

TreeHuggers United = Invincible!

Invincible: Too powerful to be defeated or overcome.

Think about it: What are you doing to and for our future?

Volume 10: August 9, 2023



Photo Courtesy BirdLife

Pelicans. Birds perform a fleet of underappreciated services that help to keep the planet, and us, healthy.

Why Birds Matter – A LOT!

By BirdLife International

People are destroying and consuming nature at a devastating rate. Birds are our early warning system. BirdLife International is the largest international partnership for nature conservation.

Our feathered friends have long been a source of fascination for mankind, appearing in our art, in our music, and even in the crests of our favorite sporting teams.

But our debt to this most enchanting wing of the animal kingdom extends beyond our culture. Birds perform

a fleet of underappreciated services that help to keep the planet, and us, healthy.

Dawn breaks over America. On the East Coast, in Virginia and Maryland, the sun is rising over the Chesapeake Bay. Its light dances over the surface of the bay's brackish waters, warms the nutrient-rich mud through which it flows, and nourishes the tall, thick grasses that grow along its banks.

At roughly 300 kilometers (200 miles) long, the Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States. But more than that, it is also a

crucial ecosystem, giving life to more than 3,600 species of plants, fish, and animals, and providing a migratory stopover for an estimated one million waterfowl. And it provides benefits to humans, too. Like all wetlands, the Chesapeake Bay also helps to clean water of pollutants, trap carbon to mitigate global warming, and prevent flooding. The Chesapeake Bay is an incredible environmental resource, but one of the key ingredients to keeping this ecosystem thriving might surprise some people: its birds.

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Essential for the Ecosystem

While most people know how wetlands help birds – they provide a habitat for waterfowl, a place for migratory species to rest and refuel, and a hunting ground for predators such as osprey, eagles, and hawks – you may not know how birds help wetlands. Birds help to maintain the balance of life that keeps these vital habitats healthy. One example of this can be found in cordgrass, a type of vegetation that thrives in submerged soil. Cordgrass grows in many marshes along the East Coast, including the Chesapeake Bay. They serve an important purpose, filtering the water and protecting the marshes from erosion. There's even a system in place to keep the cordgrass in check. A small snail with a curling white shell, the Salt Marsh Periwinkle (*Littoraria irrorata*), grazes on cordgrass, making sure that it doesn't become overabundant. Predators such as oystercatchers, curlews, and plovers in turn feed on the periwinkles, keeping their numbers in check and allowing this delicately-balanced ecosystem to thrive.

Good for Coral Reefs

Marshes aren't the only ecosystem that birds nourish. Birds, especially



Photo: John Mwacharo

Paul Kariuki Ndong'ang'a, BirdLife International regional director for Africa, in blue cap, with a group preparing for a bird walk in Nairobi.

seabirds, play a crucial role in supporting marine ecosystems such as coral reefs. The secret: their poop. Seabird guano, as it turns out, is an excellent fertilizer for coral reefs. When seabirds cover their colonies in droppings, this waste washes into the ocean, where it supports the growth of reefs. Studies comparing islands with and without invasive seabird predators

such as rats found that where seabirds were thriving, so were the reefs, with even fish growing larger and faster for their age compared with those that were around islands with predators.

Feathered Seed Dispensers

Forest birds serve the same function with woodlands, eating and then dispersing seeds in their droppings. By

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If you'd like to receive future issues of my newspaper, please email me at grassrootscoalition@pa.net. Also, email me if you have good stories and photos you'd like me to consider publishing in future issues. In the past, I have published a Messages page similar to Letters to the Editor so if you'd like to share your thoughts, please do so.

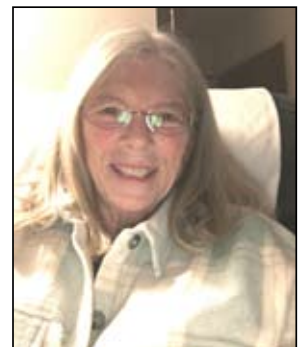
I'd like to see this be a team effort as it has been

in the past but we need time to develop this project and figure out ways to work together.

This is a labor of love but I always appreciate donations, which you can send to: Iona Conner, 157 Chambersbridge Road 4A, Brick, NJ 08723. If you use Zelle or PayPal, please reach my bank account directly via dosomething@pa.net. Cash is OK, too. Thank you!

For the Earth and the Trees,

Iona



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doing this, they can help repopulate landscapes that have been destroyed and bring plants to new locations. In this way, birds have helped to shape the landscapes around us. In New Zealand's forests, for example, nearly two-thirds of the plants have their seeds dispersed by birds such as the Tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*).

Effective Pest Controllers

Birds also provide an invaluable service to ecosystems through pest control. They consume between 400 and 500 million tons of insects in a year. In China, House Swifts (*Apus nipalensis*) are especially useful, as two-thirds of their diet consists of agricultural pests. Across the Americas, the Evening Grosbeak (*Hesperiphona vespertina*) is vital during outbreaks of Spruce Budworm – one of the most serious pests of all – because it feeds on it and provides biological control estimated at \$1,820 per square kilometer.

Nature's Cleaners

But even this impressive figure pales in comparison to the ecological

services provided by possibly the most misunderstood of all birds: vultures. As nature's most efficient scavengers (both in terms of speed and thoroughness) they prevent the spread of deadly diseases such as rabies and tuberculosis by cleaning up animal corpses before they can develop.

What can I do to protect birds?

A world without birds? Unimaginable, because they play an essential role in all our ecosystems. Whether as pest controllers, seed distributors, or plant pollinators, they are essential for humankind.

Every single one of us can play our part in protecting our local bird population. Here are four simple tips.

1. Join a citizen science project like eBird.
 2. Find out about local bird conservation sites and how you can support them.
 3. Become a member of BirdLife or one of its 100+ partners worldwide.
 4. Look at things more closely, really observe your natural surroundings.
- You'll find you discover things that

you have never seen before. You'll effortlessly learn more about wildlife and maybe even want to dig deeper to become a bird expert.

There are also numerous organizations that can tell you more about the world of birds and how to protect them, and you can get involved in a wide range of projects. National park programs and natural history events are a mine of information for nature lovers and amateur ornithologists, who can then pass on what they have learned to the younger generation.

Sources and further information:

- birdlife.org
- trilliontrees.org
- audubon.org/news/europes-421-million-lost-birds
- nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/01/why-birds-matter/nabu.de

Source: <https://www.swarovskioptik.com/es/es/observacion-de-aves/historias/why-birds-matter>

Photo below courtesy BirdLife.





Photo: Wicak Baskoro/CIFOR-ICRAF

Only seven years remain to achieve the twin global goals of halting and reversing deforestation by 2030.

Saving the Rainforest: Amazon's Last Stand

By Alister Doyle

Thomson Reuters Foundation: July 30, 2023

A summit in Brazil is the latest – and maybe best – chance to protect the Amazon rainforest after a string of unkept promises.

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva hosted leaders of Amazon nations in the city of Belem on August 8 and 9 to find ways to save the forest from threats including cattle farms, logging, gold mining, and oil drilling.

Saving the world's largest tropical forest has been an intractable problem for years, with many false starts.

In 2014, an alliance of governments, companies, Indigenous peoples, and

NGOs set a non-binding goal of halving forest loss by 2020, and ending it by 2030. That New York Declaration on Forests, the first global timeline, has fallen short.

At the COP26 summit in Glasgow in 2021, 145 countries including Amazon nations Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname, set a goal to “halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.”

Lula now wants firmer commitments to safeguard the forest, a vast store of biodiversity and carbon, and to use it more sustainably.

Our correspondents Anastasia Moloney and Andre Cabette Fabio spoke to Indigenous peoples about their

cautious hopes for the summit. Andre also has written an overview of the products – from beef to timber – that damage the rainforest, while providing jobs in Brazil.


Despite the false starts, there has been progress in slowing global net deforestation in recent years – the amount of forests lost while offset by new plantations and growth.

Overall, the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization says the net loss of forests fell to 47,000 square kilometers (29,204 square miles) a year in the 2010s, equivalent in size to the Dominican Republic, from 78,000 square kilometers (48,467 square miles) a year

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Colombian President Gustavo Petro and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva greet indigenous people upon their arrival at the event 'Road to the Amazon Summit' in Leticia, Colombia July 8, 2023. Colombian Presidency/Handout via REUTERS 

in the 1990s, equivalent to Panama.

Those net losses are still staggering. And a new plantation, such as of a fast-growing eucalyptus or pine trees, cannot make up for the loss of ancient rainforests.

In Indonesia, correspondent Peter Yeung writes about how indigenous peoples are trying to secure recognition of land rights. Around the world, studies show that Indigenous peoples are often the best stewards of forests.

"It is our lifeblood and we will fight to protect it," said Mino Nente, an elder of the Wana Posangke, an Indigenous people that inhabit the central valleys and hills of Sulawesi.

How to Halt Wildfires

A major fear for the Amazon is that climate change will dry out large swathes of forests. Scientists say we may be near a tipping point that could

turn parts of the rainforest into savanna.

Climate change is already contributing to tinder-dry conditions in many parts of the world, with wildfires raging from Canada to Greece.

Read Michael Taylor's overview of how to prevent wildfire disasters – restoring degraded forests and peatlands, for instance, helps make the land more resilient. <https://www.context.news/nature/as-europes-forests-burn-why-are-wildfires-getting-worse>

Stay or go?

A village in England tests a question that many people living by coastlines around the world are likely to face in coming decades as sea levels rise: stay or go?

Governments will generally write a blank check to protect cities – from London to Shanghai – but rural areas lack cash and face far tougher choices as ice

melts from Antarctica to Greenland.

In eastern England, natural erosion of crumbling cliffs is being aggravated by worsening storms and the creeping rise in the sea level driven by climate change.

Correspondent Rachel Parsons travelled to Hemsby, a village where Kevin Jordan, now aged 70, bought a house in 2009 and was assured by a surveyor that it would last a century.

But the sea, 91 meters (300 feet) from his home in 2009, has advanced to 21 meters (68 feet and 10 inches)

The home he bought for 85,000 pounds (\$109,000) is now "essentially worthless" and he says he loses sleep worrying about the future.

Fingers crossed for a good result from the Belem summit!

Source: https://www.context.news/newsletter?id=90e21561b09460ccd87a57e1ba844435&utm_source

Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.

~ Gary Snyder ~

Shock and Despair Are Logical Reactions to the Climate Emergency

By Sabine Von Mering
Common Dreams: August 8, 2023

Last month the world got to meet Jim Skea as newly elected head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, the U.N. body that provides regular summaries about peer-reviewed climate science. In one of his first interviews with the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, Skea suggested that we should not “despair and fall into a state of shock” about the possibility that global temperatures might increase by 1.5°C, or 2.7°F. I must confess, my shock and despair have more to do with his statement.

It comes across as dramatically out of touch with the reality of the growing number of people whose lives have already been severely impacted by the disruptions caused by global heating, including the thousands who have drowned in the Mediterranean and the millions who are fleeing a toxic mix of conflict and climate disruption in their home countries.

Yes, Skea also said that a world that warms more than 1.5°C will be “a more dangerous world” and he may have aimed to sound reassuring somehow? But it did not land that way. I recently hosted 26-year old Ilyess El Kortbi of the youth climate movement Fridays for Future Ukraine, for example, who had also read the interview and said they would not dream of choosing such words.

Scientists may agree with Skea that climate change does not yet pose an “existential threat to humanity.” But how useful is that statistical assessment to people struggling with or witnessing others struggling with extreme weather, wildfires, and flooding today?

“It’s hard not to ‘fall into a state of shock’ when your home is the battlefield of a climate war,” they told me, “It’s hard not to when you’re one of the 23 million Ukrainians who had to flee or got displaced from their homes due to a war ignited by our incessant

use of fossil fuels.”

Whether flooding in Pakistan or drought in Yemen or wildfires in Canada, like El Kortbi, there are millions around the world bearing the brunt of climate change as we speak. Given that the world has so far only warmed 1.1°C, despair and shock at what 1.5°C may mean should be considered a perfectly logical – indeed healthy – reaction.

More importantly, you could well argue that the very fact that many scientists like Skea have opted for caution and conservative estimates for decades is precisely the reason why emissions continue to rise. In other words: People do actually listen to scientists, and Skea’s pronouncement sends the message that there’s no need for drastic action, that all will likely be well. That’s the wrong message. It’s probably not even the one Skea wanted to put out there.

Skea may be worried that people will accuse scientists of exaggeration if there are still functioning human societies left at 1.5°C of warming. But he certainly chose the worst possible moment to downplay the dangers – in what was about to become yet another hottest month on record.

People know “the world won’t end” at 1.5°C of warming, but as humans we also have the capacity to imagine what happens far beyond our own existence. And we know human existence has been just a blip in the life span of planet Earth, which has no need for human civilization. Perhaps it’s time for the IPCC to invite some humanists into their midst to provide scientists with a better understanding of humanity.

And after all, for many people it is already too late now. Acknowledging that and spurring everyone into action would be a better strategy for Skea in his new position. Instead, his call for a “balanced” approach only benefits those, like the fossil fuel industry giants and their puppets in politics, who prop up and profit from the status

quo while continuing to fund climate denial and misinformation.

Skea apparently said he fears that communicating gloom and doom only paralyzes people instead of motivating them into action. As a scientist he should know that is simply not true. Indeed, the opposite is, as a recent study found: “Repeated exposure to the threatening headlines led people to feel they could do more to influence how humanity could steer itself away from the worst dangers of global warming. They also reported feeling the issue of climate change was more important.”

I hope our new IPCC head takes this to heart. Instead of calling for a balanced approach, he should emulate and – more importantly – shore up and support U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, who has been ringing the alarm bells and speaking openly about the climate emergency.

Guterres certainly understands the science, but in addition he has the benefit of first-hand knowledge of the impacts on the ground. Perhaps it might help Skea if he tagged along on a couple of those visits. Who knows – he, too, might feel shock and despair if he saw close up what climate change is doing to humans already today.

Sabine von Mering is a 2023 public voices fellow on the climate crisis with The OpEd Project, in partnership with the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, a climate activist with 350MAss, and the director of the Center for German and European Studies at Brandeis University.

Source: <https://www.common-dreams.org/opinion/shock-and-despair-climate-emergency>



Jim Skea, new head of the IPCC.
Photo: Imperial College London

Over 5,000 New Deep-Sea Species Found in Future Mining Hotspot

Submitted by Bill Boteler
Maryland USA

By Melissa Breyer
Treehugger: May 26, 2023

In our ever-voracious hunger for natural resources, no location seems too remote or precious for extraction. With an escalation in demand for metals like cobalt and nickel, mineral-rich deep-sea habitats are the new gold-rush hills of California. One might think and hope that seabed ecosystems 4,000 to 6,000 meters (2.49 miles to 3.7 miles) deep, in the middle of nowhere, would be safe from the prying industry of mining interests, but alas, no.

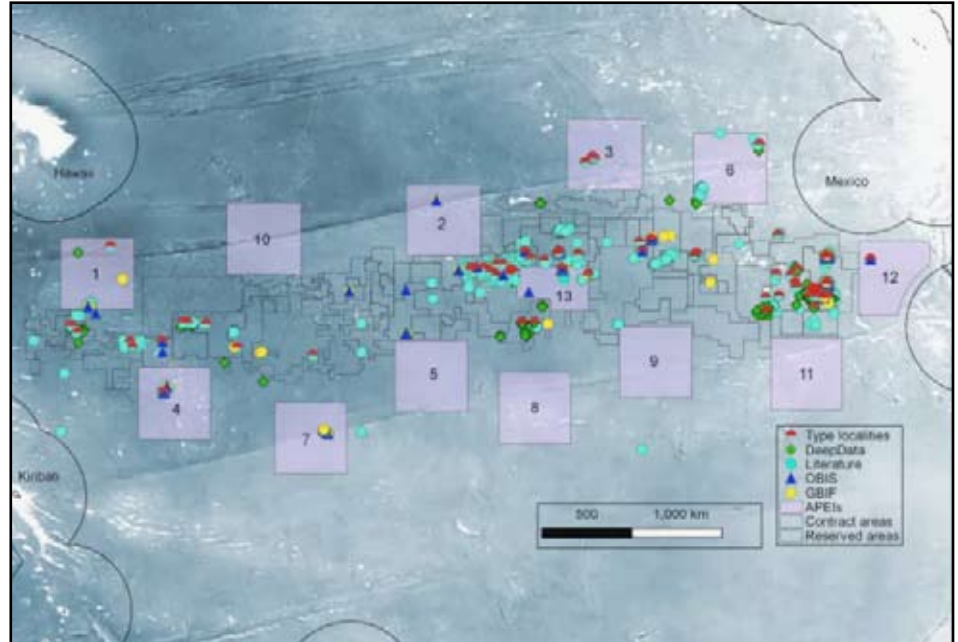
In the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, there is a massive, mineral-rich region covering some 2.3 million square miles – about twice the size of India – called the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ).

Spanning from Hawaii to Mexico, the CCZ is one of the most pristine wilderness regions in the global ocean. And it has already been divided up for future deep-sea mining. Currently, there are 17 contracts for mineral exploration in the area.

Until now, there hasn't been a comprehensive listing of the breadth of organisms that call this future mining hotspot home. But with the publication of a new study outlining the 5,578 different species found in the region, we now have a basic understanding of the biodiversity of the region. An estimated 88% to 92% of those species are entirely new to science.

“Baseline biodiversity knowledge of the region is crucial to effective management of environmental impact from potential deep-sea mining activities, but until recently this has been almost completely lacking,” explains the study, which was published in the journal *Current Biology*.

“We share this planet with all this amazing biodiversity, and we have a responsibility to understand it and pro-



Graphic: Rabone et al/*Current Biology*

Areas of Particular Environmental Interest and exploration mining contract areas, both active and reserved, are shown in outline.

tect it,” says Muriel Rabone, a deep-sea ecologist at the Natural History Museum London, UK, and lead author of the study.

The researchers combed over 100,000 records of organisms found in the CCZ taken during deep-sea expeditions. Of the more than 5,000 species they listed, only six of the new species found in the CCZ have been seen in other regions. The most common types of creatures in the CCZ are arthropods, worms, echinoderms (spiny invertebrates like sea urchins), and sponges.

And as the authors note, these estimates are nowhere complete, “Some regions and habitats of the CCZ have barely been sampled at all.”

It’s a whole magical, mysterious world down there, untouched by industries with little regard for nature.

“There’s some just remarkable species down there. Some of the sponges look like classic bath sponges, and some look like vases. They’re just beautiful,” said Rabone of the CCZ samples. “One of my favorites is the glass sponges. They have these little

spines, and under the microscope, they look like tiny chandeliers or little sculptures.”


The researchers stress the importance of more cohesive, collaborative, and multidisciplinary research efforts in the CCZ to obtain a deeper understanding of the region’s biodiversity, noting the importance of the “novelty of the region at deep taxonomic levels.”

“This is particularly important given that the CCZ remains one of the few remaining areas of the global ocean with high intactness of wilderness,” write the authors in the study’s conclusion. “Sound data and understanding are essential to shed light on this unique region and secure its future protection from human impacts.”

“There are so many wonderful species in the CCZ,” says Rabone, “and with the possibility of mining looming, it’s doubly important that we know more about these really understudied habitats.”

Source: <https://www.treehugger.com/5000-new-deep-sea-species-found-future-mining-hotspot-7504578>



(left) Bamboo coral, family Isididae on steep rock in the Charlie-Gibbs Fracture Zone Hope Spot © Dan Jones, ECOMAR Project. 
 (right) Enteropneust (Acorn worm) observed at a depth of approx. 2700 meters (1.68 miles) Station 36 (NE). ROV Dive #171 – observed in the Charlie-Gibbs Fracture Zone Hope Spot.

My Thoughts on Deep Sea Mining by Dr. Sylvia Earle: Mission Blue

Submitted by **Bill Boteler**
 Maryland USA

By Dr. Sylvia Earle
 Mission Blue: July 10, 2023

Deep sea mining is much on my mind. Greed, not need, has inspired an amazingly seductive marketing campaign that has generated a dangerous smog in the minds of many who are willing to accept the pitch without considering the harsh economic, environmental, and common-sense realities involved.

Imagine! The fate of half of the world is on the chopping block, with authority to decide actions vested in a council of 36 individuals representing the interests of 168 countries and – although most are oblivious to what’s going on – the interests of 8 billion people and all of life on Earth.

Imagine giving **anyone** the power to green-light the destruction of Earth’s last great wilderness. With our eyes open, we tacitly condone destructive mining on the land where at least damage is visible and actions can help heal the harm imposed in two dimensions. Three-dimensional devastation is the unavoidable consequence of extracting nodules and crusts from the largely unexplored depths of the systems that underpin the habitability of Earth.

At a time when stemming loss of biodiversity and calming climate disruption are considered highest priorities for action to reverse planetary decline, why would anyone even consider unleashing massive biodiversity annihilation and up-ending vast stores of deep-sea carbon?

The only way investors can hope to achieve profits will be through government subsidies as it is inconceivable that, even with advanced technologies, the costs of mining the deep sea can outweigh the alleged benefits including bankable assets. “Experimental mining” endeavors have already gone

bankrupt while imposing forever costs to society and to the planet.

It is encouraging to see alternative methods and materials for better batteries that do not require cobalt and nickel quickly coming online – I hope soon enough to deter wishful-thinking governments and bedazzled investors.

To watch the June 2023 live webinar with Dr. Sylvia Earle on this topic, you can view it on the Mission Blue YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8X-Nx9fzyUc>

Source: <https://missionblue.org/2023/07/my-thoughts-on-deep-sea-mining-by-dr-sylvia-earle/>



Screenshot of Dr. Sylvia Earle’s excellent video.



Illustration by Fran Murphy

Time Isn't Money. *Saving Time* explores a life beyond the constraints of the Western clock.

By Nicole Froio, Book Review
YES! Magazine: May 18, 2023

When I read Jenny Odell's acclaimed 2019 book, *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*, I was navigating both workplace-related PTSD and burnout. Odell's clarity about the attention economy, or how social media companies monopolize human attention for profit, snapped me out of the fast-paced work routine I had created for myself.

Ten-hour workdays were common for me, so I welcomed Odell's suggestion to consider doing nothing as anti-capitalist praxis. But it was still a difficult message to digest after years of being trained to value productivity above all else. In her latest book, *Saving Time: Discovering a Life Beyond the Clock*, Odell proposes a similarly challenging message: If time is the unit of measurement that most humans share, and it's divided to generate profit rather than to nourish and care, then how do we deconstruct the structure of time?

Excavating the origins of how Western societies conceptualize time, Odell explores the relationship between our color-coded daily schedules and colonization. Drawing on historian

Giordano Nanni's 2012 book, *The Colonisation of Time: Ritual, Routine and Resistance in the British Empire*, Odell connects the dividing of our days into seconds, minutes, and hours to Europe's colonial domination. In seeking to universalize working hours to increase production, the Western clock arrived in the colonies as a tool to "tame" the people who lived there. Indeed, as Odell writes, "A standardized approach to time and labor often accompanied colonists wherever they went." Colonists even determined how "civilized" Indigenous communities were based on how they conceptualized time.

Instead of breaking down their time into hours of profit-making work, Indigenous groups organized their societies according to tasks that needed to be done for the survival of the community. Work was not something they did to make money; it was done to be "part of a social economy" where work time and nonwork time had no differentiation. The multidisciplinary artist and author argues that remaking our conception of time can be a liberatory tool. "I believe that a real meditation on the nature of time, unbound from its everyday capitalist incarna-

tion, shows that neither our lives nor the life of the planet is a foregone conclusion," Odell writes, putting forth the claim that how we conceptualize time is neither humane nor logical.

The time structures we operate under aren't arbitrary; they're designed to support capitalism, and, as workers, we're selling our time. Implicit in this line of thought is a question: What do we lose when we're forced to sell our time to capitalism? This exposition is, in part, to show readers that "time is money" isn't written in stone and that we would benefit from questioning it. "When the relationship of time to literal money is expressed as a natural fact, it obscures the political relationship between the seller of time and its buyer," Odell argues.

Like many freelance millennials, I measure my time according to how much money I can potentially make — how long can I work before I do actual harm to myself? How early do I have to get up to get an assignment done? When do I need to file an assignment so I can get paid before rent is due? Drawing on a 1925 book that exemplifies Taylorism, a productivity management methodology, to demonstrate

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how we divide our time into profit, Odell perfectly describes my day-to-day: “[*Increasing Personal Efficiency* by Donald Laird] is shot through with the cultural moment’s fixation on speed, mastery, and a single-minded mission to cut out the useless,” Odell notes. While the book is from 1925, I saw myself in how Laird describes the cutthroat time management workers are expected to model to maximize their profit-making time.

The obvious answer to this conundrum would be to rest and return to work at a later date, but the problem with this – as Odell distills in the chapter “Can There Be Leisure?” – is that nonwork time always becomes a pathway toward more work. Beyond the fact that rest requires a certain amount of financial privilege, we’re encouraged to take time off so we can work when we’re no longer tired. We’re resting to become better at our jobs.

Odell concludes that in our culture, leisure time – the commonly doled out solution to burnout – exists only for us to return to work and eventually tire ourselves out again and again.

It’s easy to feel hopeless about our current conditions when the things that are supposed to heal us push us back toward the systems that are destroying us. Odell’s “panoramic assault on nihilism,” as she calls it, is palpable in *Saving Time*; while she insists on addressing what hurts society, she’s also adamant about finding an escape, a new way to live. She puts forth the idea that since our relationship to time is so intimately connected to how we view the world, we have

to change that perspective. That could look like forgoing the human conception of time, which doesn’t account for the many other beings – trees, animals, rivers – that operate within their own concept of time, or rather, their own desires and needs.

We could also lean in to the Indigenous perspectives of embeddedness in and attentiveness to place (commonly translated as “bioregionalism”). Embracing bioregionalism would allow us to resist the concept of linearly organized time. “Bioregionalism is useful here both as metaphor and as concrete demonstration, in that its timescales overlap and sometimes lie outside the human perspective,” Odell writes. “Expressed simply as change, ecological and geological time are full of difference: Things happen both quickly and slowly, at both tiny and inconceivably epic scales.”

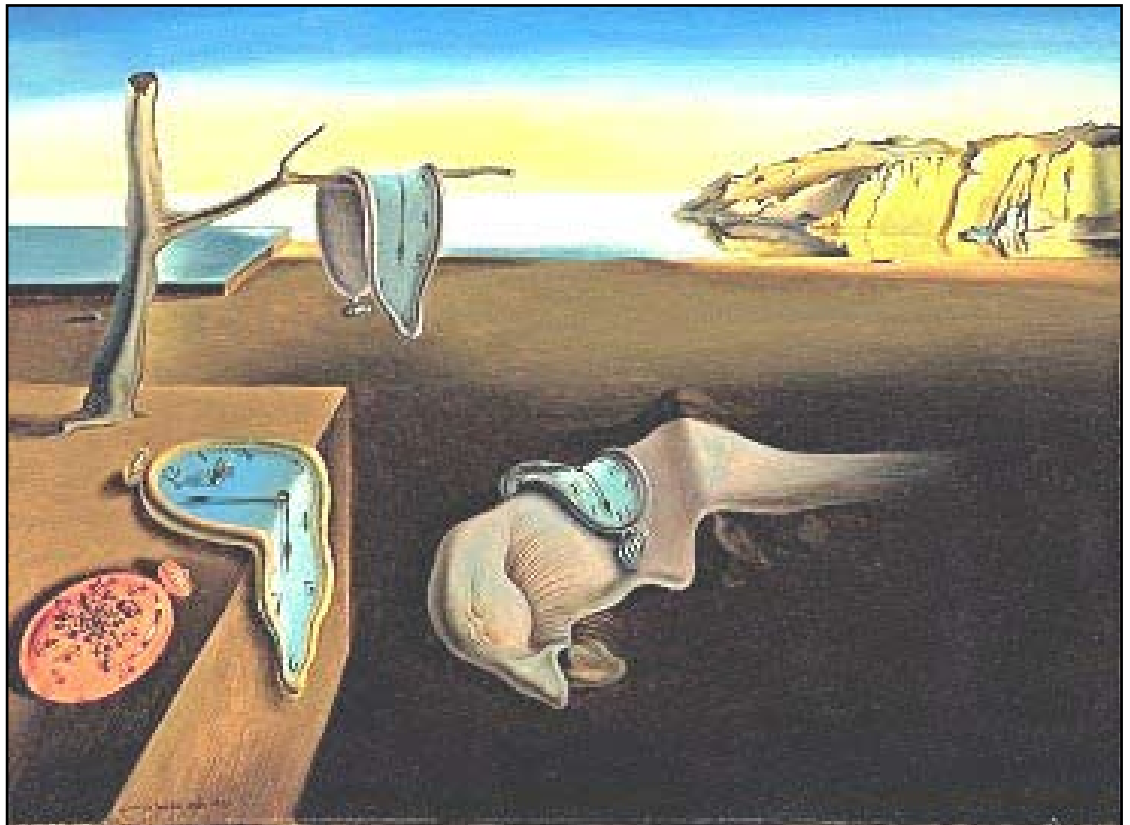
This is perhaps where Odell risks losing some readers by turning to a more abstract solution. She encourages readers to look for “[the] irrepress-

ible force that drives this moment into the next.” I know exactly what she means: a kind of leisure that can’t be pinpointed and therefore can’t be commodified. It can be the moment I see a bird sit on a branch by my window, or the overwhelming realization that the universe is alive and that I am in it. It can be the instant I realize we are all breathing the same air at a protest, and that we are all here, together.

As Odell puts it, the point isn’t “to live more, in the literal sense of a longer or more productive life, but rather, to be more alive in any given moment – a movement outward and across, rather than shooting forward on a narrow, lonely track.”

Reclaiming a life beyond the clock is that movement outward and across, toward other bodies, toward dreaming together, toward a world no longer constrained by the chains of time.

Source: <https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/thirst/2023/05/18/time-isnt-money>



The Persistence of Memory by Salvadore Dail, Courtesy Wikipedia



Connection to the Land, and to One Another: Resisting the Coming Apart of Our Natural and Social Worlds

Introduction and aims

This panel will use indigenous wisdom, western philosophy, and contemporary science to examine some ways that disconnection from the two interwoven sources of human personhood – the natural world and the social world – are making us and our ecosystem sick and how we might repair those connections.

Abstract

Disconnection from Nature and its ways has been concomitant with economic development for centuries. Such disconnection is becoming globalized, via the economically-driven disruption of traditions and practices rooted in ecological belonging. As the surrounding environment, animals and plants, waterways and soil come to seem more and more alien, they come to seem less and less a matter of moral concern. They are no longer siblings or gifts, but resources to be fought over. The result is an extractive, competitive, objectifying, utterly unsustainable posture towards the natural world.

At the same time, recent data and discussions in the USA revolve around an epidemic of social disconnection and a missing sense of belonging. The U.S. Surgeon General recently released an 82-page report on the “epidemic” of social isolation and loneliness, both of which he says are on the rise in the U.S. and doing a great deal of damage to our physical, psychological, and social well-being. Interpersonal interconnection is, indeed, a central and non-negotiable need for humans. Our friends and family create us – there is no human form of life that does not intimately involve other people.

These two species of disconnection are intimately related, flowing from deep tendencies in WEIRD societies. These tendencies are relatively novel, and very much out of step with the human mainstream, viewed through a wide historical and cultural lens. Many Indigenous/First Nation traditions maintain multiple types of connection throughout life. From the beginning, babies are nested in species-normal companionship care, never left dis-

connected or distressed. Children are woven into the multi-age community activities with kin and non-kin, with animals and plants of the locale. Ceremony engages each person with the unmanifest, connecting to the cosmos.

In short, the Indigenous worldview considers the entire cosmos unified, sacred and moral. Following the laws of Nature, including Nature’s gift economy, are essential for wellbeing. Each kind of connection builds on the other. It is only in such a setting of rich, multifaceted connection that truly healthy interpersonal wellbeing can emerge. Each person finds the source of her self both in the community and in the land, and reacts with gratitude, reciprocity, and responsibility for the gift of existence.

A renaissance of this sort of integral thinking is deeply necessary as we confront social and ecological crises across the globe.

Source: <https://kindredworld.org/press-room-1/f/kindred-world-president-and-board-member-speak-at-unga78>

Messages from Our Friends

(For many, English is not their native language.)

Thanks a million for including that inspirational “kinship” video. I’ll definitely pass it along to others.

Allen Hengst, Washington DC, USA
<https://kinshipearth.org/>

Thank you so much for sharing and keeping us informed with these articles.

I duly appreciate reading them grandma. Happy New Month.

Hanson G. Blayon, Liberia

Am glad to inform you that I have been granted a new job in the city as a manager for an IT firm, but due to the different activities I have been running for the school, I seem not to be having the startup tools of renting and other

equipments at large. And this will cost me over \$200 but however I already have part of this total pay.

The salary is encouraging so am not worried about it, my orphanage will take a step after my start up is achieved.

But on another hand, this is a great opportunity for us as a global family because it’s now easier for me to link with most of our partners in our circle as a global family since it’s the center for our country.

Reporting day is this coming Friday, August 11.

Amos Mugarura, Comforter of the Voiceless Child Friend Space Uganda

Oh, dear, Iona. We need you to live in peace and let God’s LIGHT flow from you in your publication and whole being.

What we did was good and done. Love always wins, now or later.

Marita Grudzen, California USA

I continue appreciate each and everyone support and love towards our family.

Mukama Awali, Uganda
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