

1 – Let's Start with Values and Ethics

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (the land of the Prophet Mohammed), September 2013: I'm here working as an English Language teacher for a third stint in the Kingdom. On the taxi ride to work, we pass the Filipino consulate, and as we pull up to pick up another colleague, I am shocked to see squatter encampments of Filipinos on both sides of the street, living in cardboard 'homes.' They go about their morning chores. *Slaves*. Technically speaking, in a historical socioeconomic analysis, as an economist or a politician might define it, they are 'bonded-labourers', 'debt-peons', 'proletarians', 'plebs', 'serfs', the 'underclass', 'poor people' or some other sanitised technical definition; they are not actually owned by another human being who would be responsible for housing and feeding them, but existing in a state of *de facto* slavery nonetheless.

Most arrived sponsored by Saudi Arabian nationals who, for whatever reason, decided at some point to withhold their documentation and quite possibly their wages. Others (Muslims) came for the *Hajj* Pilgrimage or to perform *Umrah* and overstayed their visas, hoping to find employment. Still others were employed legally in one capacity and then changed jobs but were unable to change their employment visas. They are now cast adrift, part of a nonlegal underclass, unwilling or incapable of returning to their native land and unable to find legal employment. As poor migrant labourers they have little political power, and the Filipino consulate's powers are limited: it walks a delicate diplomatic, political and economic tightrope. It does not wish to rock the boat too much with the Saudi Arabian government; the diplomats have little desire to threaten this important economic lifeline to the Philippine nation.

There but for the grace of God go I – or you. My university education and British passport count for much in the land of the Prophet Mohammed. By and large, I am treated well and respected by the other foreigners and Saudis with whom I work. My relationship with the Saudis who I teach varies from class to class; excellent, passable and dreadful depending on a myriad of factors. If my parents had been poor, uneducated Bangladeshis, it would be a vastly different story.

The reality of the ‘late-stage ideological Capitalist’¹ consumerist paradigm in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is that globally, hundreds of millions of human beings are *de facto* slaves. They disproportionately, although not exclusively by any means, have black or brown skins. Most often, they are exploited by their compatriots; at other times, they are forced as economic migrants to travel abroad to be exploited by foreigners. Today transnational global capital often dictates the circumstances of their life. Effectively, they have few, if any, rights; they cannot afford lawyers and find themselves on the bottom rung of an economic pyramid with which they have no choice but to engage. They are chattel, and until they are free, none of us are free. On this issue, compromise is simply not possible. The prevailing global economic paradigm of ideological late-stage Capitalism is incapable of freeing them – in fact, it *requires* an underclass of poor disenfranchised workers.

Capitalism is hardly alone in the history of exploitative human socioeconomic systems that have been grossly unfair to those on the bottom steps of the economic pyramid. Indeed, from the time of the first known human civilization of Sumer, located in what is now modern-day Iraq, there have always been slaves. Dehumanisation of one ethnic group of Homo sapiens by another ethnic group of Homo sapiens has a very long, shameful and unbroken history. Capitalism is merely the latest incarnation and is neither more nor less exploitative.

The Roman Empire based their discrimination on citizen versus barbarian; Norse Vikings of the Danelaw discriminated against local English tribes, Easter Islanders based their racism on the size of people’s earlobes, while Colonial (white European) Americans discriminated against indigenous native Americans and black Africans, white Europeans lorded over Black Africans in King Leopold’s Congolese fiefdom, Nazi Germany discriminated against Gypsies and Jews, and apartheid South Africa based its discrimination on skin colour. Likewise, in Northern Ireland, the discrimination manifests as Protestant versus Catholic; in Rwanda, Hutu versus Tutsi; in the Soviet Union, Communist versus dissident; in Israel, Zionist over Palestinian;

¹ Throughout this book I refer to ‘ideological late-stage Capitalism’ since in the first instance, it is an ideological position not based on solid evidence, and in the second, we are chronologically in its late stage.

and in Bahrain, Sunni versus Shia. These are just a few examples; there are many more examples, *so* many more. The list goes on and on.

Whenever there has been an ‘us and them,’ there has been discrimination. If we were to shed a tear for every single instance of ethnic and/or racial injustice from every country in the world for the last 6,000 years, we would drown in a flood of biblical proportions. The dehumanisation of those deemed *other* has been used to justify exploitation, genocide, atrocities, sexual abuse and the seizure of land, and it has enabled elites to coerce their poorer compatriots into carrying out their dirty work. As a general rule, ordinary people do not break down the doors of their neighbours’ houses, murder the stronger members of the household, and rape the physically weaker ones before enslaving and/or killing them, stealing all their possessions, and taking their land. But the lessons of history show us that given particular psychological influences in certain contexts, human beings will do so. This is neither just nor sustainable.

The *Tao* of Gaia

The word *Tao* (sometimes written as *Dao*) – from the Chinese – is commonly translated in English as, *the way or right/virtuous conduct or the process of nature by which all things change and which is to be followed for a life of harmony or the art or skill of doing something in harmony with the essential nature of the thing*, according to the online edition of *Merriam-Webster* available in 2021. *Tao* is related to both the natural world and human life. It is concerned with balance and cannot be explained in words alone; it must be understood in an intellectual, intuitive and experiential manner. The sage Lao Tzu² once commented, “The *Tao* that can be named is not the eternal *Tao*.” The *Tao* is often represented by the Yin/Yang symbol in which two opposites exist together with each containing the seed of the other. To live in balance in the biosphere – without endangering any of the critical life support systems – is to live in balance with the *Tao of Gaia*. Living in balance with the *Tao of Gaia* is not to exist in stasis but in a dynamic balance that places all humans in an appropriate relationship with themselves,

² Lao Tzu is commonly believed to have lived in the sixth century BC, although some historians believe it may have been the fourth century BC.

each other, flora and fauna, and the planet. Rex Wyler of *Green Peace* discusses scientist James Lovelock's *Gaia Hypothesis*,

In Greek mythology only Chaos precedes Gaia. Gaia was the Greek goddess of Earth, mother of all life, similar to the Roman Terra Mater (mother [*sic*] Earth) reclining with a cornucopia, or the Andean Pachamama, the Hindu, Prithvi, "the Vast One," or the Hopi Kokyangwuti, Spider Grandmother, who with Sun god Tawa created Earth and its creatures.

The book proposed a hypothesis developed by Lovelock and biologist Lynn Margulis, that life on Earth self-regulates its environment to create optimum conditions for the additional advancement of life. Living organisms concentrate useful elements, compounds, and nutrients, and redistribute them into the water, soil, and atmosphere where they stabilize climate, feed other life forms, and influence the environment in which they evolved.ⁱ

Wyler further comments,

Many concepts developed in Lovelock's Gaia, were not new, of course, although some of the science to support these ideas was new. Over 2,500 years ago, Taoists considered the natural patterns of Earth and living beings as primary, and that "all creatures lived together in mystic unity," co-evolving and feeding each other.

Many Indigenous cultures understood that they were part of, and lived within, a larger living community of life that included air, water, soil, and fire. The North American Lakota term, Mitákuye Oyás'in (all our relations) recognizes this fundamental kinship among all beings.ⁱⁱ

As a cornerstone hypothesis of this book, it is understood that Gaia is a living entity with consciousness and that humans exist as active participants, not masters, in this system. In a finite closed system, in this case Gaia, there is a finite carrying capacity to support a finite

human population in balance with flora, fauna and oceans within (at least) nine planetary boundaries (see Appendix Two) that have been identified. Exactly what this population level of humans might be would depend massively on their patterns of consumption which, in essence, is a straightforward equation.

$$\text{population} \times \text{average consumption} = \text{total consumption}$$

Of course, it is much more complicated than a simple equation because different economic classes, societies and groups consume differently and sustainably and unsustainably to varying degrees. For example, the top one percent of the wealthiest are responsible for the lion's share of resource consumption. Nevertheless, the equation has some functionality and validity for the sake of simplicity. If total consumption is above the carrying capacity of the closed system, in this case Mother Earth, total consumption must either move below the carrying capacity or the environment will degrade and/or collapse. There are no other possible outcomes from taking the planet beyond its actual means; it's merely a question of time and not ideological preferences. In its simplest form, consuming above the carrying capacity of a closed ecosystem is the very definition of unsustainable.

In order to better understand the dynamics of sustainability and what is required to ensure a sustainable way of life, an interdisciplinary and international group of scientists, working primarily at the Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC), proposed a set of planetary boundaries in 2009 and the framework was revised in 2014. The nine planetary boundaries consist of the following:

1. Stratospheric ozone depletion
2. Loss of biosphere integrity (biodiversity loss and extinctions)
3. Chemical pollution and the release of novel entities
4. Climate change
5. Ocean acidification
6. Freshwater consumption and the global hydrological cycle
7. Land system change
8. Nitrogen and phosphorus flows to the biosphere and oceans
9. Atmospheric aerosol loading

Dr Rupert Medd, when discussing the importance of the nine

planetary boundaries and which ones are being breached, states,

The SRC [Stockholm Resilience Centre] explain that the “planetary boundaries concept presents a set of nine planetary boundaries within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come. The planetary boundaries approach is not intended as a replacement for ecosystem management approaches but a complement that takes Earth system considerations into consideration.”³ Unified, the boundaries form a synthesis of the intrinsic biophysical processes that regulate the stability of Earth. In turn, this acknowledges that Earth is a single complex and integrated system, functioning through interdependencies. Importantly, it is equally a measure of ecosystem health throughout these biophysical boundaries. Those that are now moving into the yellow are zones of “uncertainty,” whilst those already in the red have transgressed “safe operating spaces” where a stable planetary ecosystem can no longer be sustained.

In January 2015, an update was published in *Science* revealing that an additional boundary had been breached – Land-System Change, consequently leaving four out of nine borders crossed. So, Land-System Change (deforestation/agriculture/ damming); Biosphere Integrity (biodiversity losses and extinctions); and Biogeochemical Flows (industrial and agricultural processes/fertiliser usage) are all today at high-risk levels, and adding to the equally critical and accumulative effects of the Climate Change boundary. The latter is the top as it is connected to all other boundaries and operates at the level of the whole Earth system.ⁱⁱⁱ

Any system that seeks to be sustainable in the long term must be consuming finite resources below replacement levels while simultaneously generating pollution below the carrying capacity, both

³ Various Authors. 2018. <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-news/2017-11-20-a-fundamental-misrepresentation-of-the-planetary-boundaries-framework.html>. (Accessed 5 January 2018).

locally and globally, and maintaining greenhouse gas levels below where it (theoretically) would tip into runaway climate change. This clearly suggests that both the population level of humans *and* their consumption patterns are of critical importance in calculating whether any given system is sustainable in the long term. Cradle-to-cradle (C2C) systems of resource management are a fundamental aspect of these necessary changes; they can be defined as follows:

...the safe and potentially infinite circulation of materials and nutrients in cycles. All constituents are chemically harmless and recyclable. Waste as we know it today and which is generated according to the pre-existing take-make-waste model will no longer exist, only useful nutrients.^{iv}

Assuming an optimum mix of energy generation, which might include hydro-carbons such as wood, oil, gas and coal, nuclear, renewables and/or zero-point energy (discussed in Chapter Three) and a C2C system of resource, human populations might be sustainable at current levels or perhaps even higher. But current patterns of consumption at today's human population level are reaching their upper limits and are no longer sustainable even in the short term. The inevitable conclusion is that the current social and economic consumerist paradigm must be replaced prior to its collapse or societies will be left to pick up the pieces after it collapses. The belief that we can continue advancing in a linear manner under the current system (which is a process of transformation one way or another) of ideological late-stage Capitalism indefinitely is delusional.

The World Economic Forum (WEF), or Davos Group as they are sometimes known, are proposing a '*New Normal*' and '*Great Reset*' and to '*Build Back Better*'. Their documents, however, are short on meaningful ethical concerns and long on pomposity, greenwashing/wokewashing and authoritarianism. They also take themselves extremely seriously. Former Greek finance minister Yannis Varoufakis describes their plans as "Techno-Feudalism," and he is right. If the Davos group are allowed free reign to implement their dystopian vision, there will be a two-tier society with a class of super rich travelling around on private jets doing as they please and an underclass living a brutish existence and subject to 24/7 intrusive surveillance. It

is a system that melds the worst aspects of surveillance Capitalism with Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) (definition given in appendix 1) and Communist China's social credit system (discussed in detail in chapter six). You will own nothing, but you absolutely will not be happy. If you wish to have a taste of it read any dystopian 'fiction' such as *1984* or *Brave New World*, or watch any of the myriad dystopian movies on offer from Hollywood. Or alternatively read any book about living under authoritarian regimes such as, *The Gulag Archipelago* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Two things on which the WEF are correct, however, is that we do need a great reset and a new normal, although they are entirely wrong about what this should entail. The Greater Postcapitalist Reset should start with four decisive actions, namely;

1. Non-debt based currencies as the norm
2. *Doughnut Economics* as the norm
3. End to the so-called 'war on drugs'
4. Indefinite moratorium on global arms production and sales

With these four simple measures, we can manifest a Greater Postcapitalist Reset and bring into being a new normal that is built on respect as opposed to oppression and propaganda, a new normal in which a population of conscious, free humans in their billions can live in harmony with the Tao of Gaia and not be overshooting any of the planetary boundaries in the short, medium, or long term. A new normal in which the military-industrial-complex is consigned to the dustbin of history, where psychopathic narcissists are in custody and not in government and where healing of trauma is prioritised over corporate interests.

The Strange Case of the Pareto Distribution

If you have never heard of the Pareto Distribution don't feel bad; it won't be winning any popularity contests any time soon. In a lecture on the Pareto distribution, Professor Jordan B Peterson has this to say,

...if you look at creative production in any domain, it doesn't matter: artistic domain, food production, novels written, novels sold, money generated, number of companies generated,

number of goals scored in hockey, number of paintings painted, number of compositions written. Anything like that *where the fundamental underlying measure is human productivity, what you find is a very tiny percentage of people produce almost all the output. It's called a Pareto distribution* [emphasis added] ... It's a square root law, so here's the law fundamentally. If you look at the number of people who are producing in a given domain, the square root of the people produce half the product. So, if you have ten employees, three of them do half the work, but if you have ten thousand employees, one hundred of them do half the work.^v

The implications of the Pareto Distribution for Postcapitalism are profound, as it seems to throw up some extremely intractable problems. First, it certainly implies that whatever field/profession an individual enters, unless it is an incredibly small field, they are (extremely) unlikely to make it to anywhere near the top. This has massive implications for human (socioeconomic) organisation. More pertinently to us, Professor Peterson goes on to say,

Pareto distributions govern, for example, the distribution of money, which is why 1% of the people in the general population have the overwhelming amount of money and 1/10 of that 1% has almost all of that... and you think that's a terrible thing, and perhaps it is, but what you have to understand is that, that law governs the distribution of creative production across all creative domains, right? It's something like a natural law... *it's a deeply built feature of systems of creative production and no one really knows what to do about it* [emphasis added], because the danger is all the resources get funnelled to a tiny minority of people at the top and a huge section of the population stack up at zero.^{vi}

Human history from the rise of Sumer does seem to suggest that Dr Peterson is correct. A tiny fraction of the population lives like kings, and the bottom half live an extremely precarious life. Often there exists a destitute underclass who are homeless and are destined for a grim life and an early death. Human life is often governed by numbers, and the

Pareto distribution may be a fundamental truth of the human condition that explains poverty and wealth existing side by side, cheek by jowl. Dr Peterson further observes,

But to blame that on the oppressive nature of a given system is to radically underestimate the complexity of the problem. *No one actually knows how to effectively shovel the resources from the minority that controls almost everything to the majority that has almost nothing in any consistent way* [emphasis added] because as you shovel money down it tends to move right back up and it's a big problem.^{viii}

It's not only that it's a big problem, but at first sight, it appears to be an intractable problem. If you are born poor in any country in the world, your options are extremely limited, and they probably always will be. Of course, social mobility does exist: a very small number of poor people will become rich or more likely, moderately well off, but usually an individual's access to education and opportunities is largely dictated by the family into which they are born. According to Oxfam's 2014 report, *Working for the Few: Political Capture and Economic Inequality*,

Almost half of the world's wealth is now owned by one percent of the population.

The wealth of the one percent richest people in the world amounts to \$110 trillion. That's 65 times the total wealth of the bottom half of the world's population.

The bottom half of the world's population owns the same as the richest 85 people in the world.

Seven out of ten people live in countries where economic inequality has increased in the last 30 years.

The richest one percent increased their share of income in 24 out of 26 countries for which we have data between 1980 and 2012.

In the USA, the wealthiest one percent captured 95 percent of post-financial crisis growth since 2009, while the bottom 90 percent became poorer.^{viii}

Since 2014, the situation has only worsened; Oxfam's 2014 report further goes on to say, "This massive concentration of economic resources in the hands of fewer people presents a significant threat to inclusive political and economic systems. Instead of moving forward together, people are increasingly separated by economic and political power, inevitably heightening social tensions and increasing the risk of societal breakdown."^{ix} This massive economic inequality has only increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic with the billionaire class increasing their wealth over \$2,000,000,000,000 according to the website inequality.org. Oxfam has this to say about the obscene and unprecedented wealth transfer during the COVID pandemic,

America's billionaires have grown \$2.1 trillion richer during the pandemic, their collective fortune skyrocketing by 70 percent – from just short of \$3 trillion at the start of the COVID crisis on March 18, 2020, to over \$5 trillion on October 15 of this year, according to Forbes data analysed by Americans for Tax Fairness (ATF) and the Institute for Policy Studies Program on Inequality (IPS).

Not only did the wealth of U.S. billionaires grow, but so did their numbers: in March of last year [2021], there were 614 Americans with 10-figure bank accounts. Today [2021] there are 745.

The \$5 trillion in wealth now held by 745 billionaires is two-thirds more than the \$3 trillion in wealth held by the bottom 50 percent of U.S. households estimated by the Federal Reserve Board.

The great good fortune of these billionaires over the past 19 months is even starker when contrasted with the devastating impact of coronavirus on working people. Almost 89 million

Americans have lost jobs, over 44.9 million have been sickened by the virus, and over 724,000 have died from it.^x

This is the situation that currently exists under the current global ideological late-stage Capitalist, consumerist paradigm. However, the Pareto distribution suggests that whatever system is in place; Capitalism, Communism, Feudalism, Religion, Socialism, Technofeudalism, whatever, it doesn't really matter because the issue is far deeper than *any* of these systems. How then can we possibly solve this apparently intractable problem? And where does it leave us with our current version of capitalism?

First, it may be that the evidence is faulty in some way and that Professor Peterson is wrong. In fact, on the issue of wealth distribution, it appears it is worse than the Pareto distribution would predict. The square root of 7.5 billion is approximately 90,000 and the square root of that is around 300, and the square root of that is approximately 17, which is close to the supposed richest 8 people who in 2017 owned as much as the poorest 50%.^{xi} It is in fact a triple square root law or even a quadruple square root law when applied to the distribution of money amongst all of Earth's 7.5 billion human inhabitants. What does it mean? Either the law has broken down or the accounting of all capital, both visible and hidden assets, is faulty in the commonly repeated figures.

The catastrophic failure of the ideological late-stage Capitalist economic paradigm, the cornerstone of which is debt-based currencies and the military-industrial-complex, has facilitated some kind of tipping point of inequality, and the Pareto distribution has become a triple square root or even a quadruple square root law that seems to be getting worse when applied to the distribution of wealth. The inevitable conclusion is that we need a new economic narrative and a new economic paradigm. How this might be achieved is complex and certainly will require both systems change and human psychological change on an individual and collective level. It may also be the case that while the Pareto distribution governs wealth in an economic system based on debt-based currencies, a system such as Copiosis might not be governed by a Pareto distribution but by some other type of distribution such as a normal distribution. At this point, this is speculation, but what is needed is experimentation with Copiosis and other nondebt-based

money creation systems. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter nine.

Ethics in the Swamp of Politics

While coherent arguments exist that Capitalism during *Les Trente Glorieuses* (the post war years 1945–75) has been the most effective system for raising vast numbers of people out of poverty and improving living standards, it is also true that gross wealth inequality is the norm within ideological Capitalist-consumerist systems today. Moreover, with the introduction of the neo-liberal economic Capitalist experiment starting in 1973 in Chile after Pinochet’s CIA-backed military coup that increasingly gained traction in the 1980s, particularly in the UK and USA, inequality and all its associated negative (economic) externalities has increased in an unprecedented manner with the wealthiest 0.01% increasing their wealth by a staggering amount. This ideological late-stage Capitalist leopard cannot change its spots. Mass poverty and homelessness, with all their associated negative consequences, are *inevitable* in the advanced Capitalist-consumerist system, but to accept this as unavoidable and a reasonable price to pay for any system of human organisation is a poor value decision. As Nelson Mandela once observed, “Like slavery and apartheid...poverty is not natural. It is man-made [*sic*] and can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.”^{xii}

To follow a value system that implicitly accepts as inevitable and reasonable that a significant minority of fellow humans are malnourished, hungry and without shelter, dumped on the garbage heap of life whilst the technology and resources exist to house and feed them is to live but a shadow of a life. And let no one be in any doubt that their implicit acceptance *is* a value judgement. We must start from the basic premise that the system exists to serve the people and not, as is so often the case with the materialist-reductionist ideologies of Capitalism and Communism, the people exist to serve the system. In the Postcapitalist paradigms which are to come, homelessness and poverty cannot be acceptable externalities in any way, any shape or any form.

The environmental movement, liberals and left-wingers of all shades missed their opportunity to provide an effective plausible alternative to Capitalism, connect with ordinary people and build a radical, competent and effective movement for sustained change.

Nordhaus and Shellenberger articulated this particularly well in their excellent book *Break Through! From the Death of Environmentalism to the Politics of Possibility* when they said,

Environmental leaders and philanthropists ...treat prosperity as either a distraction from their primary focus of solving the problems of pollution and bad development or as an ancillary concern to be jury-rigged on the existing environmental framework of limiting human intrusions on nature. But improving living standards for humans can never be a fundamental aspect of environmentalism – only a weakly grafted appendage. That’s because environmental thinkers and leaders understand material prosperity as the *cause of but not the solution to* [original emphasis] pollution and degradation.^{xiii}

The traditional message from mainstream environmentalists was to consume less and re-use and recycle rather than consume more consciously and intelligently. The idea that the system itself could be replaced was often considered a radical notion that was not to be discussed in polite company. This was a failure on several very important levels.

First, the traditional message has never engaged, nor could it possibly have ever engaged, the ordinary worker whose priority is to pay the bills and provide for their family. Environmental concerns may register, but day-to-day living for those individuals struggling to live and provide for their dependents living paycheque to paycheque is their primary concern. Second, it implicitly accepts the materialist-reductionist mindset; it is linear thinking firmly rooted within the box. Third it is not an inspiring rally cry. It is not the strong foundation on which to build a radical, viable and workable alternative to neo-liberal Capitalism or, indeed, any other materialist-reductionist paradigm; if it were a curry, it would lack chilli, garlic, ginger and coriander.

There can be no doubt that Stalinist Soviet Communism, Maoist Chinese Communism and the feudal-Communist nightmare of Cambodia’s Khmer Rouge, in any way represent viable alternatives to Capitalism. Indeed, they all make Western Capitalism look positively benign in comparison. Psychopathic leaders embedded within inefficient and/or pathological bureaucracies have led to some of

humanity's most dystopian nightmares and that's being generous about it. Although it is likely that some of the tools and concepts of Communism might be useful to humans in the future, as an overarching system, it is largely oppressive, dysfunctional, psychopathic and not conducive to long-term sustainability. Let's draw lessons from Communism's failures and move on.

But Capitalism of one variety or another are the prevailing systems of socioeconomic organisation in the vast majority of countries in the world today, and so that is where this section aims its primary critique. In conversation with comedian and political commentator Jimmy Dore, film maker Peter Joseph makes these observations about Capitalism:

Here's the paradox of our market economy in the 21st century. We have a system based on scarcity, which justifies our political nonsense. We can't have health care for the American public, but we can go bomb a country with trillions of dollars into infinity. The contradiction is immense.

But then what do we do? We promote infinite consumption. 'Go out and buy everything, keep buying and consuming' because that fuels jobs and GDP and everything that denotes survival. So, we have this backwards system that is completely antithetical to sustainability and in many ways antithetical to any kind of group harmony and social justice.^{xiv}

Thus, it is the very philosophy and design of ideological late-stage Capitalism with its need for indefinite growth on a finite planet that is at fault and unsustainable in the long term. *Capitalism as if the World Matters* by Jonathon Porritt is a seminal work that makes an invaluable contribution to the long history of works on human socioeconomic organisation. Essentially, the work is a vision of an optimum Capitalist system, and it would be the saviour of Capitalism if we could somehow disregard the (routinely overlooked) negative externalities of Capitalism. Indeed, we must move away from the very dysfunctional psychology and ideology that allows the destruction of the biosphere we live in to be regarded as an 'externality,' a point to which we will return later.

In reviewing Porritt's work, Lord May, the President of the Royal Society, states, "...if Capitalism cannot be bent towards sustainability – towards being part of the solution – then I believe there *is* no solution," and this has been the prevailing view of mainstream economists and development professionals of the post-Soviet era.^{xv} However, the central thesis of the book itself, namely that Capitalism can be made to be sustainable and is indeed the only system capable of delivering sustainability, is extremely contentious. Porritt states,

This means working with the grain of markets and free choice not against it. It means embracing capitalism as the only overarching system capable of achieving any kind of reconciliation between ecological sustainability, on the one hand, and the pursuit of prosperity, on the other...Logically whether we like it or not, sustainability is therefore going to have to be delivered within that all-encompassing capitalist framework. We don't have time to wait for any big picture ideological successor.^{xvi}

Is this a valid and correct analysis? To some degree, this depends on which type of Capitalism we are talking about. While it is true that Capitalism has had many successes since the Industrial Revolution and many of its tools are both useful and functional, massive global population increases since the end of WWII and changing consumption patterns have led to an almost exponentially greater demand on natural resources that cannot be sustained in the medium and long term with the present paradigm. Moreover, since the global financial crisis of 2008, wealth inequality has increased faster, and yet, the overall psychology and philosophy of economists and politicians has largely, although not exclusively, remained unchanged despite the glaring problems of this economic ideology. Capitalism is no longer fit for purpose.

Capitalism is a many faceted gem. In its more balanced forms, it is remarkably efficient, but when out of balance, as ideological late-stage Capitalism is today, it's a dysfunctional schizophrenic hydra. It offers up a fine tasting menu for the few, but it has a limited lifespan in its current incarnation. The question raised, therefore, is, "Is there any brand of Capitalism that is based on C2C systems of resource usage,

and which rejects both the military-industrial-complex and debt-based fiat currencies?” Not as far as I can tell, and I have looked very hard. If no such version of Capitalism exists then Porritt’s argument is neither valid nor correct, and the logical conclusion is that we do, in fact, need a “big picture ideological successor.” Whatever paradigm comes next, whilst it may cherry-pick the functional tools of Capitalism, must ultimately be a Postcapitalist one. American mathematical physicist Eric Weinstein in his 2016 article *Anthropic Capitalism and the New Gimmick Economy*, states, “Capitalism and Communism which briefly resembled victor and vanquished, increasingly look more like *Thelma and Louise*; a tragic couple sent over the edge by forces beyond their control. What comes next is anyone’s guess and the world hangs in the balance.”^{xvii}

Some brands of Capitalism are less dysfunctional than others. For example, the ‘social-democrat Capitalism’ or ‘Socialist-flavoured-Capitalism’ of the late twentieth century in Scandinavia, Holland, France and Germany undoubtedly helped foster some of the most egalitarian societies that have existed since the Industrial Revolution. There are lessons to be drawn from these successes for, despite its many limitations, Capitalism has offered up some extremely functional tools for human organisation. Conversely, ‘mafia-Capitalism’ in Russia, ‘Communist-Party-Capitalism’ in China, ‘narco-Capitalism’ in Mexico and Columbia, ‘winner-takes-all Capitalism’ (or ‘oligarch-Capitalism’ if you prefer) of the USA and the peculiar unique brand of British ‘*laissez-faire*-Capitalism’, or transnational so-called ‘philanthropic-Capitalism’ (‘feudal-Capitalism’ would actually be more accurate), have despoiled the environment and created some of the most successful arms-makers to have lived in human history.

The link between ideological late-stage Capitalist-consumerism and the military-industrial-complex, although largely obscured by smoke and mirrors, is extremely close. The arms trade is responsible for untold suffering and is closely linked to the trade in abusive narcotics (particularly heroin and cocaine) and human trafficking (slavery) and is ultimately corrupt. Look in an economic textbook and you will find scant discussion of these issues; yet ideological late-stage Capitalism without endemic corruption, drug trafficking or the arms trade is fantasy Capitalism. Like Eggs Benedict without the eggs, Beef Wellington minus the beef, lobster thermidor lacking lobster or *Coq au*

Vin sans coq, it simply does not exist. This does not require some long convoluted and complex conspiracy theory, but rather, a simple understanding of the logic of Capitalism, which is

Maximize profits at the expense of everything else
Concentrate the profits in as few hands as is feasible
Offset ‘negative externalities’ to other politically weaker groups

With this logic as the driving force, which is the norm for narcissistic psychopaths/sociopaths, special loans and trade ‘agreements’, coups, assassinations, proxy wars and genocide simply become tools to be used when necessary and are covered up or kept quiet about when quality journalists come sniffing about. It is not hard to find examples: Guatemala 1954; Vietnam – The Ten Thousand Day War; Chile 1973; Afghanistan at various times; and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is ongoing, never mind Syria, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, and so the list goes on. John Perkins, a self-confessed former economic hitman (a man in a position to know), sets out the blueprints used in some detail in his work, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*,

...the core tools we Economic Hitmen (EHMs) used in my day: false economics that included distorted financial analysis, inflated projections, and rigged accounting books; secrecy, deception, threats, bribes and extortion; false promises that we never intended to honour; and enslavement through debt and fear. These same tools are used today.

In the 1980s and 1990s, this was the stuff of conspiracy theories, but since the turn of the century and particularly since the 2007–8 global economic crash, the evidence has only grown and grown. Perkins describes his work in Panama, Indonesia and other countries in some detail in his book. It is a rigged game pure and simple. He goes on to say,

Now as then, many elements are present in each “hit,” although that likely is evident only to someone willing to delve deeply into the story behind the story. Now, as then, the glue that holds all of this together is *the belief that any means are justified to*

achieve the desired ends [emphasis added]. A major change is that this EHM system, today, is also at work in the United States and other economically developed countries.

Those at the top of the ideological late-stage Capitalist economic pyramid are quite prepared to use any means necessary to enslave other nations with debt. No longer satisfied with sucking money and enslaving other nations, they have now turned their attention to their own citizens. The logic and actions of those directing the system are those of an addict, lunatic, narcissist and/or psychopath, pure and simple. The amount of money they can extract is never enough, and like a junkie looking for their next fix, they always need more. Their greed is absolutely rapacious. Furthermore, the national surveillance state and Technofeudalism are a logical and natural development of this, given the degree of psychopathy and narcissism at the helm of the economic ship. Perkins goes on to say,

It is everywhere. And there are many more variations on each of these tools [emphasis added]. There are hundreds of thousands more EHMs spread around the world. They have created a truly global empire. They are working in the open as well as in the shadows. This system has become so widely and deeply entrenched that *it is a normal way of doing business* [emphasis added] and therefore not alarming to most people.^{xviii}

Morality and ethics do not enter the equation: it's just business. "It's just business." *It's just business.*

Envisaging an Optimal and Ethical Paradigm

Let us ask the questions: What is the purpose of an overarching Postcapitalist socioeconomic paradigm? Who is it for? What does it say about the human condition? And how can it guide us towards a more functional, equitable and balanced society?

In answer to the first question, the purpose of a Postcapitalist paradigm change must be to deliver a framework whereby every human has ready access to all basic necessities: clean air, adequate fresh water, nutritious food, sanitation, sustainable housing, health care and energy. This would constitute all of the first tier and, perhaps, parts of the

second tier of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, namely, physiological and safety needs. This must be achieved whilst simultaneously remaining below the carrying capacity, as per the nine planetary boundaries, of the natural environment both locally and globally. Some degree of inequality of outcome will still exist, but the extremes of inequality that we see today will come to an end.

To achieve this goal, one cornerstone would be to reimagine the five capitals framework so that it serves all of humanity. This could be achieved by reorienting the order in which the framework is commonly valued under Capitalism and is discussed in detail in Chapter Three, so a brief overview will suffice here. It is critical that *natural capital* be valued first, then *human capital* and *social capital* together, then *manufactured capital*. These first four parts must always be valued above *financial capital*, which is in contrast to ideological late-stage Capitalism which ranks *financial capital* above all the others. The current complexity of financial capital must be rejected in favour of clear and transparent nondebt-based currencies controlled locally rather than be subject to the whims of private banking cartel (more accurately described as banksters) and stock traders. As per the philosophical basis of Postcapitalist systems, there can be no compromise on this issue.

Second, it must optimise opportunities for quality work, leisure time and activities that lead to the flow-state (discussed in detail in Chapters Five and Six). Simultaneously, individuals must be able to seek out what it is that makes their hearts sing and put that into service, not just for themselves but also for their families and/or society at large; and individuals must do their duty and carry a burden, thus balancing their rights and responsibilities. Moreover, a Postcapitalist paradigm must seek to raise the consciousness of *all humans* so that emotional and mental-health issues are a fraction of current levels. Humans must evolve so that they might step into the cosmos and (hypothetically) greet their extra-terrestrial brothers and sisters as a peace-loving race.

A truly just and sustainable system is not a linear progression through the history of socioeconomics with the odd tweak here and there: it demands a paradigm change of education, philosophy, psychology, socioeconomic organisation, technology and values; nothing else will suffice. This work proposes that a paradigm change of socioeconomic political philosophy is necessary to deliver long-term environmental sustainability *and* social justice. Furthermore, it would

propose that there are five minimum characteristics to achieve sustainable societies. These five characteristics are the following:

- Permaculture and ethical animal husbandry
- Cyclical resource use and technology
- Individual and collective psychological freedom
- Effective and egalitarian-ish states *and* nonstate forms
- Holistic and research-based education systems

These five parts are all explored in detail in Part II of this work, which is a starting point rather than a finishing line. By necessity (we are after all discussing future possibilities), certain factors must be discussed in general rather than in specific terms. Others, such as the optimum population size for nonstate-forms (NSFs) can be discussed in much more specific detail. To implement global sustainable systems for human society, there must be a certain minimum number of global actions to allow the space for the transition that must be implemented this decade. Let's start with just four parts for our *Greater Postcapitalist Reset*.

- Indefinite moratorium on arms production and sales
- End of the so-called War on Drugs
- Implementation of nondebt-based currencies
- Doughnut economics as baseline economic principles

These four simple changes will not only solve many of the biggest problems the human race faces today, but also, they will allow the human race the breathing space to fully implement all the ideas in this work. Of course, the globalist technocrats (substantially overrepresented by dark triad personality types) of the WEF and a variety of other international organisations will resist this to implement their dark vision. My suggestion would be to take them into custody while they await trial for their crimes against humanity. Once this Greater Postcapitalist Reset is embedded, we can implement a new normal that is for the many and not the few; this will include but may not be limited to

- C2C systems to be the norm

- Market regulation to vary considerably depending on context
- Peace and reconciliation commissions
- States recognising the rights of NSFs to exist
- Transition to permaculture as the norm
- Legal status of companies to be completely reassessed
- Privacy of individuals as the norm
- The right to bodily autonomy as the norm

A permaculture system of agriculture and ethical and sustainable animal husbandry are both necessary to produce enough food for over 7 billion people without degrading the soil and the wider ecology on which sustainable agriculture depends. Advanced technology explicitly includes clean and green renewable-energy, effective waste-management systems, and sustainable housing with a low or zero environmental impact. Whilst humans would continue to manipulate their environments, as they have done for several thousands of years, the way they do so would be fundamentally different; it would be based on scientific knowledge/research, long-term thinking, and respect for the Earth. A scientific understanding of the carrying capacity of the environment and C2C resource use would be an intrinsic part of the system. Moreover, the wise and intelligent use of advanced technology in the sustainable paradigm absolutely and unconditionally rejects the arms trade. War, sexual violence, domestic abuse, poverty, debt, slavery, homelessness, unemployment and illiteracy must become relics to be viewed in the museum of human organisation.

This shift must be achieved whilst living in balance with the natural environment and any pollution produced as a negative externality of productive economic activity must be below the local carrying capacity in every locale around the planet. This is a tall order indeed, but if this is not our aim, what can we expect for the future of the human race? Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) articulates what this might mean thus:

In our dreams we have seen another world, an honest world, a world decidedly fairer than the one in which we now live. We saw that in this world there was no need for armies; peace, justice and liberty were so common that no one talked about

them as far-off concepts, but as things such as bread, birds, air, water, like book and voice.^{xix}

To achieve this, a new covenant must exist between state and individuals based on compassion and wisdom and not oppression, propaganda and deception. Furthermore, these relationships must be based on reciprocity with agreed sets of rights and responsibilities for individuals and states. For those who wish to use the many benefits of the effective and egalitarian-ish state, fair laws, protection from violence, sustainable housing, food, water and energy, and a wide range of work and leisure options would accept an independent judiciary and just police with a legal monopoly on violence. It would be a society of rights and responsibilities of citizens walking hand in hand with the rights and responsibilities of the state. Moreover, states would accept that those who wish to live in small autonomous communities, or nonstate forms (NSFs), should be allowed to do so.

States recognising the rights of well-informed mentally balanced adult humans and their families, if they have one, to live outside of the state and experiment with NSFs would be the norm. Effective NSFs must exist for those individuals who wish to forgo the benefits of a state and live together with a minimum of formal rules and no police force with a monopoly on sanctioned violence. NSFs, by necessity, would be much smaller than states and therefore likely account for a substantially smaller part of the planet's human population. Individuals might choose to temporarily live in an NSF for whatever reasons and return to live in a state at some later point in life.

Psychological freedom, whilst difficult to articulate adequately in words, is perhaps the single most important of the five minimum characteristics, and it owes as much, if not more, to feelings and emotion rather than logic. We must change the metaphors, symbols and narratives through which we interpret the world, most particularly with regard to socioeconomic organisation and our relationship with the natural world. Societies and individuals must address and seek healing for negative psychological patterns of behaviour, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), mental illness and emotional trauma in all its grim myriad of forms. Furthermore, humanity must recognise the destructive potential of those individuals who demonstrate psychopathic traits and/or the dark triad personality type and channel their skills and

abilities into constructive pastimes. Moreover, those activities (including but not limited to sports, music, fine arts, and meditation) that foster a flow state would become central activities that replace intra-state and inter-state war and domestic violence.

A Postcapitalist paradigm change is thus, in certain respects, synonymous with a quest for a utopia, defined here as *technologically advanced sustainable and optimum systems of human organisation*, and although we may never achieve this, we can still use it as a helpful target to aim at. Why should we humans settle for a corrupt, inefficient, discriminatory and grossly hierarchical system, even if it is marginally better than the other corrupt, inefficient, discriminatory and grossly hierarchical systems on offer? Why choose one of the less bad suboptimal choices when there are optimal solutions available? Winston Churchill once observed, “It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government – except all the others that have been tried.”^{xx} Surely the time is ripe for we humans to draw a line in the sand and say, “*Less bad is simply not good enough.*”

- ⁱ <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/24978/gaia-ecology-earth-is-connected-rex-weyler/> Accessed 16/11/2021.
- ⁱⁱ Ibid.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Medd <https://berghahnbooks.com/blog/disobedience-in-paradise-can-we-extend-a-loving-frame-of-mind-in-time-for-the-amazon.>
- ^{iv} <https://epea.com/en/about-us/cradle-to-cradle#:~:text=Cradle%20to%20Cradle%C2%AE%20describes,materials%20and%20nutrients%20in%20cycles.&text=In%20this%20way%2C%20old%20products,circulate%20in%20a%20technical%20cycle.>
- ^v <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcEWRyKSGwE>.
- ^{vi} Ibid.
- ^{vii} Ibid.
- ^{viii} https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp-working-for-few-political-capture-economic-inequality-200114-en_3.pdf. p. 2–3.
- ^{ix} Ibid., p. 3.
- ^x <https://inequality.org/great-divide/updates-billionaire-pandemic/> Accessed 23/11/2021.
- ^{xi} <https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2017-01-16/just-8-men-own-same-wealth-half-world.>
- ^{xii} <http://www.unfoundation.org/blog/nelson-mandela-quotes-we-love.html>.
- ^{xiii} Nordhaus and Shellenberger, p. 37.
- ^{xiv} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOyASsRvuvs>.
- ^{xv} *Capitalism as is the World Matters* – back cover
- ^{xvi} Ibid., p. 19 and p. 84.
- ^{xvii} <https://www.edge.org/response-detail/26756>.
- ^{xviii} Perkins, p. 249-59.
- ^{xix} Khasnabish, A. 2008a. “A Tear in the Fabric of the Present.” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 2(2): 27-52.
- ^{xx} <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/w/winstonchu164161.html>.