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Witch Hazel

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Eve: A Green Anarcha-
Feminist Perspective**

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written about the effects of patriarchal rule on women today, and I hope to see that discourse continue. But after nearly ten years of feminist consciousness raising, mostly with other women, I'm ready to hear about it from men and talk about it with men. It's one thing for men to mention patriarchy in the list of institutions that comprise civilization. It's another to define what effects patriarchy has had on the autonomy and social evolution of men in civilized societies, and to discuss how we can overcome it together, through our daily interactions, as well as in the ways we fight the state, support each other when the state fights back, and develop collective projects that subvert the institutions that control us. Anti-patriarchy is not an "issue" to take up. It is a consciousness that should underline our lives as we struggle against the forces of civilization to revive ancient ways, while realizing an entirely new way of being in a post-domesticated world.

As a female anarchist I have for many years thought about and looked around for any interpretations or writings on "anarcha-feminism." I could find nothing. Besides a few reprints of writings from the 70s attempting to define the term, and many writings by anarchist women on various subjects of particular interest to women (especially women's health); there just isn't a whole lot out there. *Green Anarchy* newspaper (and other *GA* endeavors) has recently made an effort to integrate what could be called an "anarcha-feminist" or anti-patriarchy critique into the overarching anti-civilization perspective.

This is a good thing — even giving "lip service" to patriarchy as a pillar of civilization actually goes a long way to opening up the anti-civ perspective — making it feel more inclusive of the experiences and perceptions of us women living in and resisting the control imposed on us by a patriarchal world. This "lip service" is an honest attempt to address what some feminists (anarchist and otherwise) have defined as a "male dominated" and an "irrelevant to women" green anarchist movement, in a way that doesn't compromise an anti-civ analysis. But as always, we could still be going much further. Taken to another level, an anti-patriarchy critique is as relevant to men as to women (and all those who identify in between, as many people have throughout pre-history). Anti-patriarchy is not a female issue. We are not the only ones who suffer under the thumb of enforced sex roles, division of labor, emasculation of violence, etc. On the contrary, the devaluation of the feminine archetype could be considered a parallel to the mind/body split that enabled so much of humanity to take a drastic turn in evolution toward domestication and civilization. This "totality" affects men and women in different ways, but they could not be compared in terms of quantity.

A main reason I feel so uncomfortable with a "feminist" identity is that most feminist thought denies (or is oblivious to) the inherent feminism in anarchist ideas not to mention in primitivist anarchist ideas. Liberal feminism seeks to empower itself at the expense of men. I used to be a liberal feminist. I studied the theories in college, and I practiced it by bullying and coercing men to defer to women at all times, as reparations for thousands of years of patriarchal rule. As I became an anarchist, this "identity politics" praxis gradually seemed more and more simplistic

and single-issue, and our tactics started to feel authoritarian. I was still pissed about male behaviors that revealed a lifetime of male privilege (and I still do get pissed, by the way), but I eventually decided that I would interact with sexism in an entirely different way. Looking back, I understand where my rage came from, and why I chose to direct it in the way I did. I even understand where the rage of some of the radical women in our movements comes from, and I see it as potentially a step toward truer liberation for them.

As for the male dominance of the GA “movement”, there is undoubtedly a dominance IN NUMBERS of males over females involved actively as self-defined green anarchists. This of course does not mean that the ideas behind a lot of GA activity are not shared by many anarchist/radical women, in the same way that those ideas are shared by many people outside the militant anarchist subculture. Just like with issues of biotechnology and agriculture’s threat to food security, when I discuss issues of specific interest to women, such as the loss of control over our health, childbirth, sexuality, body image, etc., I do so from an anti-industrial/anti-civ perspective, and I find that people genuinely agree with that perspective. I make efforts to publicly identify with green anarchy, so that those around me — including women — might consider the relevance of anti-civ ideas. I want more women to write for GA — to speak about the “totality” of civilization with a specifically woman’s voice.

Where I first started developing my own brand of “green anarchy-feminism” (if it has to be labeled) was when I discovered “eco-feminist” ideas. These ideas most closely resemble the anti-patriarchal, anti-civilization critique, but much of it is most definitely not compatible with anarchy. Glorification of Goddess-worshipping cultures as indication that a matriarchal society is somehow preferable to patriarchy, is a bunch of crap. This isn’t much different from the pro-statist liberal feminist idea that a woman president would save the world. Some of it is even colonialist (in its co-optation of indigenous wisdom), or “essentialist” in the way it defines women’s power in terms of our reproductive capacity. As an anarchist I felt alienated from much of “ecofeminism,” but attracted to some of it too. Chellis Glendenning put a whole new spin on it for me.

I have never known self-identified GA men who dismiss the institution of patriarchy as irrelevant to anarchism or primitivism. There has been a LACK of such analysis, but that’s simply not the same thing. The absence of such analysis has indeed been a product of living in a patriarchal world, as are many things in all our movements, and I think many GA men have come to recognize this (all of them I know anyway). This recognition has seemed to happen partly in response to the insistence of radical women, and while I despise many of their tactics, I am actually really pleased to see that those on the receiving end (which is not all men, by the way) have not turned away from what I consider to be the issue at hand: the lack of an anti-patriarchy perspective. One of my fears was that the despicable, authoritarian, manipulative tactics of some women would cause a backlash against feminist critiques, and obscure the inherent feminism in anarchy. I used to not care much about the effects of my feminist rage, and when it’s aimed at certain sectors of the population, I still don’t. But when it’s aimed at people striving for total liberation, however reactionary they may seem when confronted on their privilege (aren’t most of us?), I am pretty convinced at this point that if we are serious about what we say we are trying to break down and recreate, in terms of fighting patriarchy we HAVE GOT to do it together.

This is not to say that “seperatism” as a method of unlearning patriarchy cannot be useful for both men and women. I am a firm believer in “men against sexism” type groups, and “women’s safe spaces”. I like the idea of women’s solidarity and “sisterhood” (although I have seen some power-tripping there), and although the notion of “brotherhood” kind of scares me, I’m not closed to the potential for liberation there. Also, I’m not talking here about confronting sexist violence, misogyny, or homophobia — those were never issues of contention in terms of having tolerance for such behaviors. I’m pretty much no-compromise when it comes to that.

As a pillar of civilization, the effects of patriarchy will not be dismantled or eradicated from our communities anytime soon. As with the lingering effects of religion, domestication, agriculture, linear time, and symbolic thought, we are facing a massive challenge in identifying, much less unlearning, the ways patriarchy has alienated us from nature, each other, and our own internal wildness. Much has been said and