

Hard Words: An Eco-Extremist Conversation

“These are hard words! Who can hear them?” (John 6: 60)

As a reader, I have never been very satisfied with all of the interviews that have been done with eco-extremists through the years. The interviewers have either seemed badly informed, of bad faith, unwilling to engage with anything new, or they simply didn't seem that smart. In any event, as a reader who is a bit more informed on these topics, I wanted to ask some questions that got to the bottom of what eco-extremism is, its origins, and recent developments. Thus, Xale, Chief Editor of Revista Regresión and a member of ITS-Mexico, an expert on these topics, has been very generous with his time in responding the following questions and/or thoughts.

It should be noted at the outset that this conversation is held in the journalistic spirit. We ask and answer the questions to inform and not to exhort in this document. The interviewer declares him/herself independent of ITS and eco-extremism, and the purpose of this interview is purely to inform and “entertain.”

Let us begin:

HH: Since the beginning of the new phase of ITS and its internationalization, what in your opinion have been the lessons that the eco-extremists have learned? How do you think eco-extremism has evolved since the beginning of this year?

Xale: This calendar year has seen a great amount of movement for us. It has been full of news, new complicities, and new characteristics of eco-extremist acts and texts.

As an individualist advocate of this tendency, I think that the lessons from this year from eco-extremism's expansion vary widely and depend on the individualist who experiences them. Speaking personally I think that there has been a qualitative advancement regarding the extremist acts against selected targets. The intelligent reader will know that I am speaking of civilization and its progress.

The Chilean members of ITS have shown us that one can do a lot of damage with only one liter or less of flammable liquid. This they did on the Transantiago bus and at the Vivo Mall, in February and May, respectively. They have also taught us how, even if in some cases the devices don't work, the threat remains. There is no discouragement and the war on the nerves continues.

The eco-extremist adherents to ITS in Argentina have also shown us a particular terrorist and indiscriminate attitude. The most recent bomb threats at schools, universities, and train station in May and June show us a defined tendency to disregard civilized human life in all its forms and in all of its corners. This is also evident after reading their most recent August communiqué in which they take responsibility for poisoning dozens of bottles of Coca-Cola that were distributed in a couple of supermarkets in Buenos Aires. In this manner they formidably threatened the social and physical well-being of the hyper-civilized.

Eco-extremists in Brazil have also recently joined ITS, showing the element of surprise. They have attacked ferociously and have shown that the threat of ITS is unpredictable. This irreverent attitude was manifest in the three kilos of blasting powder that they detonated in a shopping center in Brasilia. The attack leaves authorities demoralized since they have to search and search for those responsible. These attackers are now part of a tendency present in four countries which threatens to spread to more.

Eco-extremists in Mexico, the place where the international project of ITS was founded, have also demonstrated many lessons.

Their homicidal attack against the Chief of Services of the Chemistry Department of the UNAM aimed to demonstrate the ease with which they can attack the hyper-civilized at any given moment with only a knife. In hitting this target, they showed that it is possible to strike at the most advanced center of study on its own turf. This assassination taught the authorities a lesson that they should not have covered-up past attacks on the University City.

The constant attacks with explosives show as well their capability of attack, the diversity of tactics, and their prolific activity even if these attacks are covered up.

The old ITS in 2011 focused on branching out nationally. From that year until 2013 it spread to Mexico City, Mexico State, Morelos, Hidalgo, Coahuila, Veracruz and Guanajuato. During this time, its expansion was barely halted. Now ITS-Mexico has a regional presence only in Mexico City, Mexico State, Jalisco, and Coahuila. Even though it has now internationalized, this shows the perseverance and continuity of the project.

Touching on the issue of theory, eco-extremism has also been growing in this regard. In the cycle of RS [Reacción Salvaje] I believe that the editors of Revista Regresión along with the factions of RS gave a theoretical basis for the tendency. These centered on the study of nomadic hunter-gatherer groups of this region, recovering their hostile attitude to all that is alien as well as their pagan animism. With the end of the cycle of RS, we gave these themes “a rest” and focused more on practice. Other theorists, however, have picked up the slack. I consider Chahta-Ima to be the most important eco-extremist theorist in this newest cycle. His essays and investigations have been fundamental for the development of other individualists by giving them foundations in history to attack or keep attacking. The eco-extremist requires theory and practice. He or she needs to know and to do. They need to learn and at the same time to teach their brothers in arms. Speaking generally, eco-extremism does not have “future plans”. It doesn't act “under a program”. It doesn't outline any future methods of struggle beforehand. There is no strategy to follow. We eco-extremists act spontaneously, we weigh whether an action is opportune or not for spawning a reaction. We follow our animal instincts and we continue with our warlike inheritance until,

like the migratory dove, we disappear.

HH: I think people who read eco-extremist literature do not understand the role of the “war on the nerves”. I know that this has been explained previously, but you still find criticisms of eco-extremist actions that state that they should focus instead on attacking the power grid or whatever. They state that eco-extremist actions range in anything from jokes in poor taste (with bombs) or psychopathic murder (as was done at the UNAM). It hasn’t sunk in that all of those actions are part of a tactic known as “war on the nerves.” Being “under the radar”, deception, indiscriminate attack, etc. don’t just serve to strike out against the infrastructure of civilization (which, to be honest, is difficult to target, and upon being destroyed, it is rebuilt again providing “gainful employment” to the dumb masses). The purpose of these actions is also to become like the “monster under the bed”: a threat that civilization has created against itself. For me, at least, this stage of eco-extremism has underlined that aspect of ITS and the other groups.

Xale: Certainly, the people who make references to the actions of ITS and other groups as being “jokes in poor taste” or carried out by “murderous psychopaths” probably think that the war against civilization is a game. Maybe they think it’s only about attacking power grids or similar targets. We and the other eco-extremists no longer think that. We believe in waging a “total war” against civilization, as in a REAL war and thus we don’t worry about whether our acts are “acceptable” to other radicals or if they impress the media. If the actions of ITS bring disapproval from others, or are disturbing or intolerable, that’s precisely what eco-extremism wants. That is, to show that the War against Civilization should be taken seriously and it should be carried out by individualists who truly hate to the death all human progress. There should be blood spilled, there should be wounds and death since that is what War is. That’s what we carry out and we don’t hesitate in accepting this fact. Lately the Western world has been classifying anyone who carries out any act of extreme violence as being a “psychopath,” “a mercenary,” etc. That’s what we see when they refer to the terrorist acts of the Islamic State, and indeed it is a strategy of governments and their media to belittle greater causes, lowering them to the level of being a mental disorder or what have you. It’s understandable then that people who share Western values follow this strategy to slander eco-extremists.

HH: What is the relationship between eco-extremism and nihilism? I ask since it seems like Nihilist Terrorism is the “branch” of eco-extremism in Italy and maybe in other places.

Xale: A little while ago the nihilist terrorist tendency has emerged and developed side by side with eco-extremism. This tendency is not passive and renounces all of the fundamental moral values of civilization. Terrorist nihilism, and especially the version that some groups of individualists in Italy have defended, is a philosophy with which we have found authentic affinity since it is totally opposed to the humanism and progressivism that we eco-extremists criticize so much.

I believe that the individualists of the Americas (of whichever country) feel sympathy with eco-extremism and this can be seen with the expansion of ITS. In certain groups, certain small but important aspects have been adopted from this tendency. But I have noticed that “Latin Americans” in particular have been more drawn to it than the Europeans who seem to be more drawn toward nihilism. But in this point, eco-extremism and nihilism go hand in hand.

It’s not unusual that we who inhabit the lands on this side of the world feel attracted to this tendency, since eco-extremism is the call of our ancestors. It is not a war for native separatism or indigenous identity, or to give a political sense to any of this. No, it is a war that we inherited from our ancestors. We invoke the dead of our grandfathers, and they have possessed us. Any individualist feels in the blood the fierceness of the ancients, be they Teochichimecas, Yahis, Selknam, the great variety of Amazonian tribes, etc. Surely they are looking upon us to see what we say and do. I believe that this is even a genetic question (to put it in scientific terms). Many eco-extremists still come from native families: this drives us to continue the conflict in which they gave their lives. That is to say, we aren’t strangers in this fight, we still heed the wild call to defend ourselves by any means necessary.

Historically, the Americas were invaded by the whites in the sixteenth century, and with them came destruction, epidemics and disasters. They raped our sacred lands, the profaned the tombs of our dead, they killed our elders, they enslaved our women, they sold our children, they burned our houses, they stripped the Earth of minerals and they humiliated our ancestors in the most disrespectful ways. They killed the prey we hunted with veneration, they mocked our spirits and exterminated our languages and our culture; they consigned them to oblivion, all this and more in only the last 500 years, which is a relatively short time. Today the situation is no longer a racial one, it’s no longer a question of the white man who commits the atrocities, but rather civilization as a whole. We no longer have anything to fight for, we don’t have a community with which we share a common tongue, tradition, and environment. Elders no longer impart to us their ancestral wisdom. They have domesticated us for years. They have made us live in big cities, they’ve made us need money to survive in urban areas and work like slaves for it. They’ve made us believe that science can explain everything or that religion is eternal salvation. They’ve enclosed us in schools to educate us. They’ve tried to take the warrior spirit away from us by eclipsing it with modernity and religion, progress and monotony, drugs and entertainment, humanism and non-violence. They have tried to bury in a deep grave the accursed history of our ancestors who stalked their enemies, shot them with arrows, scalped them, and took out their tendons to sustain the points of their arrows; they conspired, and they fought to the death. Xale, the Teochichimeca tlatoani (leader) lives in me. He speaks to me in the tumultuous wind, in the thunder that echoes indiscriminately through the city. He whispers to me in the moss of the river, in the Dragon’s blood that grows toward the sun, in the shadow of mesquite. He awakens me in the flames of the fire, in the eyes of the nocturnal coyote, in the

frigid cold of the mountain, in the tracks of the mountain deer. He speaks and whispers to me, he teaches and guides me. He has taught me to transform myself into an animal when I carry out attacks alone or with my pack. He has told me that every eco-extremist has a spirit that accompanies him as well. He has told me that the very fact that we have these thoughts means that we are a danger to our enemies and one of the most important things that he has told me is that revenge will be terrible...

HH: Indeed, it seems to me that the nihilist-terrorists of Europe have their own peculiar mode of expressing themselves. But overall the affinity comes in action. Some nihilists in other parts think that eco-extremism is trying to shame those who think that to carry out any action is "moralism". I know that you're not a nihilist in the same sense as your allies in Europe, but in your opinion, can you be a nihilist without physically attacking this society? Some nihilists say that their "Ego" doesn't really want to attack anything, and it's better to do whatever they wish.

Xale: That's the attitude characteristic of the passive nihilist, one who states that attack isn't an essential part of their thinking. It's understandable that nihilism has those sorts of variations and misrepresentations in the modern era, but this does not conform to the original school of thought. It's well-known that before the October Revolution in Russia, there existed a large number of women and men in secret societies who carried out selective and indiscriminate attacks that pushed Czarist Russia towards the abyss. These were the founders of terrible nihilism. These women and men aimed to wound society, they were driven toward a confrontation with the forces of that regime; those who made bombs to throw at those who were responsible for the societal and economic ills of the time. They were the ones who stabbed and stained their hands with blood; for their time they were quite advanced. Today they've "calmed down", the new nihilists are dedicated to criticizing without doing anything. They relax and are bogged down in their own inertia. There's even a philosophical strain of nihilism based mainly in art (?), but it too is "nihilism". What I would take from all of this is that, even among all of the flavors of our time, there do exist real nihilists who ferociously confront society in the same manner as the original thinkers did. In Italy, we have the examples of "The Nihilist Sect of Free Death," "Memento Mori Nihilist Sect," and the "Cenaze Terrorist Nihilist Clan."

HH: Related to this question, it seems like a difference between the first stage of ITS and the Reacción Salvaje stage was a return to indigenous / savage / pagan roots with RS. Even now there are references to "Chicomoztoc," etc. But I perceive a diminishing of this aspect in the present in favor of an opening to other ideas and ways of understanding things. Do you think that this perception is correct? Is this a necessary part of the expansion of eco-extremism?

Xale: Yes, as I have mentioned in the first response, in this stage of eco-extremism, we have put aside references to native groups a bit, since we have recently been studying and mentioning the question of paganism.

This shift in interest from the native theme can be seen in the communiqués that have been published of late as well as the content of *Revista Regresión*. And as you have indicated, there has been an opening to other questions concerning nihilism and criminal activity. I should clarify that this is not because we consider it more important to speak on these themes rather than focus on the war of indigenous peoples. No, it is our current circumstance which demands that we expand into other variants which can conform to the eco-extremist tendency.

With RS there was a concrete study centered on native war, and in fact most of the communiqués of that group had references to the war inherited from our ancestors. But after this cycle, and having more individuals who participate in our theory and practice, it is necessary to make an opening into other themes to consolidate the tendency.

HH: One interesting thing is that "to be native" in places like Canada and the United States doesn't necessarily entail illegality nor war against civilization. Many modern tribes function almost like businesses. They have casinos or they rent their land out for oil and gas exploration, etc. Nevertheless, some critics have stated that eco-extremism exploits the memory of "dead indigenous peoples" for its sick anti-social causes. How would you characterize the relationship between eco-extremism to today's indigenous peoples who are not that opposed to (and are sometimes allied to) civilization?

Xale: This criticism always makes me laugh a lot. To say that we are exploiting the memories of "dead indigenous peoples" only lengthens the list of excuses from this type of critic. Eco-extremists don't exploit anyone's memory. We would be "anti-social crazy people" if we were justifying by the same discourse the rape and prostitution of children, organ trafficking, sex with corpses, and the other illnesses derived from the atrophied minds of the hyper-civilized. But as we are only justifying politically incorrect acts against civilization, acts that were carried out by our ancestors, and even some contemporary tribes, this criticism is completely erroneous.

I am not going to deny that many indigenous and native groups in many parts of the world are accomplices to the major corporations that are devastating their territories. I am not going to deny that many indigenous peoples here in Mexico even are separated from their traditions and they have adopted Western practices. This often leads to harm to their environments as mandated by large corporations. You can count those tribes not absorbed into the dominant society on two hands; there are very few. Although I should say in many cases where indigenous peoples depart from their origins, they do so under their own volition because they want to adapt to the modern way of life. In other cases, however, they are manipulated to do so and are put into conditions which force them to depart from their cultural origins and join the walking dead in the cities. Here there are very well-

known cases of companies that arrive in secluded villages to get cheap labor, and they convince the indigenous people there to work in the cities since they will get good money and creature comforts, which turns out to be completely false. When the companies no longer need them, they abandon them to their fate there. They then have to survive in a city as monstrous as the Mexican capital, and it is very unkind to survive on the streets here if you are an outsider. Thus, the indigenous people end up being homeless drug addicts, or in jail or dead. It's a sad situation, sure, but it's part of daily reality.

HH: Eco-extremism has a very complicated relationship with anarchism. Sometimes such phrases come up as "Anarchy by not anarchism." Can you be an anarchist and aligned with eco-extremism? How would that go?

Xale: I just got finished writing an article entitled, "Indiscriminate Anarchists," for issue No. 6 of *Revista Regresión*, where I describe the terrible terrorist acts that anarchists committed that have been buried and long-forgotten. In the text I mention the constant fights between anarcho-bandits and the anarchist-humanists of their time. This was due to the fact that the former always attacked their targets without regard to hurting innocent bystanders. These acts could be classified as "indiscriminate attacks," a practice that has been a point of contention among today's anarchists.

With this text soon to be published, I show evidence that some anarchists in the 19th century acted indiscriminately, violating moral and political codes of morality that are associated with anarchism as they were understood by the great majority of the traditional anarchist movement.

With this text I also aim (if only temporarily) to resurrect those anarchos from the tombs in which the official and not-so official history wished to leave them.

It's funny to read, for example, about how the social anarchists were scared stiff by the terrorist acts of Di Giovanni around 1900. It is uncanny that some contemporary anarchists have the exact same reaction when they learn of our attacks, namely, calling us, "bandits," "inhuman," "these aren't our comrades," "let us exclude them from our movement," "random attacks are for cowards," etc.

Responding to the question, I think that anarchists CAN be allies to the eco-extremists, only if and when these anarchists firmly hold to the demonical and terrorist characteristics of their predecessors. On the other hand, the humanist anarchist who worries about society and dreams of a "better world" CANNOT be an ally of eco-extremism.

HH: What would be the difference then between an anarchist who sympathizes with eco-extremism and one who rejects it vigorously?

Xale: The difference would be substantial. In fact, the anarchist who sympathizes with eco-extremism would have to subvert much of what was said by traditional anarchist thinkers, shaking off the humanism and progressivism that aims to obtain a better world without "State-Capital." He or she would have to leave aside utopias and focus on the decadent and pessimist present in which we find ourselves. He or she would have to assume the role of an individual within our present circumstances and act accordingly. He or she would have to disregard all that is human (in philosophical terms). He or she would have to act in a cold and calculated manner without regard to collateral damage. He or she would have to be like Di Giovanni, like Mario Buda, like Santiago Salvador, like the galleanist anarchists.

HH: It seems to me that "social" anarchism is a vestige of the old politics of the masses. I can't really say much about that, as I have never been an anarchist and I don't know the history very well to be honest. On the other hand, I suspect that a lot of individualist actions that you mention took place before the "modern era of Revolutions," as in Russia in 1917, Spain in the 1930's etc. The social anarchist has a lot of trouble closing that chapter of history, even if the rest of the world (political or not) already has. The rest of the world has renounced all of this talk of the masses fighting in the streets or whatever. Even in extremist Islam, when it hasn't been a question of conventional war, many of their attacks are individualist and indiscriminate. But the social anarchist can't separate himself or herself from the idea of "waking up the masses," to bring forth a "new dawn," because he or she can't renounce the old analysis or it would take away their hope and they would have to become a disgusting nihilistic eco-extremist or something like that.

Xale: The historical context which unleashed this accursed anarchy that I am speaking of happened before and after the Bolshevik Revolution and before and after the Spanish Civil War of 1936.

For example, Santiago Salvador acted alone in November 1893 when he attacked the Great Theater of the Liceo in Barcelona. This was in revenge for the death by firing squad of his friend Paulio Pallás (another anarchist terrorist who in September of that year attacked General Martínez Campos in the middle of a military parade in Barcelona. The terrorist threw a couple of bombs at his carriage, and the general was wounded in the attack, with two generals and a civil guard killed. There were also dozens of bystanders also wounded.) Salvador hid in his clothes two Orsini bombs, a very popular bomb among anarchists of the day that detonated when it struck the floor or other hard surface. The terrorist waited for the opera's intermission and threw two bombs indiscriminately at the public from the balcony. The first bomb created an infernal deafening sound and blasted human flesh, blood, and splinters everywhere. The second landed on the fancy gown of a woman wounded in the first explosion, but didn't detonate as the dress softened the impact of the bomb. This anarchist attack left 22 dead and 35 gravely wounded.

Maybe many contemporary anarchists don't remember that the author of this attack was one of their political predecessors. It's a pity that such an emblematic personality, who in his moment was a terrible enemy of society and the system, has been forgotten (as have many others). Not totally, of course, there are still those among us who remember him.

HH: There is certain ambiguity concerning the term "re-wilding". Sometimes it is said that the eco-extremist must do what he can to not be dependent on civilization, but at the same time, "there is no future." Is there a defined position on "re-wilding" or does it depend on each individual eco-extremist?

Xale: Re-wilding as we understand it differs a bit from how the Yankee eco-radicals understand it. I believe they were the first ones to employ this term. The meaning for them is to designate actions in favor of wild nature, always relating to the preservation of an environment and the spreading of natural settings into the urban spaces in which humans can then little by little become feral.

Personally, I know some eco-extremists who weren't born in the city and at this very moment are leading the lives of nomads in some place within what is geographically known as "Mexico." They go out for a while, return to their places, and then decide to attack civilization. It's a very effective strategy.

That type of eco-extremist has decided to "re-wild" in wild nature itself: to wander like nomads, knowing how to hunt, to make friction fire, use animal skins, gather food, etc. Personally, I respect very much their way of life and consider that if that's how they want to live, I'm all for it. In any event, to be in constant contact with wild nature always does something beautiful to you. You always give it a much greater value. This type of eco-extremist also knows that there is no future. That's why he's up in the wilderness before it all gets completely destroyed. Fortunately here in Mexico there are still wild places in comparison with other parts of the world where they no longer exist.

On the other hand, the eco-extremists of the city also "rewild" themselves individually in their own way. Many of us know how to do what the "nomadic" eco-extremists can do in given situations. But in the city one needs to know how to move about and to be the "wolf in sheep's clothing". City eco-extremists need to know how to wage war, how to attack, ambush, evade authorities, mug, use firearms, and savor the last breath when taking the life of an enemy. All of this is also re-wilding: to return to the primitive in a conflict inherited from our ancestors; to put into practice the tactics that the ancients used but in our own conditions. In fact, the murder that ITS carried out also represents "individualist re-wilding". The goal of assassinating an UNAM employee was not just to take him out and create negative reactions to this act, but rather with the same act, the members of ITS also murdered the civilized person within, killing little by little with thrusts of the knife those Western values imposed on them from childhood onward.

For me and my own, the eco-extremists of the city and outside of it, there is no future; there is only the present. We don't have anything to fight for except ourselves. To re-wild ourselves is to know how to move about like hunters, to learn to stalk the enemy, to hate him, to spill his blood, to scalp him and offer the scalp to the dead. But it is also to know wild nature, to lose oneself in the wilderness, to be in contact with the cycle of the seasons; to know it, breathe it in, and love it.

HH: Some people have accused eco-extremism of being in favor of authority, since it rejects anarchism. Does eco-extremism have an abstract position regarding "authority" or is too much of a scholastic question in our context?

Xale: You can't deny that authority has had an important role in human societies. In each ancient ethnic group there has always been a leader in war as well as in spiritual matters. The woman who gathered food could be considered a type of leader when the hunt went badly, being the "head" of the tribe in difficult times. Only relatively recently have we only seen the negative face of authority with the rise of authoritarianism. It has been translated into a concrete phenomenon that has wanted to "impose on us something by force." That's due to Western culture that we have stuck in our brains. Forced education accompanied by an authority figure who tells us what to do or say is the model in which we were educated. Up to a certain point, then, it is understandable that many consider authority something harmful and invasive.

It is necessary to cast off that Western culture to see authority with other eyes; to differentiate between an authority figure who wants to impose something on us at all costs and an authority figure who imparts to us valuable teachings due to his knowledge. Thus, without beating around the bush I can say that eco-extremism doesn't demonize authority, and it doesn't flatly reject it as the anarchists do, for example. This is because we don't only see its negative side in the Western way, but also we see the positive side of authority as indigenous people saw it. In fact, many anarchist groups have had leaders or authority figures. They might call them by another name, like "an example to follow," but that's another story. We can also say in the examples of the anarcho-bandits, etc. there was an anarchist among them who had a greater presence, who incited the rest, who had the most initiative, and whose knowledge was more elaborate. To give one example, Di Giovanni was the leader of his crew due to his commitment to all that he did, including bombings editing of books and newspapers, writing letters to defend himself from the calumnies of the "anarcho-Franciscans," the execution of undesirable people, and hold-ups etc. Bonnot was the one who led his group of robbers in France since he had the most experience in robberies. Miguel Arcángel Rosigna was the one who led a group of robbers in Uruguay due to his almost perfect methodology and intelligence in committing robberies and jail breaks.

Even Bakunin could be considered an authority figure, but don't freak out here anarchist reader. He's an example of benign authority who taught valuable things with his theories. Due to this, the anarchist movement became a threat to its enemies.

Thus in gradually answering your question, I think that authority for the eco-extremist is an abstract theme. We don't put special emphasis on it since we have no problem in accepting it.

HH: It's true that leftism and anarchism (in general) treat authority as an absolute metaphysical category, when traditionally it hasn't been anything like that. I blame modern man who can do nothing, is completely domesticated, and for that reason obsesses about the question of authority. In other societies, authority was charismatic. Even in the most primitive bands, however, there were laws and social codes that one had to follow whether you liked it or not. I read recently of someone saying that the modern anarchist wouldn't hack it in primitive band society because their role would be defined within the band and you can't shirk your obligation there. And all that without the state or the police, mind you. On the other hand, the social anarchist seems totally bound to solidarity and reciprocity among "comrades" or whatever they call them. But that morality is never questioned...

Xale: I agree with you that the anarcho-primitivist would surely get thrown out of the primitive band like a dog if he or she were ever to try to join one. Surely they would always be whining about something and pushing the others to rebel against the shaman or something like that.

HH: I believe that many interested readers especially in the United States think that eco-extremism isn't for them, since there the state is very powerful and eco-extremist action does not appear possible. Is there a way to be an eco-extremist in the United States without being immediately thrown in prison or shot down by the police?

Xale: I sincerely believe that people who think that eco-extremism is not possible because you have the largest security agencies in the world "in house" so to speak are cowardly people who can't think of ways to carry out actions in the United States without getting caught. It's true that the NSA is spying on the majority of radicals and that the FBI has a list of potential trouble-makers. And it's certain that the police have infiltrated extremist groups to the point of being able to break them up. I'm not denying that. I think that the problem lies in people who are under suspicion, the ones already on a list and who have their photo in the system. They are people who are part of certain movements and are already suspects for the security agencies. Those people who join movements love the spotlight, to be recognized as being "the most radical." And they like to brag. Now let's think of an eco-extremist who isn't interested in any of that, who acts alone or with an accomplice. Someone who keeps a low profile, who doesn't hang out in the places where there are people who belong to radical movements (anarchists, environmentalists, ecologists, Black Bloc, etc.). Let's think of an eco-extremist who knows how to hide, (as much as possible) his Web history. We would consider this person to be very cautious, untrusting and intelligent. Under certain conditions I think that this eco-extremist could carry out attacks without getting caught or killed by the police. Of course, I know all of that is easier said than done. An eco-extremist should have conviction, dedication, patience, and commitment. An eco-extremist would be very capable of carrying out attacks in the United States, come out unscathed and continue the war, of that I am certain. Only time will tell if I am right...

HH: This is a sensitive issue, and I am not suggesting anything concrete here, of course. I am only observing. But it seems like individualist and indiscriminate attack is a constant theme among people in the U.S., or at least the Yankee mentality obsesses over it. John Zerzan, for example, is always going on about the "mass shooter" who kills innocent people in clubs, schools, or other public places for no reason or for "twisted" ones. As you well know, everyone up there has guns, and lots of guns, of every caliber, etc. The shooter always shoots himself in the end or is caught by the police, but there is never a way to stop these "lone wolves" before it's too late. I mention this because it can explain the reaction of the well-behaved anarchos when faced with eco-extremist attacks. It's not a question of something that is separate from their daily lives, but is rather very much a part of it: a "crazy guy" with a gun killing people out of pure frustration.

Xale: I think what you are talking about is really a cultural question. In Mexico there are not really a lot of cases that I know of where a person starts shooting randomly at people. If people have guns here is for protection, for revenge, or it's for a job (assassination, assault, kidnapping, etc.) If someone gets killed, people don't say it was because of frustration or it was done by a person who was mentally disturbed. Instead they'll say something like, "he probably deserved it," "it was just his turn," or "that's what you get for trying to fight back!"

I remember one case over here that was similar to the "mass shooter" thing over there. In 2009, a man was painting slogans in Balderas Station in the Mexico City metro about global warming, the responsibility of governments, etc. The police tried to stop him, and all of this during rush hour and with the station full of people. The man resisted arrest and from his belongings he took out a revolver and killed the policeman trying to arrest him. Many passengers were terrified and tried to hide in the cars. Some bystanders tried to play the hero and take the weapon away, and without remorse he shot them in the same manner. He left some wounded and one dead in the skirmish. When his clip was emptied, he was surrounded and almost lynched. He was finally arrested, and the press published that he suffered from schizophrenia due to the treatments he had undergone in an insane asylum. This led to the violent reaction, but in any case, he was condemned to spend some years in a "mental health" clinic and was afterward released. Maybe in this case people over here would say, "that fucker was crazy," but the context is quite different from what happens over in the United States, though the root causes are the same. In this case, it was the medicine that he was given

that made him have a schizophrenic episode; the medicines and treatments that derive from the main problem, civilization. Addressing the U.S. context, from my perspective I think that the mass shooters have real reasons to carry out those sorts of indiscriminate attacks. They're not just doing them to do them, or from nothing. They aren't just shooting to fire their gun. There was something that drove them to do it and plan it out. Killing a large number of people like that considering how they did it can only be the result of a great number of religious, social, clinical, and cultural causes, as well as economic and political one, etc. I've known of people who were bullied in school who one day decided to show up to class with an assault rifle and take out the person who was bullying them. Some others have done so for racial injustice against blacks, others for religious reasons and they attack U.S. society since they consider it an enemy of Allah. Others do it out of "white supremacy." Some do it because they are on psychoactive medications. In the case of U.S. eco-extremism, should it ever emerge one day, the reasons for an act of this type would be attacked but we would know that it was the only option. With this we arrive at the conclusion that civilization is the problem and we attack it without hesitation. That is to say, all of the causes and reasons, actions and their consequences, derive from a framework of diverse conditions, and I think they deserve a profound analysis before condemning them. Those cases and others are for me a single reaction of animal human instincts that attempt to manifest themselves in civilization. And since they find themselves unable to develop as they had previously, they find a release in those conditions. You have to accept that. All of us in civilization are to a certain extent "frustrated" for one reason or another. Thus to say that those acts are derived from frustration is not a conclusion that is totally mistaken when all is said and done.

HH: I think that the "theoretical work" of our current time is to find a means to re-found a paganism / animism apart from the secular mentality of leftism and Western monotheism. For me this signifies a profound knowledge of one's local environment. Do you think a change in perception, separating oneself from humanism and anthropocentrism, would change the "pessimist" rhetoric of eco-extremism? Or rather, if Nature is the one who wins at the end of the day, and human beings are the real "villains" who are defeated, would this mean that the "true nihilists" are the ones who defend civilization, and, why not, society and humanity simply put. What do you think of this analysis?

Xale: The change in perception that you are speaking of would have to be radical. We would have to change from pessimists to optimists, from nihilists to positivists.

Maybe there would be some eco-extremist or someone similar who, due to his cultural formation and social conditions, would have a different perception to the one discussed here and, as you imply, would consider modern humanity to be the real nihilists. Though, if he did have that perception, I don't think the central idea of the individualist defense of wild nature would change, nor the embodied recognition of the old deities linked to that nature who are the fundamental basis of this.

But now reality dictates the pessimistic setting and it is within this framework that we develop. We don't have another option to take up and act on.

HH: What is the role of criminality in eco-extremism? It seems to have emerged as a major theme on the blogs, Revista Regresión, etc. What would you say to those who would object that criminality is also part of civilization and does not merit being idealized?

Xale: Criminal activities are a fundamental part of the eco-extremist tendency. Criminality in this case consists of stealing, planting bombs, burning things, threatening people, acquiring ingredients for explosive devices, transporting arms and explosives, storing these, conspiring with individualists in other parts of the world to carry out attacks, assassinate people, and in some countries it's even a serious crime to publish, translate, and edit these types of messages inciting people directly or indirectly to carry out crimes. We eco-extremists are criminals, thugs, thieves, murderers, and attackers. That's the essence of all of this, it is its nature. In this we aren't idealizing anything. It's a practice inherited from the naked savages who robbed cattle from the Spaniards, those who ambushed and attacked their caravans; of those who killed the enemy and raided their towns reducing them to ashes; of those who poisoned the tips of their arrows, etc. This is the practice we are continuing only in a different time and context, but in the end it's the same war. This refers to the practice of criminality, but as a term we have coined it as rhetoric. If society and the authorities say that we're criminals that means we are. If they say we're terrorists we're that too. Those labels don't scare us, we're not going to try to defend ourselves saying that we're not criminals because within their juridical terms we are. We aren't going to get indignant at this name like the majority of "revolutionaries" and "radicals" do when they're called those things. Eco-extremists don't defend "just causes", their "compassion" and "humanism" don't represent them. On the contrary, they are best represented by violence and the lack of consideration for civilized life.

Many people see criminality as part of civilization, sure. Many even think that it is a product of social conditions that some suffer in civilization, and that is also true. Evidently, if civilization did not exist, criminality in its juridical aspect would not either. But I emphasize, only in the juridical aspect. This is because crimes against anyone would also take place without civilization. But it needs to be asked, would criminal acts be classified as criminal without civilization? Or would they be classified as retribution only? Or in the modern era is there no difference? Is criminality something that emerges from the problems of a civilization, or could they be considered a consequence without it having to be strictly associated with civilized conditions? We ask this since it has to be remembered that everything in this world and outside of it is governed by cycles, all is constant movement where every action is followed by a reaction.

Let's take one example: the Aztecs considered the Teochichimecas to be barbarous and uncivilized, and they didn't dare to explore the Gran Chichimeca. When they did they encountered hostile savages who expelled them violently. The Aztecs then did not consider these natives to be criminals, just "uncivilized": a people without culture. Under this logic, the Aztecs focused on building a civilization without interfering in the Teotlalpan Tlacoachcalco Mictlampa ("the northern place where death dwells" in Nahuatl). Maybe their gods recommended to them not to mess with the Teochichimecas. They listened to that recommendation and left them alone. They devoted themselves to conquering and expanding their empire by subjugating other tribes that were easier to conquer. The War Chichimecas, looking at the Pre-Columbian civilized people, did not enter their territories, and had no need to come into conflict with them.

When the Spanish arrived at the Gran Chichimeca, they began a campaign of total war against those accursed uncivilized peoples. These people responded accordingly with the same harshness as the white man and even worse. It was then that they were considered criminals by the laws of the Spanish crown, and they were then enslaved, domesticated, or exterminated. That is to say, the actions of the Spanish who attacked the Teochichimecas created this reaction.

I would even say that if the Westerners hadn't arrived with that insatiable attitude of subjugating all people and things, the Teochichimecas would have just continued on with their simple lives, that's for sure. They would have merely continued to fight against neighboring tribes as that was their perennial tradition due to their conflict-prone nature.

The same is true of the eco-extremists. Since civilization wants to completely artificialize, mechanize, and domesticate us, we respond violently like our ancestors did. Thus criminality is not just a product of modern civilization as such. It doesn't arise from it. It is given the name of "crime" by the laws of this society but in itself it is a general consequence of an action depending on the established system called civilization, the system of domination, etc.

This reasoning is based only on the juridical-historical aspect, an official punitive matter. But if we break down the term "criminality" a little more, we will see that it is quite relative, and it bases itself on a fixed moral position as in the examples that I will cite here:

-A man holds up a bank with his gun, he threatens the teller with blowing his brains out if he doesn't give him all the money in the till. In this case, the robber will consider that at that moment he is committing a crime, or perhaps not. Maybe he will think he is doing something "bad" or perhaps not. Maybe like many bank robbers in Mexico City, a bank robbery is just another "job" where he risks his life to earn money, employing strength and intelligence, just like a miner, a window washer on a tall building, or a metal worker.

But for the teller, the manager of the bank branch, and the police, that man is a criminal and he is doing a "bad" thing.

-A worker in a slaughterhouse kills dozens of head of cattle daily. He slits their throats with a sharp knife so that they bleed out and their meat is then processed. It's a dirty job but at the end of the day this employee is considered to be a "good" citizen because at the end of the week he gets his wage with which he can support his family and as an extra he contributes to the food industry. Slitting the throats of cattle is not considered to be "bad" and much less a crime. But for many radical vegans what the worker in the slaughterhouse does is "bad" and he is a criminal for killing animals so that others may eat them. For that reason the vegans decide to torch his car.

-A law student wants to "be somebody" in life and for that reason in school he doesn't care if he has to claw over others to get ahead in his law practice. He uses tricks to get his degrees and finally gets to be an important lawyer. In his career he is charged with putting people who are falsely accused behind bars and with successfully advocating for the clients who are almost always rich. For that lawyer none of this is "bad," and much less is he considered a criminal just because he jails people with false evidence while receiving a handsome compensation in return for each case won. At the same time, his wealthy clients are quite pleased with him. But the relatives of the people he puts in prison don't think the same about him. For them what he is doing as a lawyer is anything but "good." And one among them even considers him a criminal. And knowing that he will never get his day in court, that relative decides to follow him and put a bullet in his brain.

As you can see in these examples, and as I stated above, if we analyze the term "criminality," in many cases we would see the term as relative. For sure, eco-extremists don't see criminal activity as actions that are either good or bad, but as consequences of other actions, employing and defending the term within the rhetoric that characterizes us.

HH: What would you say of Zerzan's crew who think that eco-extremists should flee into the mountains to fight against the cartels to free wild places?

Xale: Goddamn Zerzan and his buddies! Their stupidity and the incoherence of their criticism never cease to amaze me! Haha it's obvious that they've run out of valid criticisms and they're just spitting out ridiculous things like that. This would be as if someone asked Zerzan's band of anarcho-primitivists, "If you criticize technology so much why do you have a radio show on the Internet?" And they looked equally dumb in telling us that we have to go and fight the cartels so that they leave the mountainous regions where they inhabit alone.

To respond to their question I would ask Zerzan and his disciples: Why do we have to go into the mountains to fight against the drug assassins of this or that cartel? We would have to do that if our goal was "earth liberation," or if our goal was "re-wilding" in the gringo style. But as those are not our goals they can go fuck themselves. There's no doubt that their chief Zerzan and his subordinates are only thinking within their own terms. They can't level a sincere or valid criticism because they can't get out of their closed mentality where they think they're always right in what they preach. It's a shame, we were hoping that with all that

was written against their (anarcho) primitivism they would come up with a thoughtful criticism but I guess we were wrong. Maybe in another lifetime...

HH: With this question our conversation ends. The truth is that few who read this conversation will agree with all that is contained herein. But the truth is that eco-extremism doesn't appear to be going anywhere. As a defined tendency, it is still quite young. It's only five years old, and it has changed much during that time. But we are now living in the ruins of failed utopias, be they socialist, capitalist, or religious. Within that context, eco-extremism will continue to be an option. People hate eco-extremism not only because it is opposed to society, but also because it reflects society without civilized illusions. It reflects the disgust and frustration that the hyper-civilized have, things that they feel but can't change. It is an attack on all of the lies of the domesticated world. The idealists of today don't even swallow the pill of optimism and humanism. The world is on the edge of the cliff and there is no turning back. Alea iacta est.

-H.H.