

Posted on the Homepage of Dr. Louis Komjathy (www.louiskomjathy.com). January 1, 2022. Ongoing aphoristic “essay” originally begun circa 1993.

Theses on the Philosophy of Oecologie

Louis Komjathy, Ph.D.
The Underground University (TUU)

○

“Here I sit and wait surrounded by broken old tablets and new tablets half covered with writing.”
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

○

Oecologie. From the Greek *oikos*, house/dwelling, and *logos*, word/discourse/to speak. Saying/speaking the home (beyond houses), studying dwelling. Ecology as the science of the economy of animals and plants, that branch of biology which discourses on the relations of living organisms to their surroundings, their habits and ways of life. Oecologie as rooted in the indwelling word, the speaking inhabitant. And oeconomie: household management. Not political economy, but cultural/biological oeconomie. Oecologie as discourses *of* the earth. *Language in the service of life*. Dwelling within locale, region, community, and world. The ecosystem of existence: the whole of culture.

○

By the time that Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany in 1933, the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) had received some 17,277,000 votes through democratic elections and controlled 288 of the 577 seats in the Reichstag.

○

The law of unintended consequences.

○

The disappearance of bees.

○

Strip-malls.

○

Desertification. Not simply occurring in external landscapes. We are witnessing the desertification of cultures and consciousness.

○

Books on government watch-lists.

○

“Honor killings” and “widow-burning.” Women as storehouses of “family honor.” Women as appendages to male identity.

○

Essential reading. Towards an ecological ethics and applied practice. Edward Abbey, Thomas Berry, Wendell Berry, Murray Bookchin, Ernest Callenbach, Rachael Carson, Noam Chomsky, Warwick Fox, Masanobu Fukuoka, Susan Griffin, Hildegard of Bingen, David Holmgren, Aldo Leopold, Denise

Levertov, Barry Lopez, Ned Ludd, Sallie McFague, Bill Mollison, John Muir, Arne Naess, Richard Nelson, Mary Oliver, Tom Regan, Peter Singer, Gary Snyder, Henry David Thoreau, Terry Tempest Williams.

Make your own lists.

Eihei Dogen, the founder of Soto Zen, wrote *The Mountains and Rivers Sutra*. He learned to read landscapes as sacred texts.

Mediation paralyzes.

Assembly lines to debeak chicks. The psychology of cages and pens. The consequences of animal stress in feedlots, factory pens and meat-packing facilities.

Foot-binding and high-heels.

Karl Marx identified religion as the opiate of the masses. He never could have anticipated the efficacy of the modern entertainment industry.

Avoid elevators, escalators and electric doors.

Western biomedicine was developed on battlefields. Triage. A response to industrial diseases and catastrophic trauma from technological “progress.”

The economics of war. It is now cheaper to exterminate a village than to support its flourishing.

Edema.

Five percent of the US population controls more than fifty percent of the wealth. Two percent of the global population controls more than fifty percent of the wealth.

Fractal theory. An individual branch contains the patterns of every branch. The branch contains the forest; the forest reveals the branch.

“Pests.”

O

The demographics of criminals, prisoners and the homeless provide a window into cultures. Study asylums.

O

Why should people not steal in a society characterized by socio-economic inequality, oppression and exploitation?

O

Our dreams are not our own.

O

Conspicuous consumption and planned obsolescence.

O

Architecture is the remnant of previous minds. Ideas made into semi-permanent structures. Mandated patterns of movement.

O

What will the world be like without birdsong?

O

Strip-mining and slag.

O

Embrace simplicity. Embody a conservationist ethic.

O

More green-house gases are produced by cattle in feed-lots than by all the cars on the earth.

O

Holocaust deniers. Holocaust, from the Greek *holókauston*, meaning “fire sacrifice.” Compare the Hebrew *ba-shoab* (“catastrophic upheaval”) and the Yiddish *kehurbn* (“total destruction”).

O

“Virtual reality.”

O

Those who would seek to set the world on fire must be stopped.

O

Evangelical Christianity, mega-churches and mass hysteria.

O

In 2003, the government of the United States directed its military to invade Iraq. During the occupation, over 600,000 Iraqis have been killed. “Body counts” and “collateral damage.” Translation: 6,000,000 Americans have died.

○

What is this affluence built on?

○

Over ten million children worldwide are victims of child prostitution.

○

“Race,” “ethnicity” and “nationality” are dangerous fictions.

○

“The real can be presented in thought not by integers but only by fractions.” Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*.

○

We must compost our own consciousness.

○

There is an eschatological battle underway for control of the world. All in the name of a god who does not exist. Or are there two gods who require blood sacrifices for survival?

○

The apocalypse originates with humans, and it will occur because of them.

○

Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

○

Human trafficking and the modern slave trade. There are at least twenty-seven million slaves in the world today. The politics of global economics and consumption. *Disposable People*.

○

Some six to eight million cats and dogs enter shelters in the United States each year. Of these, three to four million are “euthanized.”

○

How a culture treats animals reveals its degree of humanity. It also has a direct correlation with intra-human relational patterns.

○

We must work for the liberation of all beings.

○

Lesser-known “sins” that deserve the death penalty according to the “Old Testament”: Adultery (Leviticus 20:10), kidnapping (Exodus 21:16), loving anything more than God (Leviticus 20:2), “occult practices” (Exodus 22:18), pre-marital sex (Leviticus 21:9), not observing the Sabbath (Numbers 15:33-36), and striking or slandering a parent (Exodus 21:15, 17).

- Global poverty and social justice: Every day 27,000 children die of hunger and malnutrition.
- Suicide bombers. A modern myth of Islamic martyrdom: that the reward for (male) martyrs will be 72 virgins in paradise. “Infidels,” “heathens,” “pagans,” and other useful dichotomies.
- Mahatma Gandhi on incongruity: “Be the change you want to see.”
- I have spent days listening to alpine lakes.
- Imagining identity beyond opposition and negation.
- Responsibility is the ability to respond.
- Rape as political policy and military tactic. The systematic mass rape and impregnation of women in Bosnia, Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Yugoslavia. What do the children of rape represent?
- Planned ecological dead-zones. Africa, the Middle East, and South America.
- The lost boys.
- Life is symbolic. Contemplate semiotic ecosystems, the underlying signification.
- You wrote this in a different place at a former time.
- The demographics of incarceration. African-Americans make up 12% of the American population, but 44% of all prisoners are African-American. Enduring legacies of slavery. Institutional racism.
- Rainer Maria Rilke on “The Panther”:
From seeing the bars, his seeing is so exhausted
that it no longer holds anything anymore.
To him the world is bars, a hundred thousand
bars, and behind the bars, nothing.
Animals in zoos no longer exist. This is what there is “to see at the zoo.”

○
Authenticity requires us to look at reality directly and honestly, without averting our eyes or turning our heads.

○
Prepare for social revolution, municipal breakdown and ecological collapse.

○
Decorum must be breached.

○
For those who would “mine” or “excavate” religious traditions for “ecological ideas”: Asceticism and monasticism *are* ecological models.

○
Investigate the diversity of cultures. The social structure of ants, elephants, mountain gorillas, penguins, wolves, and bees.

○
Jalaluddin Rumi and the Mevlevi Order. Dancing in remembrance and celebration of the Beloved.

○
Movement awareness techniques.

○
Inhabitation and embodiment.

○
Jerusalem. The Temple Mount simultaneously as sign of covenant, divine assumption, and apocalyptic requirement. Compare the Zionist dream of Israel with the East Africa proposal of 1903. The *danger* of places.

○
The average employment duration for a slaughterhouse worker is six months. The largest slaughterhouse in the world is operated by the Smithfield Packing Company in Tar Heel, North Carolina. There some 5,500 workers slaughter over 30,000 pigs per day. “Cumulative trauma injuries.”

○
The history of racism, slavery and genocide.

○
Walled “communities.”

○
The Asian Exclusion Act and Japanese-American internment camps.

○
I too have seen the films and the eyes.

O

The colonization of silence. Human flourishing requires quiet and wild places. It also requires the sounds of unfenced existence.

O

Human beings are not machines with replaceable parts. The human body is an ecosystem.

O

“Resources” do not exist.

O

The cherry trees in spring. The scent of morning rain.

O

On “artifacts” and museum collections. “There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.” Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*.

O

We are living in the final moments of the Roman Empire.

O

Modern nation-states have built their propaganda machines according to principles and practices developed by the Nazi Ministry for Public Education and Propaganda under the direction of Joseph Goebbels. One guiding principle of Nazi propaganda: “If you tell a lie often enough, people will accept it as true.”

O

Modern rituals. Blood sacrifices in the name of “peace” and “security.”

O

What would our ecological prospects be without genocide, technological warfare, viruses, epidemics, and legalized abortion?

O

Society of the Spectacle. A pandemic of violence and humiliation. Being entertained by the pain and suffering of others.

O

Recycling has become a justification for unmodified consumption.

O

Not “meat-packing plants.” *Slaughter*-houses.

O

Blood.

- There are few human beings left. “Humans” without humanity.
- Read *Diet for a Small Planet*, *Diet for a New America* and *Fast Food Nation*.
- All religious adherents are responsible for *their own tradition’s* history of violence and texts of terror.
- We must create psychologies of possibility.
- Dark matter and string theory. The universe is more hidden in darkness than manifestly perceivable. There is a matrix of being underlying separate individuation.
- Manzanita seeds will only open after a fire passes over or once passed through a bear.
- This was written as a reminder to yourself about what you love.
- The long shadows of genocide and mass death. Extermination camps. Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau, Treblinka. Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Darfur.
- Does nature encompass culture, or does culture encompass nature?
- Utopianism derives from millennial visions and expectations. What if “things becoming worse” is a direct consequence of “trying to make things better”? Displacement. The desire for something and somewhere else.
- History is a victor’s narrative.
- England partitioned India into an Islamic state and a Hindu state in 1947. Conflict has a history.
- Resistance movements. How to distinguish “freedom-fighters” and “terrorists”?
- Americans make up five percent of the global human population, but consume twenty-five percent of the world’s energy and produce twenty-two percent of the world’s green-house gases. Americans produce some 230 million tons of garbage per year. There is more to this than “carbon footprints” and “global climate change.”

- Ad hominem* arguments are no longer philosophical fallacies.
- We must overcome our own complacency and complicity.
- World hunger could be eliminated through the adoption of vegetarian and semi-vegetarian diets.
- Read the fine-print.
- There is a place inside us where we are always free.
- In every illness, there is the “illness” and the “disease.” In illness, one finds an internal disruption, an existential experience with subjective variables. Disease is a series of cultural categories with their own assumptions, history and heuristic value. “Cancer” does not exist.
- The cultural and ecological effects of UNESCO “World Heritage Sites” and the World Bank.
- Forced sterilization.
- Death by machete.
- Famines and draughts.
- For Native Americans, Europeans represented smallpox epidemics, massacres, broken treaties, and displacement. The Indian Removal Act. The Battle of Wounded Knee.
- Corn.
- A sense of place and reverence for sacrality are essential.
- Sericulture and the stages of silk production in ancient China. A method to accord with the seasons.
- Compare golf courses and cemeteries.

O

The “daily news” as the eternal return of the same. Reducing headlines and feature stories to underlying patterns of repetition: violence, exploitation, oppression, corruption, denigration. The fiction of being “informed.” Better to focus on one’s own watershed and community.

O

We have become deaf.

O

In the United States, one in six women and one in thirty-three men is a victim of sexual violence. How to translate this in terms of the perpetrators? A society where rape is cultural norm.

O

The lived experience beyond statistics.

O

A pandemic of noise and fear.

O

Anesthetization and desensitization. “Better living through pharmaceuticals.”

O

In the context of the modern military-industrial complex, few will have a death of their own.

O

In the coming decades, the resource-driven nature of wars will become more apparent.

O

Michel Foucault directs us to investigate the archeology of knowledge. “Madness” has a history. Our bodies are as much constructed as given. Each of us lives in the Panopticon. Write a history of “nature.”

O

The epistemology of *environmentalism*. There is no “environment.”

O

The earth does not need to be “saved.”

O

The ethics of tourism, the world as themepark.

O

The Bureau of Public Debt. As of 2006, the national debt of the United States was 9,000,000,000,000 dollars. The annual interest was over 400,000,000,000 dollars, or 65% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The primary creditors: Japan with 650 billion dollars, and China with 350 billion.

○ Couple this with the American government's systematic gutting of social equity and welfare programs. Not "entitlement."

○ Clearcutting and snag fields.

○ We must touch the contours of rain.

○ Everything is significant.

○ Follow solar and lunar cycles.

○ Practice interior silence. There is an internal landscape as vast as the external landscape.

○ The search for new symbol systems. Unimagined metaphors. Perhaps they are to be found among synesthetes and schizophrenics.

○ Beyond religion of the simple-minded. There is no such thing as "sin" or "evil." If heaven and hell exist, they are located in the human mind and created by human action *in the world*.

○ Depopulation or mass extinction.

○ Humanity as *homo sapiens*. As theocratic steward. As consumerist collective. As alien hybrid. As evolutionary pinnacle. As virus.

○ The United Nation's Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

○ The installation of fear, and the culture of surveillance. The National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security.

○ Sociopaths are necessary.

○ These are prescriptions for counteracting atrophy.

Riprap.

Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Cixous and Irigaray on the “body.” *Fragments for a History of the Body*.

Forest ecology.

The *kyosaku*. The “wake-up stick” used during Zen Buddhist meditation. Not as a method of discipline and punishment, as a support for awakening.

Racism on the part of victims of racism is still racism. Hate speech and the fiction of “whiteness.” If whiteness exists, it is an ideology, not a skin color.

Diversity is a result of life experience, not mere ancestral dispensation.

Roughly 137 plant, animal and insect species are destroyed every day due to rainforest deforestation. That equals 50,000 species a year. 25% of Western pharmaceuticals are derived from rainforest materials.

Homogenization and annihilation.

A “murder” of crows.

“Indicator species.”

Investigate the categories and statistics. The usefulness of illusions. Enduring fictions.

The Mother’s Cross (*mutterkreuz*) was a Nazi medal which recognized the virtues of German motherhood and had the purpose of increasing the size of “pure Aryan families.” A mother could be awarded a bronze, silver, or gold cross depending on the number of children that she had produced. Eight would entitle the woman to a gold cross; six to silver; and four for bronze. The socio-political functions of reproduction.

At some point, governments will no longer need human beings to reproduce the social order.

- A sense of gravity.
- Eugenics, bioengineering and gene patenting.
- They have warehouses with refrigerators full of blood.
- Blogs and chatrooms reveal the epidemic of individual powerlessness, marginalization, and oppression. “Free speech” ensures social inequality and physical complacency. Uninformed opinions.
- The age of simulacra. Copies without originals.
- “In wildness is the preservation of the world.” *Walking*, Henry David Thoreau.
- Sunlight falling over the aspens.
- A paradox of land conservation: Protecting wild places destroys them. Visit Yosemite Valley in the middle of summer.
- Emile Durkheim wrote a sociological analysis of suicide. Were any individuals involved?
- The highest homicide rates in America are in inter-city African-American communities, with homicide being the primary cause of death among African-American males between the ages of 18 and 25. Compare the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment.
- The socio-economics of exploitation and delusion.
- Body image, the fashion industry, and the history of “beauty.” Eating disorders.
- Biomass indexes.
- You have been sleeping your whole life.
- Cleanse the doors of perception. What influences are conditioning perception?

O

What is the connection between growth hormones and obesity?

O

“Gratuitous violence.”

O

The ontology of forests. From the seedling, the forest. I am scattering seeds through time.

O

Aldo Leopold directs us to “think like a mountain.” We should also learn to live like a watershed.

O

Naming as simultaneously colonization and proximal intimacy.

O

Locality gods.

O

Monoculture, pesticides, and run-off. Poisoning the wells.

O

Where is the “away” that is thrown? Where is “outside”?

O

The interconnection among governmental funding, the pharmaceutical industry and mainstream medicine. The Food and Drug Administration. Legal medications whose “side-effects” are worse than the primary pathology. Allergy medicines that lead to kidney failure.

O

There is no power without oppression. The universality of a domination paradigm. Authoritarian control. Forced conformity. Subtle coercion.

O

“Animal testing” should be replaced with voluntary human testing.

O

Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” revisited. An ecological shift. From carnivores, herbivores, and omnivores to cannibals. The conversion of major urban centers into human feedlots to supply rural communities with necessary “meat.”

O

Urban graffiti. “No more second hand word of God.” “There are no innocent bystanders in the daily crime of life.”

○

“Weeds.” Any plant growing where it is not desired, especially a wild plant growing in cultivated ground. Unwanted vegetation free from human control over growth. Grass growing through cracks in city sidewalks. This is the strength of wildness.

○

Post-colonialism: A global humanism or bioregional locatedness?

○

“This is a parable for each of us: one must organize the chaos within by thinking back to one’s real needs. One’s honesty, the strength and truthfulness of character, must at some time or other rebel against a state of things in which one only repeats what has been learned, learns what is already known, and imitates what already exists.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, “On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life.”

○

There are some cultural practices and “traditions” which should go extinct.

○

More than 9 billion chickens, along with half a billion turkeys, are slaughtered for food in the United States each year. Worldwide, more than 50 billion chickens are raised and slaughtered annually. The “healthier choice.”

○

Transcendental mentalities.

○

Hakuin on dying as existential approach and daily practice—Live as if you were already dead. Die while alive.

○

Speak to remember mountain streams.

○

Beyond the necessity of syntax, there are only semicolons.

○

If and unless remain the only hope.