Everyone wants a village, but no one wants to be a villager.

THE MINORITY REPORT
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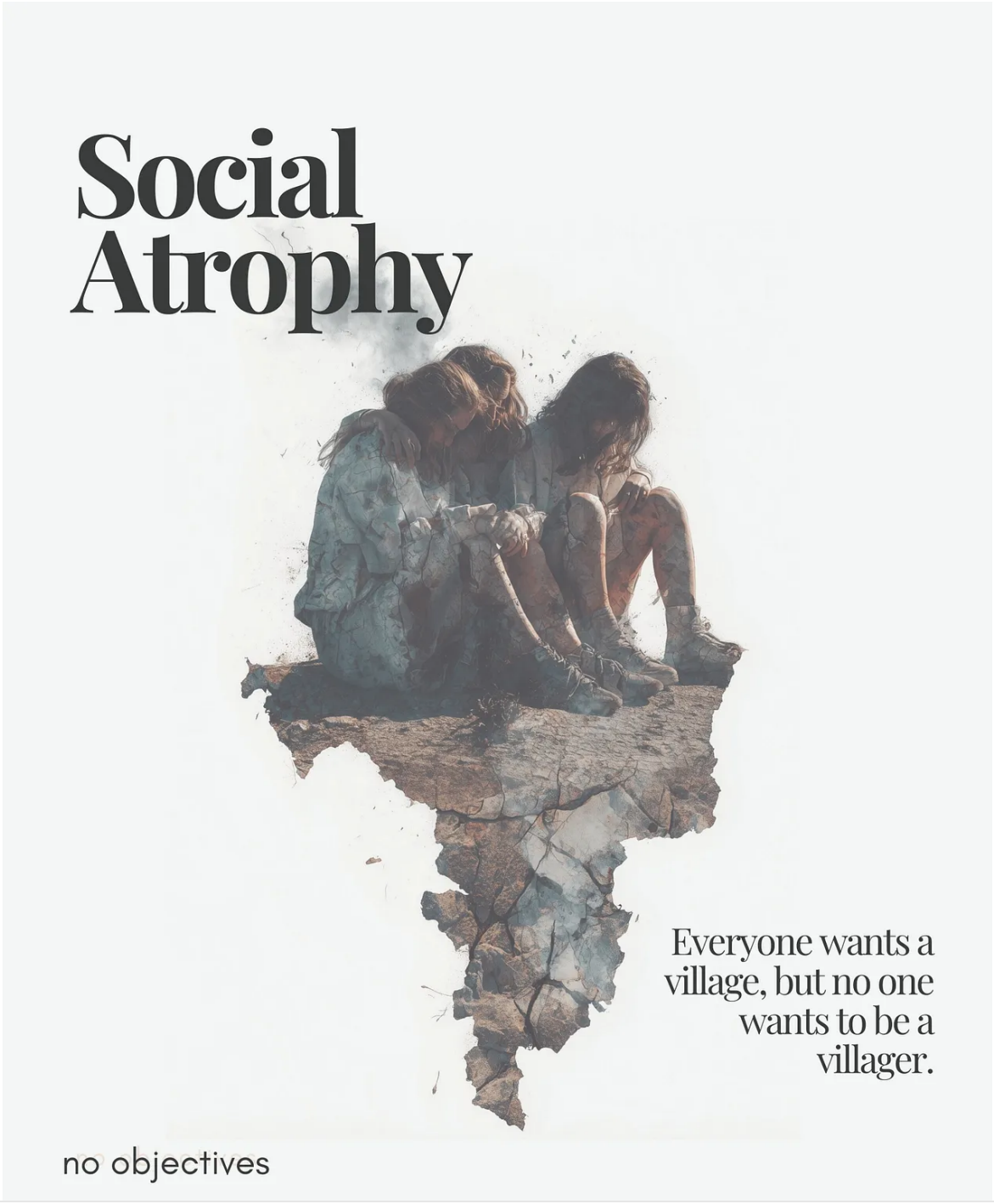

yourself. We live in the most connected era in human history, yet loneliness is widespread. We scroll past hundreds of faces each day, but struggle to name three people we could call at three in the morning. We long for belonging, for community, for the sense of a village. Yet an uncomfortable truth is becoming harder to ignore: we want all the benefits of community without accepting the responsibilities that make community possible.

This tension between our desire for connection and our resistance to obligation reveals something fundamental about how modern life has been reorganized. The insight does not come from an academic paper but from a cultural observation that deserves serious attention: everyone wants a village, but no one wants to be a villager. This simple sentence opens up a much deeper story about social structures, convenience, technology, and the quiet disappearance of everyday togetherness.

The price of admission we no longer want to pay

What does it actually mean to be a villager rather than simply wanting a village? The distinction matters. Being a villager means accepting friction as part of connection. It means your neighbor might knock on your door when you are exhausted. It means the community potluck happens on the one evening you hoped to be alone. It means your carefully optimized routine is interrupted by other people's needs. Annoyance, inconvenience, and unpredictability are not flaws in community. They are the cost of entry.

Previous generations understood this intuitively. The neighbor who borrowed tools without asking was often the same person who showed up when you needed help. The relative who arrived unannounced was also the one who helped you move or watched your children. Community was not something you subscribed to. It was something you inhabited. Support and irritation came as a single package.

In recent decades, we have tried to separate the two. We have increasingly structured our lives around hyper-independence, strong personal boundaries, optimized schedules, and minimal interruption. We frame this as self-care and emotional maturity. Boundaries are important, but when they become rigid, they stop protecting us and start isolating us. The desire to never be bothered slowly erodes the conditions that allow care to emerge in the first place.

How we dismantled the infrastructure of belonging

This shift did not happen only at the level of individual choice. It was reinforced structurally through the steady disappearance of what sociologists call third places. These are spaces that are neither home nor work, but neutral ground where social life forms organically. Parks, libraries, youth clubs, public squares, local cafés where people are allowed to linger.

Economic logics have been particularly effective at eroding these spaces. Parks face budget cuts. Libraries reduce hours. Community centers close or become inaccessible. Independent cafés are replaced by chains designed for efficiency and turnover, not conversation. Benches disappear. Public space becomes something to pass through rather than stay in.

What disappears with these spaces is not just physical infrastructure, but social infrastructure. Without regular, low-stakes encounters with neighbors and strangers, our ability to be social weakens. Casual interaction becomes unfamiliar. Small talk feels awkward. Meeting new people feels exhausting rather than energizing. We are not suddenly antisocial. We are socially undertrained.

The result is a form of social atrophy. We have fewer places to practice being human together, and so the effort required to do so increases. Discomfort grows, and with it the temptation to withdraw.

At this point, it becomes necessary to zoom out even further, because this transformation did not happen only through economics or urban planning. It also happened at the level of perception itself.

As described in the film Koyaanisqatsi, meaning a life outside of balance, released in 1982, the main event of our time is not perceived by those of us living within it.

-We notice the surface of things: newspaper headlines, visible conflict, social injustice, markets, and cultural turbulence. Yet the greatest event, perhaps the most significant in all of human history, has largely gone unnoticed. There is nothing in the past truly comparable to it.

That event is the transition from nature as the primary host of human life to a technological milieu. Technology has become the environment in which life unfolds. Politics, education, financial systems, nation states, language, culture, and religion now exist within technology. It is not that technology influences these domains. It is that everything exists inside it.

We no longer use technology. We live it. It is as ubiquitous as the air we breathe, and for that reason we no longer notice it. We focus on traffic as an event. We organize cities like circuit boards. We accept acceleration and density as normal qualities of life. This way of living

remains largely unseen and unquestioned.

A life that goes unquestioned is a life lived in a religious state.

When technology becomes the invisible environment of life, inconvenience begins to feel like a malfunction rather than the normal condition of being human together. -

The seductive trap of convenience

Faced with friction and social discomfort, we retreat into what feels safe. We optimize our routines. We minimize unplanned interaction. We manage relationships through screens where we control timing and intensity. We order everything for delivery. We work from home. We entertain ourselves endlessly without negotiating with other people.

This is not moral failure. Convenience is seductive. Efficiency feels responsible. Control feels like safety.

But comfort has consequences. Every system designed to eliminate inconvenience also eliminates opportunities for spontaneous connection. Every boundary erected to protect our peace blocks a potential pathway to belonging. We become more comfortable and more lonely at the same time, and these two conditions are not a coincidence.

We are paying for convenience with disconnection. We traded the messiness of community for predictability, not realizing that the mess was the thing that made community possible.

Rebuilding our capacity for connection

The answer is not to abolish boundaries or romanticize the past. It is to recognize that strong communities are not built from convenience. They are built from presence. From showing up when it would be easier not to. From staying with awkwardness instead of immediately retreating. From choosing people over efficiency, at least some of the time.

This requires retraining our social muscles. Like physical therapy, it is uncomfortable at first. Say yes to invitations even when staying home feels easier. Join something even when it feels intimidating. Talk to neighbors even when it feels vulnerable. Show up to community events even when you are tired.

These are not heroic acts. They are ordinary behaviors that previous generations took for granted. In today's context, they are quietly radical.

The village starts with you

This analysis does not let us off the hook. Structural forces have made community harder. Capitalism has monetized and hollowed out shared space. Technology has offered endlessly convenient alternatives to being together.

Still, we are not powerless. Third places can be rebuilt one interaction at a time. Community gardens, tool libraries, shared workshops, neighborhood dinners, and skill-sharing networks all begin with people willing to tolerate inconvenience.

They require time, patience, and a willingness to be interrupted. They require villagers.

The question worth sitting with is simple: what small social risk will you take this week? Not a grand gesture, but a minor act of showing up. Because the village we say we want does not appear on its own.

It emerges when enough people decide to stop optimizing their lives away from one another. The choice is uncomfortable. But it is also collective. And it is still ours to make.

And something else happens when we begin to retrain our social muscles. We do not only become better at being with others. We slowly return to the real world.

Presence pulls us out of the technological milieu and back into lived reality. Faces replace feeds. Voices replace text. Time stretches again, no longer compressed by optimization and acceleration. The body becomes involved. Attention deepens. The world regains texture.

When we choose to show up physically, imperfectly, and without control, technology stops being the environment of life and becomes a tool again. Community reanchors us in place, in time, and in shared responsibility. It reminds us that life is not something to be managed from a distance, but something to be participated in.

Rebuilding community is therefore not only a social act. It is an existential one. It is a quiet refusal to live entirely inside systems designed for efficiency, convenience, and abstraction. It is a return to a world where meaning is generated between people, not mediated by platforms.

In learning to be villagers again, we do not just rebuild the village.

We come back to life itself.

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The Minority Report 2d

Author

These insights are based on Dr. Sarah Stein Lubrano brillant book “Don’t talk about politics” I highly recommend any to read it. And also the movie film Koyaanisqatsi, A life outside of balance

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Reginald Duquesnoy Reginald’s Substack 2d

Liked by The Minority Report

That is the very essence and aim of capitalism and of the dominant class, break communities and hype the individual, the so-called torch bearer of freedom. Then scare the sheep with the threat of the wolf(s) and make them forget that it is the sheperd who usually fleeces and eats them. Divide to rule! old hat...

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