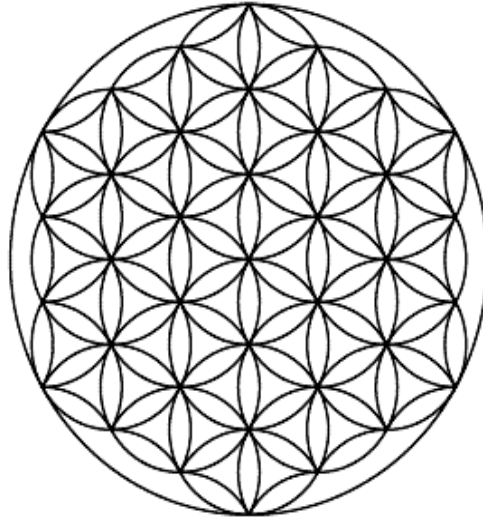


# From Capitalism to the Collaborative Commons

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**Abstract:** This is an edited summary compilation of my work in several Ning Integral Postmetaphysical Spirituality (IPS) forum discussion threads listed in the bibliography. It will lay out the slow decline and endgame of capitalism, while also highlighting the emerging new socioeconomic system of the collaborative commons. It also criticizes the notion of clinging to conscious capitalism, as if capitalism could be redeemed if only the right consciousness were applied. While conscious capitalism may indeed be a healthy transition step toward the collaborative commons, in itself it is not enough and to the contrary retains many of the inherent elements from a bygone and no longer effective socioeconomic structure.

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## How is Economics Spiritual?

While each domain like spirituality or economics is a self-contained holon with its own autopoietic structure, nonetheless as the image above depicts holons also intersect with each other and share some spaces between. Hence we can discuss the spirituality of economics and vice versa. It is in this light that I make the case below where those domains intersect.<sup>2</sup>

Pope Francis said in his Encyclical (2015): “[T]he most [...] astonishing economic growth, unless [it is] accompanied by authentic social and moral progress, will definitely turn against man” (para. 4). He goes on to expound on what type of economic progress is deemed moral. As one example, there must be a social mortgage on all private property in order that goods may serve the general purpose that God gave them. It is not in accord with God's plan that this gift be used in such a way that its benefits favor only a few (para. 93). He suggests that the study of ecology requires the interrelationship between living organisms and their environment, the latter including the social and economic milieu. And both are integrated within of the broad rubric of the spiritual (Chapter 4). Furthermore, our current socioeconomic system is one of personal conquest over nature, extracting its abundance for personal gain and not for any common good (Chapter 2). In order to serve each other in a more caring and humane manner we need a more spiritually oriented economic system.

Michael Lerner (2017), a Rabbi and leader in the progressive Jewish faith, brings a spiritual perspective to economics. Spirituality in a broader sense is how we bring those principles to the daily bread of, well, daily bread: How we get enough bread to eat, how we share our bread with our neighbors, how we provide it if they can't afford it, etc. Recall that bread is a key ingredient in Holy Communion, how we share in the body of the Divine, and how we nourish our physical bodies in preparation for cultivating our more ephemeral bodies. His organization's Spiritual Covenant promotes loving and caring relationships, recognizing that everyone is part of, and contributor to, the sacred energy of the universe. It requires social responsibility in democratizing our political economy to achieve a living wage, reduced work weeks and meaningful participation in work. Spirituality requires that we act in the economic sphere to improve lives or it is just more empty rhetoric.

Otto Scharmer (2013) discusses how the self can be alienated from the environment, society, and ourselves. All three domains are inextricably related. The spiritual divide is not from some divine being or reality as such but “between the current self [...] and the emerging future self.” He correlates the spiritual divide with our current governance systems not giving voice to the people or defending private property rights. He demonstrates that all of the above disconnections are tied to our economic paradigms. Economically we are moving spiritually toward awareness- based collective action and commons- based ownership.

Christian Arnsperger (2008) makes an explicit connection between existential reflection and religious/spiritual values. He considers such values as the very foundation of economic thought, since the latter is directly concerned with the liberation of humankind from oppression and enslavement, so much so that economics is “less a technical-operational domain than an

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<sup>2</sup> Also see Alderman in this Issue for a fuller appreciation of this phenomenon.

existential-spiritual one.” He even goes so far as to see Marx, Keynes, and Hayek literally as “the most influential theologians of the 20th century.” Hence the subsequent examination of economic systems and the transition from capitalism to the collaborative commons is of utmost spiritual concern, where the rubber of spirituality meets the road of its material enactment.

What could be more spiritual than helping people earn a living wage to feed their families? Than addressing income inequality so that people have a fair shot at creating enough money to meet their basic needs and have some surplus time and energy to devote to needs higher on Maslow's hierarchy, like spiritual pursuits? And I don't mean just traditional religion but so-called integral postmetaphysical spirituality (IPS)? It seems most of us that are into such spiritual pursuits are already privileged with enough surplus in the lower levels such as survival, membership, individual autonomy and other basic needs that we take for granted, while most of the population is struggling to eat and pay the rent. If you are in the latter group you will not focus on much of anything else, let alone IPS. So a key spiritual question becomes which political agenda best enables people to meet their deficiency needs in order to fulfil their higher needs? Barring that, how realistic is it to expect ordinary people to even approach something like IPS?

Just preaching IPS to the choir of already relatively wealthy elites is a circle jerk. Taking the prime directive seriously means taking action to lift everyone up to achieve their highest potential, not just in financial terms but all the higher needs. But we can't get there without addressing real sociocultural problems. And it matters a lot which political agenda is in power. I'm also reminded of Wilber's (2006, p. 34) contention, and with which I agree, that the predominant factor in an individual's level of consciousness is the economic system. Recall the recent proclamations of the Pope above about trickle-down economics being a major factor in subverting one's religious obligations to the people. Or Jim Wallis (2017), who sees economic budgets as moral issues, how we enact our moral and religious beliefs in treating each other. At IPS forum we've long included political and economic issues as part of an integral view to achieving spirituality.

## **Capitalism, Conscious or Otherwise**

First let's examine capitalism. Dictionary.com defines it as:

An economic system based on a free market, open competition, profit motive and private ownership of the means of production. Capitalism encourages private investment and business, compared to a government-controlled economy. Investors in these private companies (i.e. shareholders) also own the firms and are known as capitalists.

Noam Chomsky (2009) explains that laissez-faire capitalism is an ideal that has never existed in practice. Existing forms are dominated by oligarchs who buy legislators that intervene in the economy on their behalf. A free, competitive market is more a talking point that in reality must be avoided at all cost. Instead Chomsky prefers economic democracy where workers have control over their workplaces and economic institutions, more like the collaborative commons.

On a positive note Jeremy Rifkin (2014) defends capitalism. The first two industrial revolutions required vast amounts of capital to build its infrastructure. It also required vertical integration of huge organizational structures with top-down hierarchical control. He notes that while greed,

deregulation and corruption certainly played a part in what capitalism has become, he also asserts that this structure was a natural process for the sort of communication-energy-consciousness regime that provided a general increase in the standard of living for all. However, its own drive for ever-increasing productivity at lower marginal costs has now resulted in it being nearly obsolete.

Wilber and Parlee (2009) claimed: "If you shop, have a job, or own any investments, you're a capitalist. But are you a conscious capitalist?" This presumes that if you engage in markets and business, or exchange money you are a capitalist, which is an erroneous and revealing assumption. Cannot one do all those things without engaging in capitalism? One most certainly can. Just because monetary investment is involved doesn't make it capitalism. The latter is a specific economic system as defined above. So what do their assumptions reveal?

Technically capitalism means private ownership of the means of production. We can just as well make money, shop, have a job and engage in competitive markets in a system in which the workers can own the means of production and operate businesses democratically. Co-ops are but one example, the Mondragon Corporation being the largest. This is Marx's (1948) move from capitalism to democratic socialism. I'd add that some of the most democratic and happiest countries have some degree of democratic socialism, like Iceland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden (World Happiness Report, 2018).

Wilber (2006) said the following: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their reality but their economic-material realities that determine their consciousness" (34). He of course qualifies this claim, but he agrees that the economic system is an incredibly strong factor in shaping the consciousness of most of society's individuals. So one of the strongest reasons people support those who oppress them is because they have to make a living. Making minimum wage or not much beyond is better than starving to death. And the latter is not just a fanciful hypothetical but a daily reality for many Americans, not only the poor but increasingly the middle class as well. It's hard to have an ideology when you're working overtime and/or a second job to make ends meet for your family. Given the above, many of us do not have the time or energy to be educated about political issues and/or to get involved in that process.

Which is of course the intent of global, corporate capitalists, for they realize an uneducated, overworked, underpaid workforce with the apparent freedom to vote is much more easily manipulated with ads and political framing. Hence it is the ideology of those in power, generally those with the most money who want to keep it that way, that program us with scientifically proven linguistic techniques specifically designed to get us believe in something that is against our own self-interest, i.e., getting out of the cycle of poverty or slave wages. There has been a lot of research on framing and, according to Lakoff (2016), capitalists have been on to this for a long time and have manipulated public opinion to vote for policies that further enrich the already rich and further impoverish the already poor. Obviously they hide the reality of this process within political frames that spin a story that their agenda is all about opportunity, jobs, and lifting the poor and middle class. But it is well-designed misdirection that has been exposed time and again; the programming is so strong and insidious that those so programmed refuse to accept the cognitive dissonance of facing that they've been so manipulated.

Now of course some integralites also buy into this false story that if anyone just tries to work hard enough, and are smart enough, they too will succeed financially and become healthy, wealthy and wise. Thing is, most of us integralites have grown up in more upper middle class households and already started on third base, to use a well-worn metaphor. We don't realize that many others don't even start at home plate but never get the opportunity to get into the game. I'm reminded of kids that don't have enough to eat so cannot learn well, so even though they're given the equal opportunity of an education it's not sufficient. Their parents are both working low-wage jobs and still don't have enough to buy adequate food to feed their families. Also lower-class schools have inadequate supplies and an insufficient number of teachers, their budgets having been slashed by capitalists lying about a shortage of funds yet unwilling to get those funds via reasonable taxes from those who can afford them. Again, part of the plan to keep lower and lower middle classes under- or uneducated to perpetuate the cycle of wealth flowing to the top. Most of us privileged integralites never had to experience such conditions so we unconsciously buy into and enable such exploitation, thinking if we just educate leaders about integral ideas then the above problems will be somehow corrected, when in reality such training just gives leaders better tools to keep the deception going.

In some integral circles there is the notion of consensus between liberalism and conservatism, which presumes that they are both legitimate worldviews of equal worth, complexity, and development that just need some balancing and integration. But is the presumption accurate? I think not. I agree with the general idea that the liberal worldview is a higher cognitive development than the conservative (Wilber, 2006b, p. 22). Granted there are exceptions and contextual caveats but it's valid as a generalizing orientation. And I also agree with Wilber (2000, p. 221) that worldviews are what he calls transitional structures, i.e., that development entails the replacement of outgrown worldviews with new ones. For example, in moral development one does not simultaneously hold an egocentric and worldcentric morality, and they are not balanced or integrated. The latter replaces the former. And so it is with worldviews. However basic elements are indeed included from different domains, as we'll see below.

We do *not* have to balance or integrate conservative with the liberal worldviews. We can though mix-and-match elements from capitalism to balance with more equitable ideas from a more developed worldview. It is important to make this distinction. Even though we retain some of the healthy elements of capitalism in moving to the collaborative commons, retaining capitalism as a guiding worldview has severe real-life consequences for society by continuing the inequities of a system that has outgrown any usefulness it might have had previously.

Another assumption is the following: "Capitalism can and will evolve as the consciousness of the people composing it evolve" (Wilber, 2009). This is the consciousness in conscious capitalism. But again, this assumes that a higher consciousness, presumably integral consciousness, will continue to express through a lower socioeconomic system. That somehow the latter can be redeemed if we just think about it differently. It also presumes that this integral consciousness has somehow balanced and integrated the prior liberal and conservative worldviews in a higher synthesis. But recall the liberal or progressive worldview was not a balance or integration of the conservative but its replacement. And if there is such a thing as an integral worldview it too is not an integration of liberal and conservative worldviews but their replacement. Granted some

elements of a previous system can be included, but they are reconstructed and interpreted within the new worldview.

That the integral view tries to balance and integrate capitalism with a so-called higher consciousness reveals a few things. It is antithetical to its own principles of the transcend-and-replace nature of transitional structures. Confusing how enduring structures are included with transitional structures that are replaced is indicative of the type of egoic-rational cognitive structure that cannot make this very distinction. It lends further support that integral conscious capitalism really is not so much an evolved worldview but more of a conservative, capitalist, Republican socioeconomic view dressed up in newer, more glamorous clothing-rationalizations. It's a view that has yet to go through the so-called 'green' progressive worldview with its social and democratically run markets.

Mackey (2006), another proponent of conscious capitalism, seems oblivious that the ruling form of capitalism is State capitalism, and such corporate control of government will not be changed by a few sincere but naive idealistic capitalists like him promoting positive change by example. He will not even be noticed by the power elite until and unless he starts to cost them one penny in profit; then he will be crushed. In the meantime such power brokers no doubt silently nod in approval while he promotes capitalism in general, as it keeps the masses from appropriately directing their anger at the iniquitous system that is creating their turmoil.

Granted there are positive elements in conscious capitalism to be included, like dedication to the triple bottom line: profit, people, environment. It attempts to balance all three stakeholders so that profit is not the only motive. The latter by itself is what is considered to be the culprit in the downsides of capitalism and they're right on that count. However there are other aspects of a capitalist worldview noted above that are accepted unconsciously which also get in the way of a more equitable and humane economy.

## The 2015 Integral Theory Conference

In an Integral Leadership Review interview Sean Esbjörn-Hargens (2015) said:

[T]he theme of the conference, which is around 'Integral Impacts,' is simultaneously a statement and a question aimed at exploring the issue of whether integral approaches are more impactful than other non-integral approaches? The narrative that we tell ourselves in the integral community is that it is. It logically has to be. And yet there aren't a lot of examples that really make that case. If push comes to shove, I think we as a community are hard-pressed to actually demonstrate that.

One way of addressing that is educating ourselves and others of the consequences of end-stage capitalism, of facing our unconscious assumptions that lead us into accepting and enacting its outright pernicious tenets. To have an impact we have to drop the pretense of civilized debate and just fight against what is wrong. Sometimes the former is a way to capitulate to the hegemonic power structure, to succumb to its premises while politely disagreeing. Which in effect doesn't change that structure one iota. I'm thinking here specifically of the ITC debate on capitalism, where Stein's opening statement (2014) makes clear we should not accept capitalism's own terms, for to

do so, no matter how 'integrally' dressed, really changes nothing. Moving beyond conscious capitalism requires more than polite and respectful disagreement. It's a fight that requires strong language, and yes, even polemic, that motivates us to personal and collective action in order to change a defunct and destructive system. We can't politely watch climate change destroy our lives and planet from an ivory tower burning to the ground. If we don't fight now we all die, and that's not a metaphor or hyperbole. This is not an academic debate befitting of its rules of engagement; this is a fight for our very lives.

Stein (2015), in a video clip linked below, reiterates some of the points in his 2015 ITC paper. The weak argument is that integralists should at least become informed of the nature of capitalism, to date under investigated. Conscious capitalism ignores its history and its deeper implications. This is necessary for his stronger argument against it: If you stick to integral metatheory then at the very least it should be post-capitalist, and even anti-capitalist. He finds calling anti-capitalism a 'green meme' a poor excuse for actual thought, a misuse of developmental theory to dismiss something that hasn't been thoroughly thought through. He then discusses transitional and enduring structures, arguing as I have that capitalism has to be transcended and negated. Not everything is included in transcendence.

He goes on and sees conscious capitalism as a transition to a post-capitalist form of economics. He's not opposed to conscious capitalism, just that form of it that sees no alternative to capitalism or that thinks it is the integral expression of the most evolved socioeconomic system. Capitalism is inherently a paradigm of endless profit and growth, unsustainable for the planet and for people. This addiction to profit and growth requires the exploitation of labor and the environment. And finally, there is a relationship between markets and violence; wherever there's a market there's someone with a gun.

Also consider one of Michael Schwartz's (2015) points in his IPS Facebook integral myth thread, that no matter one's cognitive level on developmental tests, once we are within the system the system itself starts speaking and acting through us. It challenges the notion that all we need do is attain integral cognition, or try to inculcate the integral model into the system. The system itself will appropriate those cognitions and models for its own purposes and proceed along virtually unchanged. We need to also enact new socioeconomic structures in alignment with our cognitions and models. That is what the collaborative commons movement is doing. And apparently organically, without AQAL models.

Political and social revolution arises from the external socioeconomic system, the mode of production. This agrees with at least that part of what Wilber (2006a) spoke to as the predominant way most people move into a new level overall: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their reality but their economic-material realities that determine their consciousness" (part 3). The difference is that he thinks more developed individuals create the new systems from the inside out. I suggest that it's more individuals being affected by the emerging tech and modes of production that then instills the value logic. Development is accomplished not by having a 'higher' model to which one must conform, but by the actual practice of operating within the sociocultural practice of democracy. This is what transforms individual operators in a value logic supporting the notion of the public good in distinction from the dysfunctional notion of individuality espoused tirelessly by the regressive capitalists that prefer oligarchy. Again, it's the social practice that inculcates a

working system for democracy against oligarchy, where the inside-out model has yet to have even a minuscule effect on this stated goal.

I know, the AQAList might argue it's not one creating the other, it's all of them tetra-arising at the same time. But as another example, Habermas (1994) using Mead determined that it was the cultural system that creates and inculcates the individual ego in the first place. Without it, despite the hardware, one remains an egoless wolf boy. Vygotsky's (Edwards, 2004) work supports this notion as well. They directly contradict the Piagetian notion of inherent inner structures that shape external stimuli to fit that structure. It's a very metaphysical system that I examined in depth in the IPS "real/false reason" thread. And again, it's not that the inner/outer, individual/social all tetra-arise simultaneously. That certainly provides for a nice apparent 'balance,' but that is an imposed systematic assumption that presupposes such a balance that does not match the empirical facts on the ground, instead trying to match the facts to the created metaphysical system. It is a hallmark of the capitalist system to do exactly that.

Stein (2014) recommends that a key goal of integral activism should be to replace capitalism with a new economic system. In that light let's now explore the collaborative commons.

## **The Collaborative Commons**

Jeremy Rifkin (2017) discusses how the capitalist paradigm is phasing out and the collaborative commons is phasing in. The transition will inevitably take time but it is already forming a hybrid economy. He predicts the transition will be complete by 2050, with the Commons dominating but capitalism will still exist on the margins as a aggregator of network services and solutions. The major impetus for the decline of capitalism is near zero marginal cost. Marginal cost is that of producing additional goods and/or services once the investment costs are covered. Due to technological advancement and efficiency, marginal cost is approaching zero, thereby making goods and services virtually free after investment costs.

Given the loss of return on investment, capitalists are losing out to a new way of creating goods and services. People who were once consumers are becoming prosumers, using advanced tech at near zero marginal cost to produce their own goods and services and sharing them with each other for minimal cost or free. They are forming collaborative teams in the social commons to create projects that can scale up to handle large, complex projects. "The Collaborative Commons is already profoundly impacting economic life. Markets are beginning to give way to networks, ownership is becoming less important than access, and the traditional dream of rags to riches is being supplanted by a new dream of a sustainable quality of life" (Rifkin, 2017).

There will still obviously be significant expenditures needed for initial start-up infrastructure. That can be generated through City, State and Federal government investment paid by our taxes. It can also come from collaborative sources, like crowdfunding, for smaller projects.

Rifkin (2014) proposed that each phase of socioeconomic development entails coordination between communication and energy systems within the prevailing societal paradigm. Hence capitalism was appropriate at that particular juncture of development because the first two industrial revolutions required vast amounts of capital to build its infrastructure. It also required



vertical integration of huge organizational structures with top-down hierarchical control. This paradigm provided a general increase in the standard of living for all. But the capitalist structure has reached the point where its disasters outweigh its dignities. And its own impetus for ever-increasing productivity at lower marginal costs has made itself near obsolete.

Capitalism was the age of privacy and individual autonomy, whereas with the collaborative commons there is much more sharing and openness. Throughout much of history humanity did things much more communally and publicly, like eating, sleeping and even excreting waste. With capitalism we moved many of these functions indoors and into our own private rooms. This “went hand-in-hand with the enclosure and privatization of the commons” (Rifkin, 2014, 75).

The emerging collaborative commons needs a new, unifying narrative or worldview, heretofore having to navigate within the capitalist paradigm or regress to old notions of the commons. It found its theme in the ecological sciences, where the focus was not so much on individual species but how they interacted within environments. And most importantly, how all the environmental niches interacted with the biosphere as a whole.

Rifkin (2014) describes how this ecological emphasis manifests via the collaborative commons. We shift to renewable energies that can be installed on our individual homes or businesses. Such energy sources, while intermittent, can be stored in new battery technology or hydrogen fuel cells. Since we will be increasingly connected to the Internet of Things we can sell excess energy to the grid that someone can use on the other side of the globe. 3D printer technology empowers local businesses and governments to produce goods that don't require expensive and polluting long-range transportation. Education is conducted more on a collaborative basis where teachers facilitate students to participate and create innovations instead of just learning by rote, and often at lower tuition if not entirely free. Such sharing and exchange of energy, information and products is indeed conducive to a collective and collaborative commons.

This worldview of global consciousness is the democratization of everything. One of its early expressions was the free software and open source movements, both dedicated to making information accessible to all for minimal to no cost. It was based on the notion that everyone could share, change, and mix knowledge in a collaborative endeavor where no one person or company could claim ownership. All of which transpired in the global commons of the internet beyond blood ties, religious affiliations and national boundaries, thus enacting global consciousness.

Empathy within an ecological consciousness expresses as spiritual awe at our connection with everything. We transcend our individual selves in this embodied, embedded, enactive and extended union while still retaining our individuality. This opens the possibility for an individual developmental growth that also realizes the ecological connections and integrations within the various parts of our self: reason, emotions, feelings and sensations. At this stage our empathy can transcend the individual, the tribe, the religion or the nation and enact caring relationships with the entire ecosphere. We are indeed arriving at the beginning of our collective enlightenment (Berge, 2017).

This view is replacing the capitalist invisible hand, which was itself a holdover from a theological God in control to rational, self-interested individuals in control. Lacking a systems

view it replaced God with the invisible force of a marginally less superstitious autonomous Market. Backed by ecological and other scientific advances, it is now being replaced with the visible systems view of the global eco-social commons and redefining our place within it.

Note that the invisible hand of the market is still metaphysical in that it must posit some autonomous agency that operates on its own if we but focus on our self-interest, i.e. the market will take care of itself. Moving into systems science and ecological consciousness thus naturalizes this process, making previously autonomous agencies like Gods or markets 'visible' and understandable, and reconnecting us with ourselves, our peers and our environments, but in a postmetaphysical framework. This also applies to the sort of instrumental rationality inherent to 'enclosure' of disciplines of study rather than to interdisciplinary cross-sharing more indicative of Habermas' collaborative, communicative action. It is not by chance that Habermas (1994) calls this latter form of rationality postmetaphysical (Berge, 2014).

## Paradigm Shift

George Monbiot (2017) is right to assert that one's worldview narrative trumps all other considerations, like adherence to facts. Such stories organize how we see everything through their lenses. Monbiot notes that the two major narratives of our time are social democracy and neoliberalism. While having different means and goals they both have the same narrative structure:

Disorder afflicts the land, caused by powerful and nefarious forces working against the interests of humanity. The hero – who might be one person or a group of people – revolts against this disorder, fights the nefarious forces, overcomes them despite great odds and restores order.

This notion of a hero has to go; we the people collectively and collaboratively become the initiators and maintainers of the story, not some special class of enlightened ones. We work together to enlighten each other, and it is in that collaborative interaction where the enlightenment resides, not some special individual achievement.

He explains why we can't simply go back to the earlier story of social democracy to overcome the current story of neoliberalism. Among other reasons, the earlier story assumes continuous economic growth with the same consumer lifestyle, devastating to the environment and more fuel for climate chaos. So we must create a new story ASAP. This story must be based on our evolutionary capacity for mutual collaboration and aid. It's one that rejects the narrative told by neoliberalism of "extreme individualism and competition." Instead we share ownership and stewardship in community, respecting and honoring each other and the environment.

We will develop a new economics that treats both people and planet with respect. We will build it around a great, neglected economic sphere: the commons. Local resources will be owned and managed by communities, ensuring that wealth is widely shared. Using common riches to fund universal benefits will supplement state provision, granting everyone security and resilience.

Monbiot shows how this story has already been taking shape and having positive effects. Sanders' campaign was one huge water mark. It organized numerous small networks via the internet and got most of its spending money from a large number of small donors. Such tactics were used successfully by Corbin in the UK. The Indivisible Guide grew out of this learning process.

Jeremy Lent (2012) sees changing paradigm shifts in the dominant societal metaphor for nature. He begins by referencing Lakoff's work on metaphor, in that metaphor is how we use embodied experience to understand more abstract thought. Metaphor also indicates our underlying values. Hunter-gatherers saw nature as a giving parent. Agricultural society saw it as a divinity to propitiate. Monotheistic religion saw it as subject to man's dominion. The scientific age saw it as a machine, which gave us further dominion over it, to treat it like an object which we could exploit and from which we could extract whatever was necessary for human purposes.

There was then a transition to seeing nature as still property but within an ethos of stewardship, to considering our responsibilities for the consequences of our use. This metaphor though still entails our control of nature and our right to prioritize humanity's use thereof. This transitions to seeing nature as a valued ecosystem that humanity manages responsibly, but still retains a monetary valuation for environmental resources. The next metaphor sees nature as a geo-engineering project, using science and technology to solve climate change, but still assumes never-ending economic growth without any change in consumer lifestyle.

Systems science offers the most recent and best-to-date metaphor akin to the collaborative commons. It sees nature as a collection of self-organized dynamical systems in an ecological interaction with each other. And it is their interactions within the broader ecology that is the significant factor. The predominant metaphor is that nature is a fractally connected organism, each level connected with the next. This puts humanity in its place as just one dynamic system embedded in the larger ecosystem, not transcendent over it. Humanity realizes that as part of nature we must care for it like we care for ourselves. The paradigm shifts to the collaborative commons.

## The Developmental Argument

A point of clarification is in order before proceeding. No individual or group is *at* a level of development (Mascolo, 2015). We individually and collectively enact different levels in different contexts at different times. So when using developmental levels we must keep this in mind, particularly with entire socioeconomic structures. It's not like there is a pure capitalistic society; there are mixes of elements from earlier paradigms like feudalism as well as later developments like socialism involved. Again recall the above symbol on how holons intersect.

Another thing to keep in mind is Otto Laske's (2013) socio-historical account of developmental models. He questions the scientific or 'objective' facts claimed by developmentalists and sees them more as a product of their unconscious societal biases. One of those biases is that very blindness in accepting the modernist (formal) premises of a pure objectivity apart from more subjective biases, as if science or math could get outside of context and determine the final 'truth' of things. Such a blindness then doesn't even recognize the societal shifts necessary for personal transformation, instead assuming that it's all a personal quest and responsibility, the very values

inherent to the status quo, modernist and capitalist system that only accepts personal responsibility as legitimate via this formal and metaphysical logic. All we need do is get them to personally grow and send them back into the shark-pit of the capitalist workforce, as if they then have the personal power and will to overcome it.

Another example of that is the incessant obsession with classification, and the belief that those classes are rigidly structured with clear dividing lines: You're either in the classification or not. Laske doesn't see this as a representative of dialectical thinking but a continuation of formal logic. And this maintains the hierarchical status quo of business as usual, with the 'leaders' in charge as they should be. However once we 'enlighten' them with personal growth this will of course trickle down to the rest of us and make our lives better? Instead it reinforces the very formal and modernist notion of hierarchical business relationships in the first place and completely misses the actual next phase of societal development, the collaborative commons.

Given the above caveats, Wilber (2003) notes that social structures set up the latest and best paradigm and create laws to enforce them, in effect creating the best-to-date attractor as ideal and by which the society strives to attain despite its actual status. Even within that mix there is a dominant paradigm that serves as goal post. So let's take a look at some examples of developmental analyses which provide the hallmarks of the different levels of socioeconomic paradigms to date, with some speculation on where we might be going.

Rifkin (2014) looks at worldviews from feudalism to capitalism. He starts by noting that worldviews justify themselves as the ways things are, either by divine or natural order. The feudal Great Chain promised salvation by knowing one's place in the hierarchy and doing one's duty. In the transitional medieval market economy this shifted to one's hard labor, earnings and property as signs that one was favored by God, which shifted to a more secular notion of one's autonomy and worth as equivalent with one's property.

When the market economy transitioned into capitalism there arose much more vigorous defense of individualism tied with private property as inherent to human nature. Utilitarianism became the defining worldview justification. This led Herbert Spencer to twist Darwin's ideas into social Darwinism, a justification for 'survival of the fittest.' Darwin was aghast at such a torturous distortion of his work.

Nonetheless Spencer saw the way of things as follows: "...all structures in the universe develop from a simple, undifferentiated state, to an ever more complex and differentiated state, characterized by greater integration of the various parts" (Rifkin, 2014, p. 64). Therefore only the most complex and vertically integrated business should survive, as this was natural to evolutionary development. All of which leads to oligopoly with its hierarchical and centralized command and control. This remains the dominant and regressive Republican (and corporate Democratic) view today in the US.

Rifkin (2010b) proceeds to show the changes in society from past to present based on empathic development. In forager-hunter societies communication was limited to shouting distance within the local tribe. Empathy was extended to the tribe while those outside it were considered aliens. Writing emerged in agricultural civilizations which allowed our empathy to extend to religious

groups. With the industrial revolution and electrical communication our empathy is extended once again, this time to a larger organization called the nation-state. Now new technologies like the internet are providing a framework that allows us to communicate with the entire world, thereby extending our empathy to the entire biosphere. It is this last development that provides a foundation for a collective, planetary collaborative commons.

Now granted there are existing cultural memes already setting the stage. As noted above and below worldviews are co-instituted with stages of human development and their socioeconomic formulas. Some developmentalists suggest that modern egoic rationality is the first stage of equality for all and capitalism is most certainly not about that. I suggest that democratic business, like democratic politics, is indeed an example of this stage. And that capitalism is still a regressive holdover from the aristocratic feudal period. In other words, the politico-economic line in our culture is lagging behind other developments. Capitalists are still the privileged aristocrats that do not want equal opportunity but to maintain their privilege. So when governmental forms shifted from the old aristocracy to democracy with a vote for all they fought tooth and nail to subvert that process by refining quickly the art of rhetoric backed by the science of linguistics. And of course coupled with a heaping pile of bullshit to feed an already abused mass starving for promises of hope.

Some in the FB IPS anti-capitalism thread have also suggested that being anti-anything, let alone anti-capitalist, is not so-called second tier. Stein (2014) discusses Hegel's 'negate and preserve,' discussed above as the difference between 'transcend and include' and 'transcend and replace.' The latter is akin to Hegel in that basic structures are included, whereas transitional structures like worldviews and morals are replaced. So a valid critique of the capitalist worldview is necessary and warranted to negate and replace those elements within it thwarting further development. We discussed transitional structures in detail in the Ning IPS "ladder, climber, view" thread.

Elza Maalouf (2014), an associate of Don Beck who practices his Spiral Dynamics Integral (SDi), examines evolutionary democracy. She provides a rundown of appropriate political forms for different countries. Of note is that the US needs to expand into social democracy (green), while Germany and northern European countries are entering functional democracy (yellow). A characteristic of the latter is a "distributed intelligence model." Interestingly, Rifkin is working with Germany on his third industrial revolution plan, aka the Commons, which no doubt is a big factor in this move into yellow. Maalouf asserts that holonic democracy (turquoise) is a couple of centuries off, so not likely to be at all like conscious capitalism.

Bruce Gibb (2014), an organizational psychologist and SDi practitioner, reviews Rifkin (2014). His premise: "[Rifkin's] analysis proceeds from a yellow, Stage 7 (S:7) stance." He notes that while foundations are built upon and not eliminated, nonetheless a "more adequate theory **replaces** a less adequate one" (my emphasis). Also of note is the emphasis on how socioeconomic infrastructure is what drives our evolution: "[Rifkin] recognizes that life conditions – and in particular the sources of energy and the technology of communication – are the drivers of cultural evolution."

While Gibb admits near the end that biosphere consciousness is turquoise, he also said right before that statement that the collaborative commons is a horizontal extension of green consciousness into all sectors of society. He led up to that conclusion by noting that green's psychological consciousness extends empathy to larger associational ties to include like-minded

others. His own logic doesn't follow here, as the collaborative commons goes beyond associational, like-minded ties into biosphere consciousness, given its expansion of empathy to *all* people, beyond associational ties, as well as to the entire biosphere.

Also he doesn't provide a description of an SDi yellow cultural mode. His progression seems to indicate we can jump from associational communities (green) to the biosphere (turquoise) with no yellow in between? Granted he's following Rifkin's empathic levels here, which don't account for what Gibbs describes as yellow. But Gibbs doesn't account for a yellow cultural stage either.

Said Dawlabani (2014) discusses 2nd tier functional capitalism as arising in a yellow and turquoise value system in its incipient phases in parts of the US, northern Europe and Germany. It is distinguished by a distributed biological intelligence manifesting in economic systems. It requires all stakeholders to participate in its design. He notes that such an economics must be spearheaded by those displaying that value level and sees Senator Warren as an example of it. "The next system of governance sees right through the incompetence of the current political system and its complicity with lobbyists and corporate interest." I'd add Senator Sanders to that category. The article though does promote Whole Foods and conscious capitalism as yellow business examples, still maintaining the CEO with such values as the leader of a top-down organization that guides it. Per above that falls far short of the standards set by the collaborative commons and its peer to peer dynamic structure.

In Spiral Dynamic terms I'd put conscious capitalism in the orange exit/green enter phase. It still mixes and matches their elements. Yes, it's better than the kind of global capitalism he criticizes but it's not yellow by a long stretch. The emerging neo-Commons is the transition into yellow or so-called 2nd-tier socioeconomics. Dawlabani rightly characterizes the latter with distributed intelligence. I'd say Rifkin's economics is more green exit/yellow enter phase, whereas stable green economics would be more like the social democracies of northern Europe on the verge of yellow. Hence those countries are amenable to Rifkin's agenda. And conscious capitalists apparently are not.

Dawlabani (2016) updated his view by noting that the distributed intelligence of the next system follows no ideologies, including capitalism. That end of ideology is the "rise of the collaborative commons." It is open source, highly networked and depends on the wisdom of the crowd. It integrates the individualistic and communal value systems in an intelligent network. "It is more Allometric than it is Holocratic. Allometry is from the biological sciences and here's what it means: It preserves the high functionality of its different sectors, (the specialized organs in an organism) that create innovation, (specialized functions) while relying on the Network for fair and equitable distribution."

Dawlabani (2018) still sees Whole Foods' original intent as integral, but when its bottom line of profits fell the investors decided to change its business model, especially after Amazon bought it. "This real Orange threat forced Mackey to start thinking differently." Hence Mackey's "long-term prospects of continuing a culture of Conscious Capitalism at Amazon are highly unlikely." As I noted above, the dynamics inherent to capitalism tolerated his conscious approach only as long as he made them money. When competition drove down its profits and share price the forces of capitalism drove out the conscious aspect in favor of its own inherent values. As expected,

Mackey lost the bargain with the devil capitalism, as any such bargain inevitably will as long as it remains wed to it.

Arnsperger (2007) makes the point that an integral economics must provide not only a critique of capitalism's material reductionism, endless growth orientation, and competitive markets, but a positive vision of how a more evolved economy should work to provide an environment for the development of its citizens along as many lines as possible. We might therefore take some clues of what he considered more evolved economic systems of the past, like Soviet Russia of the 60s or Cuba of the 70s. They had developed a more social and communal way of life that provided basic needs to all citizens like lodging and health care. He even suggested that we incorporate some of the great religions' moral-based tenets to “delineate paradigmatic ideals of economic organization and economic agency towards which conscious evolution might be geared in a liberation-oriented economy,” akin to comments above about setting our ideals as an attractor to strive for.

## Conclusion

There is ample evidence that the collaborative commons is not only emerging but already has a solid foothold in the transition away from capitalism.<sup>3</sup> It also seems to be growing organically via its peer to peer principles, changing the very ethos of what it means for a system to organize. It integrates hierarchy with heterarchy in a distributed, networked format that transcends capitalism's dominant hierarchical, top-down structure. This format is where organizational levels no longer evolve in a strictly linear fashion of an ever-increasing complexity of growth but via the evolution of a folded, meshed, ecological sustainability, akin to what I've come to call hier(an)archical synplexity.<sup>4</sup> Again, the symbol at the beginning is indicative of this meshwork.

Given the inherent and multiplicitous connections in the shared spaces between all of us, there can be no more spiritual quest than to provide the material, socioeconomic basis needed to allow for humanity's progressive development. Without such a basis most of us will remain trapped in a

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<sup>3</sup> Also note Dawlabani (2018) where the collaborative commons is the end of first tier centralized ideologies.

<sup>4</sup> Hier(an)archy is a term coined by Caputo (2006). It basically means not anarchy but hierarchy that leaves open the possibility of something other and outside itself, a transcendental condition in excess of our conceptions. “There is always an ontological excess, withdrawn from immediate relation” (Alderman, forthcoming). The origin of the suffix *plex*: Latin *-plex*, *-plic-* (akin to *plicare* to fold, bend, *plectere* to plait, braid; see *-fold*) + *-s* nominative singular ending.

The origin of the prefix *syn*: Greek, combining form representing *syn* with, together with. Hence synplexity is folded together with.

Hier(an)archical synplexity is thus an image-schematic, pre-positional folding together of the actual with the transcendental.

Note that a transcendental condition is not transcendent “but rather what must be presupposed about the nature of the world in order for our scientific practices to be possible. As Deleuze reminds us, the transcendental is not to be confused with the transcendent. The transcendent refers to that which is above or beyond something else. For example, God, if it exists, is perhaps transcendent to the world. The transcendental, by contrast, refers to that which is a condition for some other practice, form of cognition, or activity” (Bryant, 2011, p. 42).

See the Bibliography for the IPS thread on “States, Stages, the Wilber-Combs Lattice and the Fold” for a taste of how this worldview supports the collaborative commons.

struggle for survival. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to work toward creating and sustaining a collaborative commons that allows for and promotes those possibilities of our future growth.

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