Reader Thoughts on Collapse, Part 2: What do we relish leaving behind?

Contributed by Various Authors
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In April, Culture Change put out a call for reader responses on three questions about collapse. Here in Part 2, we publish responses to the question: Regarding collapse: What do we relish leaving behind, as collapse begins or as it will be intensified? Here are the responses:

Plastic, TV, electronically-reproduced music, tractor trailers, space shuttles, high-tech weapons.

Phony people and consumer object fetish-ism.

I relish leaving behind all those effects which are unhealthy for "children and other living things."

The behind the scenes control, manipulation and misinformation and the overwhelming gloom and doom news.

I relish leaving behind the money dominated value system of our culture.

An end to an economy and social contracts based on development, growth and easy access to fossil fuel.

Greed, hierarchies, disconnection, competition. So, I have a hard time thinking of this as collapse.

Pollution of air, water, food, sound. All items that allow one to persist alone in a box. Heavy individualism and competition promoted through mass marketing.

An economy and human population that are programmed to gradually shrink because of planning - as opposed to the inevitable harsh shrinkage that will be imposed by resource scarcity in the absence of planning.

Mechanized ways of thinking, acting, and doing things. Emotional, psychological, chemical and material pollution. Industrial ugliness. Alienation from ourselves, each other and the Earth.

I will relish leaving behind all the crap and trash I produce now. I will relish leaving behind Postmodern neuroses and worries.

The commodification of everything and everyone to the point where we can accept the destruction of ourselves and the planet for the sake of monetary profit and growth. Also, the intense separation from each other and the world we live in as people or things to be molded to our needs.

I personally look forward to the day when there are no planes and helicopters joy-riding over my property, no speedboats and jet-skis screaming around recreational lakes, no motor racing, no adverts for consumerisitic 'stuff', no shopping malls selling mountains of imported goods nobody needs etc. -all the crap of the present culture.

I look forward to entertaining ourselves with nature, art, music, theater, comedy, literature, and absurdity with no need for Internet service, carbon consumption (except to fuel up the body), or buying useless crap and dumping it in a land-fill within a year.(

The Stock Market, supermarkets that make all sorts of food available all year round instead of encouraging seasonal

eating, mass media, advertising, corporate giants such as BHP Billiton and all the oil companies, definitely leave behind the colonising mentality where it is ok to take peoples land in the name of either civilisation or Imperialism, leave behind the concept that some people are worth more than others.

I will relish leaving behind unconscious living on the part of many people; arguments from climate and energy deniers; the doubts about what will happen; the insanity of "rush hours", long highway commutes; the shift of freight from trucks to rail and water; dirty coal generation displaced by renewables; the tilted playing field against renewables; fast food and fast living; not being appreciated for the work I do; isolation between neighbors; the assaults on the environment; the obliviousness to social and environmental justice issues; environmental stupidity; mass produced bullshit; rampant consumerism; conspicuous consumption; fads; materialism; the sense of entitlement; ballooning population, and I'm sure there's more.

To leave behind going to places, buying things, and doing things that insult our soul, such as blindly going to work, clocking in, and obeying the corporate master. Leave behind the lie that "having is being". Leave behind competition. Leave behind the imaginary artificial invention called "money." On every level we use substitutes and screens instead of connecting to what is real in our lives. Few of us are connected to place. We have no sense of community--our lives are defined by our labor to make someone else wealthy. We wander lost among strangers endlessly consuming stuff that has no connection to where or who we are.

The universal constant busyness, the assumption that there’s something suspect about arrangements in which people take care of each other, the fragmentation of attention caused by an overload of information, the awareness of pervasive injustice—from massive imprisonment of pot smokers and black youth, to endless wars of aggression to the impunity of the rich and powerful, about which I can do nothing. The sense of walking hallucination which our culture currently conveys, in which various TV programs are more real to an awful lot of people than the actual world of which they’re part. At the root of it all is meanness—the tough skin necessary to ignore the pain caused by exploitation, whether it’s exploitation of the land beyond what is sustainable, or of animals and trees, or of people less powerful than oneself.(

I don’t watch TV.. I don’t own a TV.. But sometimes, day to day, allowing the social inertia pull me through my existence, I kind of feel like I’m watching my life on TV rather than really living it. I exist in temperature controlled environments, I touch engineered fabrics and surfaces, I eat prepared foods, but I’m not really (I mean, REALLY) participating in it all, I didn’t build the house or the place where I work, I didn’t create the fabrics or surfaces I touch, I didn’t grow or cook the food I eat. I’m not really living as much as sleep walking through this passive existence. I look forward to leaving that behind.. Sure, I acknowledge that there will be difficultly, struggle, pain, discomfort, but.. At least it will feel like I’m really LIVING, you know?

I don't relish anything left behind except the institutional Empire and it's capitalist class-imbalanced framework. I'm not of the neo-Luddite ilk. I have disabilities that computers and all that "bad" gadget technology have helped me overcome. I have Tourette's Syndrome and another Attention-Difference spectrum "disorder" that renders a potentially 19th century low-tech life a living hell, a nightmare from which my childhood was largely centered and the advent of computers and the internet in the 80s and 90s allowed me to escape from. I cannot write short fiction or novels on pads of paper with a pencil again. Typewriters were a start for me, but computers and word processing were the tools that allowed me to earn a living, albeit a meager one.

I won't miss the traffic, too many cars, or the largesse of the owning class at my expense. But really, as a person who can live as if I'm not disabled now, the thought of going back to being functionally disabled with the loss of tech is suicidally depressing. My future looks worse than ever in light of the coming collapse and the loss of high-technology.

As your editor I'm again impressed by this complete batch of responses; not one had to be omitted. A pattern is emerging: hopeful, enlightened and imaginative visions.

I relish leaving behind the waste of human potential. We are capable of so much as individuals, but tend to be pushed into limited roles as producers or consumers. Specialization has cut us off from wider experience whereby we share skills and personal art with joy and freedom. Roles will change and expand.

I particularly look forward to seeing the end of the waste of space created by the car infrastructure -- so deadly and filthy. Much good can come of such changes as no more asphalt and concrete over good soil - Jan Lundberg

Reader Thoughts on Collapse

- Part 1: What we are acting toward? Or, what main outcome might we be looking forward to?

- Part 2: What do we relish leaving behind, as collapse begins or as it will intensify?

- Part 3: What do we not want to leave behind unresolved? Or, what needs to be done before it's too late to accomplish it?