and South American countries improve their economies so they won't try and come here.

A National Identity Card is needed to weed out all the illegals who are here now. They should all be rounded up and sent back ASAP.

ML

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>Don Bertolette
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2003 12:30 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Tim-

Time for us to start adopting instead of procreating...ZeroPopulationGrowth is the first incremental step...
-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>TJ Sullivan
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 9:00 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Hey Gang,

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Tim

This email was sent to: mlforester@rcn.com

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<<http://topica.com/u/?a2iZIX.a48UXh.bWxmb3Jl>><http://topica.com/u/?a2iZIX.a48UXh.bWxmb3Jl>

Or send an email to: ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robert Leverett <dbhguru@attbi.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 06:49:52 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052477570.inmta002.27661.1005549>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:87.2912 M:96.4339 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.6488)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbhguru@attbi.com> forward (good recip)

Don:

ZeroPopulationGrowth never seems to appeal a number of groups of people whose genes aren't needed but who insist on passing them on.

Bob

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>>Don Bertollette
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2003 12:30 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Tim-

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-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>>TJ Sullivan
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 9:00 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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Tim

This email was sent to: dbhguru@attbi.com

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Or send an email to: ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com

To: ENTSTrees <ENTSTrees@topica.com>
From: David Yarrow <championtrees@msn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 08:29:39 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052501892.inmta006.22621.1030286>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Originating-IP: [207.94.112.77]
X-Originating-Email: [championtrees@msn.com]
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 09 May 2003 16:23:14.0949 (UTC)
FILETIME=[4AC61350:01C31647]
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:95.5423 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
2.1000)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <championtrees@msn.com> forward (good
recip)

as for the "american dream," i see the key problem less as overpopulation than over-consumption. not how many people there are, but how they choose to live. there are nations today with much higher population densities than america.

similarly with energy, the issue is less what kind of energy generation systems we have, than how much energy we consume individually and collectively. our ethics and economics encourage consumption: more is better, and cheaper is best. how much fossil fuel is each person's right to burn? the key issue is morality and ethics, not technology and supply.

the same with food. today america is a nation in which people consume far too much food with far too few nutrients. the consequence is not just increasing overweight and obesity, but

more devastating is that 90 percent! of the population is dying an early death of degenerative disease. that so many die unnaturally of disease is overwhelming and undeniable evidence of a culture out of balance.

but denial is a major feature of this culture and the mindset that spawns it. and shouting at them drives them deeper into denial, which usually pushes them emotionally to become into ever more efficient, fast and fixated on their dysfunctional behaviors.

it's unreasonable to expect sensible, ecological, sustainable forestry practices of a culture and population so out of balance and out of touch with nature. what will bring a correction? what can force an adjustment? what will bring awareness and change to a population that wakes up everyday ready to rush off into habitual consumption?

my experiences with human psychology reveals that almost always calamity, pain and loss are the only experiences that force people to stop, self reflect and change course. sometimes. a small percent of the times.

so, bring it on. and, not to worry, because it is coming. rather, it is happening.

more is better, but less is best.

David Yarrow
Turtle EyeLand Sanctuary
44 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY 12061
518-477-6100; fax 477-1346
www.championtrees.org
www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
<<http://www.championtrees.org/yarrow/>>www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

----- original message -----

Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 12:00:28 EDT

From:

<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>SHAMROCK94@aol.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Hey Gang,

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Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhuley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Fri, 09 May 2003 08:51:06 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052485810.inmta002.27662.1004311>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhuley@mail.crocker.com (Unverified)
X-pstn-levels: (C:94.2623 M:90.4903 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:30.4883)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhuley@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

Overpopulation is an intransigent problem; a problem that might require bitter medicine. Controlling population in one country results in leaving resources to support additional population in another. This is the ultimate Tragedy of the Commons. The only way to control population is by mutual constraints mutually arrived at. If that is what we decide to do, it will require world government, and it is clear how we are moving on that.

Setting that aside, it has become clear that the demographic transition results in lowering the rate of population growth, sometimes below replacement levels. And demographic transition

requires raising the standard of living for whole populations; especially increasing education, economic opportunity and independence, and reproductive freedom for women. Demographic transition is a process that requires popular participation and so takes time. The conditions required for the transition are not being widely achieved at the pace that would be required to stem the threatening tide of population.

Military adventures around the world are wasting the resources and the time, and war is destroying the trust and confidence that would be required to improve the well being of humans around the world to the point that demographic transition could rein in population on a peaceful basis.

It could happen, perhaps, but it sure isn't happening now.

=====
=====

At 12:00 PM 05/08/03 EDT, you wrote:

>>>>

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Tim

<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 09:55:36 EDT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052488550.inmta002.27662.1005162>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:92.4220 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.3322)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <SHAMROCK94@aol.com> forward (good recip)

Mike,

I understand your point but disagree with your solution.

When I hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in 1997, I started at the Mexican boarder where I got a first hand introduction to immigration control. There is a a very tall solid steel fence stretching across the boarder from the Pacific Ocean to well past where the trail begins. The town of Campo where I began had a boarder patrol station with 100 vehicles of various shapes and sizes and 300 agents. They were supported by several black hawk helicopters that buzzed overhead throughout the night.

But the fence and guards and millions of dollars being spent seemed to have little effect on the immigrants. Though I know the fence is very affective in stopping wildlife, separating populations of already endangered species.

I met many Mexicans and saw dozens more darting across the dessert wearing jeans and sneakers carrying plastic bags with a little bit of food and perhaps a bottle of water. At first I was frustrated by the lack of security and feared for my own safety. But I quickly developed a deep respect for these people who were willing to pay their life's savings to "guides" who were very likely to rip them off, then risk their lives crossing a desert that was daunting for me even with the latest backpacking equipment and maps showing all the water sources. How poor and desperate their lives must be to take such chances! Yet not once was I threatened by these people who mostly took great pains to avoid me.

I really do not think we can build walls tall enough, post enough guards or spend enough money to stop the tide. Especially when we are so busy selling the American Dream to the rest of the world yet so reluctant to let them share in it, unless it puts money in our pockets.

I agree with you that we need to improve the economies in developing nations, though I worry that the current free trade agreements will not have that desired effect, at least from the perspective of the people who most feel the need to emigrate. I wonder what would happen if the billions of dollars spent on protecting our borders over the decades had instead been put into social projects in Mexico and other developing countries. If we remove the disparity in our life styles then you remove the need to emigrate. In fact I would argue that most people would be quite willing to live with far less than we have, if we stopped strutting around telling everyone how great and rich and powerful we are.

Yes I know, we already giving more foreign aid than any other nation. But that money often goes directly to propping up governments and companies who we favor for economic or strategic reasons, little of it trickles down to the people. Besides as a percentage of our GNP the amount we give is dead last among the top economic powers and pitifully non existent in comparison to our massive defense budget.

There has never been a castle built that has been strong enough to protect the privileged rich folks hiding inside when those outside its walls are struggling and starving. I think its time we start learning from history instead of repeating it.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 14:11:36 EDT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052503903.inmta006.22621.1032374>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-pstn-levels: (C:80.5044 M:98.8113 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.5225)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <SHAMROCK94@aol.com> forward (good recip)

In a message dated 5/9/2003 1:38:45 PM Eastern Daylight Time, championtrees@msn.com writes:

more is better, but less is best.

I agree. More at least seems better, if only for the short term. Less is certainly best for the long haul. "Quality, not quantity" as one of my wise relatives used to say.

Too bad our culture is too short sighted to see this. I bet the world could support all of us if we choose to live sustainably.

Unfortunately self restraint does not seem to be one of the stronger human instincts. But we do seem quite adept at creating new and horrible methods for population control, both slow and

subtle as well as fast and obvious. It is probably just a matter of time before we employ enough of them at once to do the job. I do believe Mr. Bush and his allies really are some of the few people working hard to provide us with a quick solution to our worlds population crises. I just worry about his method for choosing who should stay and who should be eliminated.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parks.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 14:50:18 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052506226.inmta006.22621.1034783>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: parks@his.com
X-pstn-levels: (C:98.9754 M:88.1913 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:7.3230)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <parks@parks.org> forward (good recip)

David,

The problems are not only American problems. The problems are universal both historically and currently. We Americans are not alone in our contempt for the natural environment. The Chinese, for example, are engaged in a huge catch-up race to maximum consumption. The only reason that we are #1 on the hit parade is because nobody else can afford it. As fast as they can afford it, the rest of the world will join the consumption binge. They are competing to get there first.

I am not justifying our behavior. I am trying to understand.

The following two insightful collections of revelations of the historical kinship of civilization and degradation of the natural

environment contribute to the case for recognizing the universality of the problems. . One collection is by ENTS member Ed Nizalowski. The second is by ENTS member Don Bertolette.

Maurice

=====

-----Ed's message-----

To: Eastern Native Tree Society <ENTSTrees@topica.com>
From: edniz <edniz@prodigy.net>
Subject: Civilization and the Environment
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 22:25:32 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Hello,

I'm quite fascinated by this topic and very glad that it comes up on this listserv quite frequently. I think that it stems from all of us wondering where are the "roots" of the environmental degradation, indifference and destruction that we currently see in the world.

For myself it started when I began to understand the character of the pristine forests of the Southern Tier of New York. After reading Cronon's book, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*, I realized that the pioneers of the Southern Tier knew that the environmental practices they had inherited from New England left something to be desired. In turn, the pioneers of New England, knew that the environmental practices of the mother country were also deficient by nearly any standard you would want to use as a yardstick, but there was virtually

no change in the way forest resources were treated. I began to realize that here was a thread of environmental destruction and obtuse philosophy that had many centuries of momentum and inertia sustaining it. I just finished reading Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut. He puts it this way: "And so it goes."

I've included some quotes that I especially liked from *The Forest* by Walter Kumarly and *Forests The Shadow of Civilization* by Robert Pogue Harrison. I've also included some pertinent information from Cronon's book along with a few specific quotes. It is sobering reading to say the least.

Ed Nizalowski

Ø "The mountains from the Syrian Lebanon and the Anatolian Dagh to the Sierras of Andalusia and the Rif of Morocco were well covered with trees. All these mountains have long been denuded. And together with the forests, famous granaries have disappeared in historical times"

Ø "Clearly Venice realized about 1600 what effects deforestation could have. Venice, as a great power in the Mediterranean, required countless trees for its powerful navy and these could be obtained only from the mountains of Dalmatia. . . . The fleet built from those forests helped establish the glory of Venice but the Dalmatian mountains were turned into arid karst, a term that has become synonymous with denuded, desiccated, hard and perforated rocky ground where forests can never grow again. . . In

Albania the once vast forests have likewise been destroyed. Unrestricted cutting of timber totally upset the water budget; fierce torrents came into being with the disappearance of the rain-retaining forests, causing inundations and turning fertile land into swamps."

Ø "Cyprus, too, has its forest story. . . . St. Helena, perhaps the clearest illustration of the effect of uncontrolled grazing. [goats introduced in 1502] When the tragic fact was understood, an extermination of the goats was begun in 1730; but by then it was too late to save the forest."

Ø "Gaul, according to ancient accounts, was so densely wooded that squirrels were said to be able to jump from tree to tree in an unbroken forest from Toulouse all the way to Normandy"

Ø "Goat grazing has also contributed to the denudation of Spain over the centuries"

Ø Algerian forests: 2,224,000 acres of forest were burnt between 1875 and 1897.

Ø The U.S.A. between 1780 and 1930, i.e. in 150 years, cleared 346 million acres of forest, European Russia about 74 million acres in the 19th century, and Rumania 2.5 millions acres between 1920 and 1930 alone.

Ø Freidrich Schiller, whose son became a chief forester: "You are great men: you work in anonymity, without reward, free from the tyranny of selfishness, and the fruits of your devotion will ripen for a distant posterity." Schiller had viewed foresters as huntsmen and killers of

wildlife. Germany was probably the first country to establish forestry management plans which date back to 1790.

Kumarly, Walter. *The Forest*. Translated from the German. New York: Robert B. Luce Co., Inc, 1973 pp. 259-271

Ø "In their drives to promote their civilizations both the Greeks and the Romans also promoted a mindless deforestation of the Mediterranean. Already by the fourth century B. C. Plato recalls with nostalgia a time when forests still covered much of Attica. Speaking of the hills surrounding Athens, Plato writes in the *Critias*: 'In comparison of what then was, there are remaining only the bones of the wasted body . . .all the richer and softer parts of the soil having fallen away, and the mere skeleton of the land being left.' p. 55

Ø "We know, for example, that the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries in Europe witnessed the widespread extermination of those species of wild animals which could neither be tamed nor utilized, and that deforestation took place on unprecedented scales around the Mediterranean and in England. . . . Never before had an ideology so thoroughly divorced the human from the animal species and considered the earth as a whole the former's natural inheritance." p. 92

Ø "England had already been heavily deforested by the time William arrived in the 11th century, but the clearing of woodlands (not royal

forests) continued indiscriminately during Tudor and Stuart times. It was not until the 17th century, thanks largely to the publication of John Evelyn's *Silva* (1664), that the problem of timber shortage for navy ships forced a new awareness on the administration about the vital economic and national importance of woodlands. Until then the English had generally congratulated themselves on their razing efforts, considering woodlands obstacles to progress or a haven for thieves and other degenerates." (p. 100)

Ø "We could say that a war is being waged today in the United States between Monsieur le Roy and John Manwood. The war is between two fundamentally opposed concepts of the forest. One is the concept of the forest as resource; the other of the forest as sanctuary." (p. 123)

"The sacred groves of Europe's barbarian prehistory give a new meaning to the phrase 'cathedral forest,' which has become something of a commonplace these days. The Gothic cathedral visibly reproduces the ancient scenes of worship in its lofty interior, which rises vertically toward the sky and then curves into a vault from all sides, like so many tree crowns converging into a canopy overhead. Like breaks in the foliage, windows let in light from beyond the enclosure. In other words, the phrase 'cathedral forest' entails more than just a casual analogy; or better, the analogy has its basis in an ancient correspondence between forests and the dwelling place of a god. . . .

"The correspondence between columns and trees leads one to suspect that the archaic Greek temple is not unlike the Gothic cathedral in its religious symbolism. Why, after all, is the Greek temple dense with columns? What purpose do the columns serve beyond their architectural function? If a single column once symbolized a sacred tree, a cluster of columns may well have symbolized a sacred grove." (p. 178)

Forests The Shadow of Civilization (Harrison) University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1992.

Benjamin Rush described a three part process for "taming" the wilderness:

- 1) Settlers lived almost identical to Indians
- 2) Settlers have Indian manners but these are more diluted
- 3) Settlers have tamed the land; farmers have brought civilization (p. 5)

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q "As in the process of clearing, colonial farmers treated their land as a resource to be mined until it was exhausted, rather than one to be conserved for less intense but more perennial use." (pp. 152-3)

"You know, our fathers had plenty of deer and skins, our plains were full of deer, as also our woods, and turkies, and our coves full of fish and fowl. But these English having gotten our land, they with scythes cut down the grass, and with axes fell the trees; their cows and horses eat the grass,

and their hogs spoil our clam banks, and we shall all be starved."
Spoken
by Miantonomo, a Narrangansett sachem, in 1642, a few years
after English
colonists began to settle near his people's villages. (p. 162)

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"There is, perhaps, no country in the world, where the situations,
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and circumstances of things, seem to point out husbandry as the
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essential and proper business, more than our own; and yet, there
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Notes from

Changes in the Land

Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England

by William Cronon. New York: Hill & Wang, 1983.

=====

-----Don's message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Don Bertolette <dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>

Subject: Civilizations...

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 21:54:31 -0700
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Maurice, Lee, Colby, Bob, and others in this civilized discussion-

I am cutting and pasting an excerpt from an interesting web page (<http://www.csrnet.org/csrnet/Trees/sustainable_forestry.html>http://www.csrnet.org/csrnet/Trees/sustainable_forestry.html), that cuts to the chase that started from my inability to recall a text that extolled the message that follows:

Lessons from the Past

Many great civilizations have fallen by failing to live sustainably, within their economic and ecological means.

Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia is considered the cradle of civilization. The "Fertile Crescent," of present day Iraq, is where Western Civilization first emerged. At times of rapid growth in Mesopotamia, the value of wood was equal to precious gems, stones, and metals. Neighboring states were conquered for wood, gold and silver. By 2000 B.C. the last Mesopotamian empire had collapsed. The connection between their decline and deforestation is well supported. Excessive amounts of timber were felled around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and their tributaries. This caused increased siltation and salinity which compromised the water quality and soil productivity. Irrigation canals filled with sediment and the water ways required constant dredging. Barley was the staple food of the Mesopotamians, and as crops diminished the great cities fell. They realized too late what had happened.

Greece

The late Bronze Age saw a great surge in the population and economic strength of Mycenaean Greece. In the thirteenth century B.C. large tracts of forests were cleared to accommodate the needs of the rapidly growing population. The wood was used for construction and to feed the great bronze furnaces. The harvested land was heavily grazed, hampering natural regeneration of the

forest. The decline of ancient Greek civilization was directly linked to deforestation and soil depletion.

Rome

In the 1st century A.D. Rome already devoured its own forests for fuel, shelter and transportation. The fuel wood was used to heat, cook, smelt metals and fire the public baths.

Rome's monetary system was based on silver which required huge quantities of wood, a renewable resource, to convert ore into metal, a non-renewable resource. As wood became scarce the silver content of the metal was drastically reduced. This created a monetary crisis and a shift back to the bartering system. The public baths were used to appease the masses and also used huge quantities of wood.

The deforestation of their own lands caused decreased soil stability, which resulted in decreased agricultural production. The gap between wood and agricultural needs and domestic supply was an impetus for Rome's conquests throughout the Mediterranean region. These conquests employed Rome's fleet of 60 wooden ships. The decline of the Romans was directly linked to their failure to manage their resources sustainably. The same pattern repeated itself throughout history all over the world. Growing populations, excessive consumption, the use of wood for energy to process non-renewable resources, deforestation, soil depletion, watershed destruction, and the resulting problems of famine, led to economic and social collapse. When societies fail to live sustainably they come crashing down, even the greatest ones.

Hopefully a lesson learned...

-DonB

=====

-----David's Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees <ENTSTrees@topica.com>

From: David Yarrow <championtrees@msn.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 08:29:39 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

as for the "american dream," i see the key problem less as overpopulation than over-consumption. not how many people there are, but how they choose to live. there are nations today with much higher population densities than america.

similarly with energy, the issue is less what kind of energy generation systems we have, than how much energy we consume individually and collectively. our ethics and economics encourage consumption: more is better, and cheaper is best. how much fossil fuel is each person's right to burn? the key issue is morality and ethics, not technology and supply.

the same with food. today america is a nation in which people consume far too much food with far too few nutrients. the consequence is not just increasing overweight and obesity, but more devastating is that 90 percent! of the population is dying an early death of degenerative disease. that so many die unnaturally of disease is overwhelming and undeniable evidence of a culture out of balance.

but denial is a major feature of this culture and the mindset that spawns it. and shouting at them drives them deeper into denial, which usually pushes them emotionally to become into ever more efficient, fast and fixated on their dysfunctional behaviors.

it's unreasonable to expect sensible, ecological, sustainable forestry practices of a culture and population so out of balance and out of touch with nature. what will bring a correction? what can force an adjustment? what will bring awareness and change to a population that wakes up everyday ready to rush off into habitual consumption?

my experiences with human psychology reveals that almost always calamity, pain and loss are the only experiences that force people to stop, self reflect and change course. sometimes. a small percent of the times.

so, bring it on. and, not to worry, because it is coming. rather, it is happening.

more is better, but less is best.

David Yarrow
Turtle EyeLand Sanctuary
44 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY 12061
518-477-6100; fax 477-1346
www.championtrees.org
www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
<<http://www.championtrees.org/yarrow/>>www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

----- original message -----

Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 12:00:28 EDT

From:

<[msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com](mailto://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com)>SHAMROCK94@aol.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Hey Gang,

Over population seems to be the key factor in most of our problems. If our population was at a level that would allow us to live our extravagant lifestyles ! without overwhelming the available resources then all our other discussions would be moot. We could continue to live and function using our ancient instincts to manipulate, control and horde and the world could still easily find a way to maintain equilibrium despite our lack of enlightenment.

But with so many people, and more on the way, all intent on living the American dream; we are now way out of balance. Our only choice is to rise above our instincts of face the consequences. The world will return to balance whether we like its turn or not.

So yes we should live and love and be as happy as possible. But that does not

mean we should turn our backs on the mess around us. The Germans ignored their governments transgressions, living their happy lives right up until the point where most of them were destroyed in a devastating war. Perhaps if more Germans had been aware and willing to take action in the beginning, we could! have avoided 20 million deaths and the countless fractured lives and environmental damage that came to pass.

For me it comes down to balance. Finding the ways I can help without losing the joy of living. No, I do not have the answers to the worlds problems. But I do see the problems looming over us, clear as day. So I do feel responsible for helping others see the consequences of the path we are choosing as well as finding the ways that my small mind and body can contribute to making a better world for everyone. As long as there are fearful, needy, unhappy people living in an unbalanced world, my happiness will be harder to completely attain and beyond my control to maintain.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Maurice Schwartz <parks@parcs.org>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

David,

The problems are not only American problems. The problems are universal both historically and currently. We Americans are not alone in our contempt for the natural environment. The Chinese, for example, are engaged in a huge catch-up race to maximum consumption. The only reason that we are #1 on the hit parade is because nobody else can afford it. As fast as they can afford it, the rest of the world will join the consumption binge. They are competing to get there first.

I am not justifying our behavior. I am trying to understand.

The following two insightful collections of revelations of the historical kinship of civilization and degradation of the natural environment contribute to the case for recognizing the universality of the problems. . One collection is by ENTS member Ed Nizalowski. The second is by ENTS member Don Bertollette.

Maurice

=====

-----Ed's message-----

To: Eastern Native Tree Society <ENTSTrees@topica.com>
From: edniz <edniz@prodigy.net>
Subject: Civilization and the Environment
Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 22:25:32 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

Hello,

I'm quite fascinated by this topic and very glad that it comes up on this listserv quite frequently. I think that it stems from all of us wondering where are the "roots" of the environmental degradation, indifference and destruction that we currently see in the world.

For myself it started when I began to understand the character

of the pristine forests of the Southern Tier of New York. After reading Cronon's book, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*, I realized that the pioneers of the Southern Tier knew that the environmental practices they had inherited from New England left something to be desired. In turn, the pioneers of New England, knew that the environmental practices of the mother country were also deficient by nearly any standard you would want to use as a yardstick, but there was virtually no change in the way forest resources were treated. I began to realize that here was a thread of environmental destruction and obtuse philosophy that had many centuries of momentum and inertia sustaining it. I just finished reading *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut. He puts it this way: "And so it goes."

I've included some quotes that I especially liked from *The Forest* by Walter Kumarly and *Forests The Shadow of Civilization* by Robert Pogue Harrison. I've also included some pertinent information from Cronon's book along with a few specific quotes. It is sobering reading to say the least.

Ed Nizalowski

Ø "The mountains from the Syrian Lebanon and the Anatolian Dagh to the Sierras of Andalusia and the Rif of Morocco were well covered with trees. All these mountains have long been denuded. And together with the forests, famous granaries have disappeared in historical times"

Ø "Clearly Venice realized about 1600 what effects deforestation could have. Venice, as a great power in the Mediterranean, required countless trees for its powerful navy and these could be obtained only from the mountains of Dalmatia. . . . The fleet built from those forests helped establish the glory of Venice but the Dalmatian mountains were turned into arid karst, a term that has become synonymous with denuded, desiccated, hard and perforated rocky ground where forests can never grow again. . . . In Albania the once vast forests have likewise been destroyed. Unrestricted cutting of timber totally upset the water budget; fierce torrents came into being with the disappearance of the rain-retaining forests, causing inundations and turning fertile land into swamps."

Ø "Cyprus, too, has its forest story. . . . St. Helena, perhaps the clearest illustration of the effect of uncontrolled grazing. [goats introduced in 1502] When the tragic fact was understood, an extermination of the goats was begun in 1730; but by then it was too late to save the forest."

Ø "Gaul, according to ancient accounts, was so densely wooded that squirrels were said to be able to jump from tree to tree in an unbroken forest from Toulouse all the way to Normandy"

Ø "Goat grazing has also contributed to the denudation of Spain over the centuries"

Ø Algerian forests: 2,224,000 acres of forest were burnt between 1875 and 1897.

Ø The U.S.A. between 1780 and 1930, i.e. in 150 years, cleared 346 million acres of forest, European Russia about 74 million acres in the 19th century, and Rumania 2.5 millions acres between 1920 and 1930 alone.

Ø Freidrich Schiller, whose son became a chief forester: "You are great men: you work in anonymity, without reward, free from the tyranny of selfishness, and the fruits of your devotion will ripen for a distant posterity." Schiller had viewed foresters as huntsmen and killers of wildlife. Germany was probably the first country to establish forestry management plans which date back to 1790.

Kumarly, Walter. The Forest. Translated from the German. New York: Robert B. Luce Co., Inc, 1973 pp. 259-271

Ø "In their drives to promote their civilizations both the Greeks and the Romans also promoted a mindless deforestation of the Mediterranean. Already by the fourth century B. C. Plato recalls with nostalgia a time when forests still covered much of Attica. Speaking of the hills surrounding Athens, Plato writes in the Critias: 'In comparison of what then was, there are remaining only the bones of the wasted body . . .all the richer and softer parts of the soil having fallen away, and the mere skeleton of the land being left.' p. 55

Ø "We know, for example, that the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries in Europe witnessed the widespread extermination of those species of wild

animals which could neither be tamed nor utilized, and that deforestation took place on unprecedented scales around the Mediterranean and in England.

. . . Never before had an ideology so thoroughly divorced the human from the animal species and considered the earth as a whole the former's natural inheritance." p. 92

Ø "England had already been heavily deforested by the time William arrived in the 11th century, but the clearing of woodlands (not royal forests) continued indiscriminately during Tudor and Stuart times. It was not until the 17th century, thanks largely to the publication of John Evelyn's *Silva* (1664), that the problem of timber shortage for navy ships forced a new awareness on the administration about the vital economic and national importance of woodlands. Until then the English had generally congratulated themselves on their razing efforts, considering woodlands obstacles to progress or a haven for thieves and other degenerates." (p. 100)

Ø "We could say that a war is being waged today in the United States between Monsieur le Roy and John Manwood. The war is between two fundamentally opposed concepts of the forest. One is the concept of the forest as resource; the other of the forest as sanctuary." (p. 123)

"The sacred groves of Europe's barbarian prehistory give a new meaning to the phrase 'cathedral forest,' which has become something of a commonplace

these days. The Gothic cathedral visibly reproduces the ancient scenes of worship in its lofty interior, which rises vertically toward the sky and then curves into a vault from all sides, like so many tree crowns converging into a canopy overhead. Like breaks in the foliage, windows let in light from beyond the enclosure. In other words, the phrase 'cathedral forest' entails more than just a casual analogy; or better, the analogy has its basis in an ancient correspondence between forests and the dwelling place of a god. . . .

"The correspondence between columns and trees leads one to suspect that the archaic Greek temple is not unlike the Gothic cathedral in its religious symbolism. Why, after all, is the Greek temple dense with columns? What purpose do the columns serve beyond their architectural function? If a single column once symbolized a sacred tree, a cluster of columns may well have symbolized a sacred grove." (p. 178)

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"There is, perhaps, no country in the world, where the situations, nature, and circumstances of things, seem to point out husbandry as the most essential and proper business, more than our own; and yet, there is scarcely one where it is less attended to. Joseph Warren, American physician (1787) "Warren attributed this apparent paradox to several factors: the Americans' tendency to farm overlarge tracts of land, their 'rage for commerce,' their investment of little capital in their farmlands, and their wasteful practices in feeding livestock" (p 168)

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Changes in the Land

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by William Cronon. New York: Hill & Wang, 1983.

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-----Don's message-----

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Don Bertolette <dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>

Subject: Civilizations...

Date: Thu, 1 May 2003 21:54:31 -0700

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

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Hopefully a lesson learned...

-DonB

=====

-----David's Original Message-----

To: ENTSTrees <ENTSTrees@topica.com>

From: David Yarrow <championtrees@msn.com>

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 08:29:39 -0400

Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

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David Yarrow
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www.championtrees.org
www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
<<http://www.championtrees.org/yarrow/>>www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

----- original message -----

Date: Thu, 8 May 2003 12:00:28 EDT

From:

<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>SHAMROCK94@aol.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Hey Gang,

Over population seems to be the key factor in most of our problems. If our population was at a level that would allow us to live our extravagant lifestyles ! without overwhelming the available resources then all our other discussions would be moot. We could continue to live and function using our ancient instincts to manipulate, control and horde and the world could still

easily find a way to maintain equilibrium despite our lack of enlightenment.

But with so many people, and more on the way, all intent on living the American dream; we are now way out of balance. Our only choice is to rise above our instincts of face the consequences. The world will return to balance whether we like its turn or not.

So yes we should live and love and be as happy as possible. But that does not mean we should turn our backs on the mess around us. The Germans ignored their governments transgressions, living their happy lives right up until the point where most of them were destroyed in a devastating war. Perhaps if more Germans had been aware and willing to take action in the beginning, we could! have avoided 20 million deaths and the countless fractured lives and environmental damage that came to pass.

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Tim
To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

From: Don Bertollette <dbertollette@unneedspeed.net>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 18:13:11 -0700
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052529197.inmta006.22621.1059499>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:86.7145 M:95.9494 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.1096)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <dbertollette@unneedspeed.net> forward
(good recip)

Mike-

No, Mike, I mean taking care of what we can at home first. We must first be responsible for our own actions.

-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <<mailto:mlforester@rcn.com>>Mike Leonard
To: <<mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2003 2:50 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Don B;

What you really mean is Immigration Control. There may be about 10 million illegal aliens in this country now. Another million might sneak into the country every year. When the numbers get too high, Congress declares an amnesty and it never stops. Legal immigration is also huge - 1 million/year. It's time to take control over our own borders. If that means erecting a Berlin type wall, then so be it. This should be the number one priority for real environmentalists because our population growth is what is driving urban sprawl, increased greenhouse gases, pollution, etc. At current growth rates, the US population will be 500,000 million in 50 years. Sounds good huh? Forget about all the other environmental issues. This is the NUMBER 1 ISSUE. That is why I supported NAFTA and Free Trade Agreements in the Western Hemisphere. Let's help Mexico and other central and South American countries improve their economies so they won't try and come here.

A National Identity Card is needed to weed out all the illegals who are here now. They should all be rounded up and sent back ASAP.

ML

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:dbertolette@unneedspeed.net>Don Bertolette
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Friday, May 09, 2003 12:30 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Tim-

Time for us to start adopting instead of procreating...ZeroPopulationGrowth is the first incremental step...
-DonB

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>TJ Sullivan
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 9:00 AM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Hey Gang,

Over population seems to be the key factor in most of our problems. If our population was at a level that would allow us to live our extravagant lifestyles without overwhelming the available resources then all our other discussions would be moot. We could continue to live and function using our ancient instincts to manipulate, control and horde and the world could still easily find a way to maintain equilibrium despite our lack of enlightenment.

But with so many people, and more on the way, all intent on living the American dream; we are now way out of balance. Our only choice is to rise above our instincts of face the consequences. The world will return to balance whether we like its turn or not.

So yes we should live and love and be as happy as possible. But that does not mean we should turn our backs on the mess around us. The Germans ignored their governments transgressions, living their happy lives right up until the point where most of them were destroyed in a devastating war. Perhaps if more Germans had been aware and willing to take action in the beginning, we could

have avoided 20 million deaths and the countless fractured lives and environmental damage that came to pass.

For me it comes down to balance. Finding the ways I can help without losing the joy of living. No, I do not have the answers to the worlds problems. But I do see the problems looming over us, clear as day. So I do feel responsible for helping others see the consequences of the path we are choosing as well as finding the ways that my small mind and body can contribute to making a better world for everyone. As long as there are fearful, needy, unhappy people living in an unbalanced world, my happiness will be harder to completely attain and beyond my control to maintain.

Tim

This email was sent to: mlforester@rcn.com

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Or send an email to: ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com

>

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Sat, 10 May 2003 06:22:16 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052562429.inmta006.22621.1091856>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:92.8678 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:0.2729)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr

X-pstn-addresses: from <mlforester@rcn.com> forward (good recip)

Tim,

If we enforced the current laws whereby any company who hires an illegal alien is heavily fined, maybe that would slow down the human tidal wave. If the illegals cannot find work, then they may not be as eager to come.

In addition, maybe a bounty could be paid to citizens who apprehend or inform on those people who are in the country illegally.

Just imagine armed bands of rednecks roaming the countryside for a "roundup"! ;-)

ML

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>TJ Sullivan

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Friday, May 09, 2003 9:55 AM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

Mike,

I understand your point but disagree with your solution.

When I hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in 1997, I started at the Mexican boarder where I got a first hand introduction to immigration control. There is a a very tall solid steel fence stretching across the boarder from the Pacific Ocean to well past where the trail begins. The town of Campo where I began had a boarder patrol station with 100 vehicles of various shapes and sizes and 300 agents. They were supported by several black hawk helicopters that buzzed overhead throughout the night.

But the fence and guards and millions of dollars being spent seemed to have little effect on the immigrants. Though I know the fence is very affective in stopping wildlife, separating populations of already endangered species.

I met many Mexicans and saw dozens more darting across the dessert wearing jeans and sneakers carrying plastic bags with a little bit of food and perhaps a bottle of water. At first I was

frustrated by the lack of security and feared for my own safety. But I quickly developed a deep respect for these people who were willing to pay their life's savings to "guides" who were very likely to rip them off, then risk their lives crossing a desert that was daunting for me even with the latest backpacking equipment and maps showing all the water sources. How poor and desperate their lives must be to take such chances! Yet not once was I threatened by these people who mostly took great pains to avoid me.

I really do not think we can build walls tall enough, post enough guards or spend enough money to stop the tide. Especially when we are so busy selling the American Dream to the rest of the world yet so reluctant to let them share in it, unless it puts money in our pockets.

I agree with you that we need to improve the economies in developing nations, though I worry that the current free trade agreements will not have that desired effect, at least from the perspective of the people who most feel the need to emigrate. I wonder what would happen if the billions of dollars spent on protecting our borders over the decades had instead been put into social projects in Mexico and other developing countries. If we remove the disparity in our life styles then you remove the need to emigrate. In fact I would argue that most people would be quite willing to live with far less than we have, if we stopped strutting around telling everyone how great and rich and powerful we are.

Yes I know, we already giving more foreign aid than any other nation. But that money often goes directly to propping up governments and companies who we favor for economic or strategic reasons, little of it trickles down to the people. Besides as a percentage of our GNP the amount we give is dead last among the top economic powers and pitifully non existent in comparison to our massive defense budget.

There has never been a castle built that has been strong enough to protect the privileged rich folks hiding inside when those outside its walls are struggling and starving. I think its time we start learning from history instead of repeating it.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees <ENTSTrees@topica.com>
From: David Yarrow <championtrees@msn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Sat, 10 May 2003 12:10:30 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052588319.inmta004.15819.1073862>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Originating-IP: [207.94.112.80]
X-Originating-Email: [championtrees@msn.com]
X-OriginalArrivalTime: 10 May 2003 16:57:45.0355 (UTC)
FILETIME=[473EB5B0:01C31715]
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.9561 M:91.7361 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.0421)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <championtrees@msn.com> forward (good
recip)

excellent points well said. bravo tim.

and meanwhile many developing nations are stripping and
polluting their homelands in an effort to mimic the american dream
and implement american technology. and the two economic-
ecologic areas this is most damnably true are agriculture and
forestry.

how likely that america will provide solutions when we are so busy
modeling and exporting the problems?

David Yarrow
Turtle EyeLand Sanctuary
44 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY 12061
518-477-6100; fax 477-1346
www.championtrees.org
www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/
<<http://www.championtrees.org/yarrow/>>www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 09:55:36 EDT

From:

<msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>SHAMROCK94@aol.com

Subject: Re: Civilizat! ion and the natural environment

--part1_15e.1f93b1a4.2bed0d58_boundary
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="US-ASCII"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

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Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Michele Wilson <nesfl@valinet.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Sat, 10 May 2003 21:30:10 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052616862.inmta004.15819.1092112>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:97.9508 M:94.5022 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:5.9640)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <nesfl@valinet.com> forward (good recip)

Well, my uncle-godfather suddenly died a few days ago. I'm saddened, not because I can't rejoice that he indeed lived a pretty interesting life and enjoyed a good & long marriage, but because I had just made plans for some musical picnics and the like, once "Chapter 61 season" was over...I simply wish I had spent more time with him recently and it makes me sad that now I can't. He wasn't "supposed to" die suddenly...he had an allergic reaction to anesthesia used for a "simple" knee operation...a seemingly classic case of how sometimes the "best" advances in medical technology don't mean squat when it comes to never really knowing for sure how the body will react. Oh well. I'll just have to look forward to my uncle visiting me in my dreams. So there you have it, I think. I try to be philosophical about such occurrences, I think. I've already decided that about 30 or 40+ years from now, when I can no longer "enjoy" my day, I'll just go for a walk (a crawl by then?), check out a final glorious sunset, and get eaten by a bear. I think it would be very fitting!

Michele

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:sbenoit@map.com> Susan Benoit

To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com> ENTSTrees@topica.com

Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 10:44 PM

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

I don't understand how Robie's comment jibes with the present human population curve, statistics or no. Just looking at that curve for 2000 years before, and now since the nineteenth century....

Women in most parts of the world have far more of all those things -- certainly than they did pre-Industrial Revolution -- and yet look at that bloody curve. Sounds like too little remedy way too late. And focusing on women's rights is wrong, IMO, because the problems are human, not gender-based. If we can put women's and therefore the world's problems on men, then suddenly men have a very big problem, if you see what I'm driving at, so we are back to looking at EVERYBODY'S problems. Talk about divide and conquer! The imbalances and inequalities between the sexes are symptoms, they are not the disease, and, from an evolutionary standpoint and scale, they cut both ways. Neither sex can develop too much of an advantage over the other, because, as soon as the one does, the other dies off or dries up, and the whole show grinds

to a halt, with the beleaguered sex suddenly at a premium by virtue of its scarcity.

I would really like to understand what is so fearful about death, which I would posit as the biggest, or the root, problem. Why is it so divorced from life, if you think about it, when it is as much a part of life as birth, and, indeed, gives life so much of its savor and all of its aching sweetness? (Death is why I try to take care of and enjoy everybody, and especially those I love.) Why is it so unacceptable, at ANY point in life, and at any cost in care and expense? And not only our own deaths, but anyone belonging to us? It can't be just the prospect of missing the beloved, or sorrow at the thought that they will miss something, can it? I had a 93-year-old neighbor who was recommended for a pacemaker. He was not interested, because he was nearly blind, mostly deaf, and unable to get around at all without a walker and supervision, but what kind of a system and larger culture drives those kinds of recommendations? Most people get zero support, from anywhere, for accepting and then embracing the inevitable, even once it is clearly inevitable.

It is our (apparently innate) fear of death, our inability to accept it -- in any phase of life -- that drives our population problem, secondo me. Would medical science have mushroomed the way it has if we were more philosophical, as it were, about death and its finality? We wanted to live forever, probably, all along, but it's only been since the germ theory of disease and the exponential advances in technology that we have been able to whittle away at the odds to such an extent. What are the consequences of eradicating smallpox and the plague, in the long term? Babies born with any degree of "illness" are admitted to the neonatal critical care unit, in many hospitals, and their parents and pediatricians officially lose all say in their treatment and all control over them until they are released. Will we paradoxically lengthen and multiply the human lifespan to such an extent that the quality and importance of it are nullified? If life becomes so 'cheap' and abundant, again paradoxically, like slave labor was considered in the days of Empire or the pharaohs, what will that do to our respect for it in other people? I have no idea, obviously, and I find all these questions completely baffling on any beyond the personal level; and that bafflement is really the foundation of my worry for the species. Any thoughts, ENTS?

But anyway, I'm going out into the woods this weekend!! Talk about lucky: the stiffs who get to spend all their time there. I guess I should have been a forester, or an academic researcher. Not that I have any regrets, mind... ;~)

Susan

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:robert.leverett@sphs.com>Leverett, Robert
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 11:16 AM
Subject: RE: Civilization and the natural environment

Robie:

So am I.

Bob

-----Original Message-----

From: Robie Hubley [mailto:rhubley@crocker.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 10:33 AM
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

I believe that what actually happens when we take better care of our people, especially when we advance the economic independence and freedom of women, provide opportunities for women's education, and give women control over their reproductive lives, is that the birth rate declines, often below replacement levels. As it stands right now, this is the course that offers the best chance that humans might come to their senses,

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You want some statistics? I can get you some ststistics.

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I'm fer it!

Robie

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To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Sun, 11 May 2003 10:27:22 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052694272.inmta002.27661.1138960>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com (Unverified)
X-pstn-levels: (C:97.9508 M:92.9069 P:95.9108 R:95.9108
S:73.5599)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good
recip)

Michele,

You have my sympathy, and I share your sentiments. Life is such
sweet sorrow.

Robie

=====
=====

At 09:30 PM 05/10/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>

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saddened, not because I can't rejoice that he indeed lived a pretty
interesting Life and enjoyed a good & long marriage, but because I
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To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com> ENTSTrees@topica.com

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Susan

----- Original Message -----

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To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Thursday, May 08, 2003 11:16 AM
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To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

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<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Robie Hubley <rhubley@crocker.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Sun, 11 May 2003 10:30:09 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052694272.inmta006.22621.1208789>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Sender: rhubley@mail.crocker.com (Unverified)
X-pstn-levels: (C:90.8283 M:99.4056 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:2.5469)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <rhubley@crocker.com> forward (good recip)

The whole thing seems to have taken a sharp turn and a steep acceleration toward Armageddon, very recently.

Robie

=====
=====

At 12:10 PM 05/10/03 -0400, you wrote:

>>>>

excellent points well said. bravo tim.

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David Yarrow

Turtle EyeLand Sanctuary

44 Gilligan Road, East Greenbush, NY 12061

518-477-6100; fax 477-1346

www.championtrees.org

www.championtrees.org/NYOGFA/

<<http://www.championtrees.org/yarrow/>>www.championtrees.org/yarrow/

Date: Fri, 9 May 2003 09:55:36 EDT

From:

<[msn://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com](mailto://@mail.mar@/compose.htm?NW=true&mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com)>SHAMROCK94@aol.com

Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

--part1_15e.1f93b1a4.2bed0d58_boundary
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="US-ASCII"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

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rhuble@crocker.com EASY UNSUBSCRIBE click here:
<<http://topica.com/u/?a2iZlX.a5mcjI.cmh1Ymxl>><http://topica.com/u/?a2iZlX.a5mcjI.cmh1Ymxl> Or send an email to: ENTSTrees-
unsubscribe@topica.com TOPICA - Start your own email discussion
group. FREE!
<<http://www.topica.com/partner/tag02/create/index2.html>><http://www.topica.com/partner/tag02/create/index2.html>
<<<<

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Sun, 11 May 2003 16:10:06 EDT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052684106.inmta002.27661.1132973>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>

X-pstn-levels: (C:86.4719 M:98.2169 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.2585)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <SHAMROCK94@aol.com> forward (good
recip)

In a message dated 5/10/2003 6:27:31 AM Eastern Daylight Time,
mlforester@rcn.com writes:

Just imagine armed bands of rednecks roaming the countryside
for a "roundup"! ;-)

Mike,

I know you write that sentence with tongue in cheek. But, I don't
need to imagine that scene. I've seen too many real life pictures
both past and present. Only all the rednecks in those photos are
wearing white sheets, pointy hats and really seem to get off on
burning crosses.

But I truly do appreciate your concern and share your worries
about immigration and population problems. Good luck getting
those laws enforced. A lot of people are making a lot of money
ignoring them. Nothing seems to talk louder than the almighty
dollar. And maybe that would not be so bad if we spent as much
time worrying about what that dollar is gona be worth 100 years
from now instead of what new toy it can buy us today.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: TJ Sullivan <SHAMROCK94@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Sun, 11 May 2003 16:10:07 EDT
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com

X-Topica-Id: <1052683825.inmta006.22621.1199210>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-pstn-levels: (C:80.5044 M:98.8113 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
1.2211)
X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.3000) pmCr
X-pstn-addresses: from <SHAMROCK94@aol.com> forward (good
recip)

David,

Thank you for the kind comments.

I think America will eventually lead the charge in providing solutions to the problems it is exporting. But not until we wake up and realize the ultimate outcome of the path we are on. Unfortunately as you recently mentioned, humans do not react well unless faced with a clear and imminent threat. Hopefully the threat becomes clear enough to our distracted society before it is too late to act.

I can see the tide starting to turn with the actions of folks like the ones on this list. It gives me hope even as I watch the huge wave forming over our heads.

Tim

To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
From: Mike Leonard <mlforester@rcn.com>
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment
Date: Sun, 11 May 2003 17:11:29 -0400
Reply-To: ENTSTrees@topica.com
X-Topica-Id: <1052688213.inmta004.15819.1129819>
List-Help: <<http://topica.com/lists/ENTSTrees@topica.com/>>
List-Unsubscribe: <<mailto:ENTSTrees-unsubscribe@topica.com>>
X-Priority: 3
X-pstn-levels: (C:86.4719 M:98.6627 P:95.9108 R:95.9108 S:
2.5905)

X-pstn-settings: 1 (0.1500:0.1500) pmcr
X-pstn-addresses: from <mlforester@rcn.com> forward (good recip)

Tim,

There are already private patrols along the US/Mexican border because the Border Patrol is either incompetent or understaffed. These private citizens are actually doing a good job.

With NAFTA in place, how about if we form a real North American Federation (Canada, USA, Mexico). That would be only fair since we stole 2/3 of Mexico during the Mexican-American War. We'll make Mexico middle class like us and then keep everyone else out.

ML

----- Original Message -----

From: <mailto:SHAMROCK94@aol.com>TJ Sullivan
To: <mailto:ENTSTrees@topica.com>ENTSTrees@topica.com
Sent: Sunday, May 11, 2003 4:10 PM
Subject: Re: Civilization and the natural environment

In a message dated 5/10/2003 6:27:31 AM Eastern Daylight Time, <mailto:mlforester@rcn.com>mlforester@rcn.com writes:

Just imagine armed bands of rednecks roaming the countryside for a "roundup"! ;-)

Mike,

I know you write that sentence with tongue in cheek. But, I don't need to imagine that scene. I've seen too many real life pictures both past and present. Only all the rednecks in those photos are wearing white sheets, pointy hats and really seem to get off on burning crosses.

But I truly do appreciate your concern and share your worries about immigration and population problems. Good luck getting those laws enforced. A lot of people are making a lot of money ignoring them. Nothing seems to talk louder than the almighty

dollar. And maybe that would not be so bad if we spent as much time worrying about what that dollar is gonna be worth 100 years from now instead of what new toy it can buy us today.

Tim