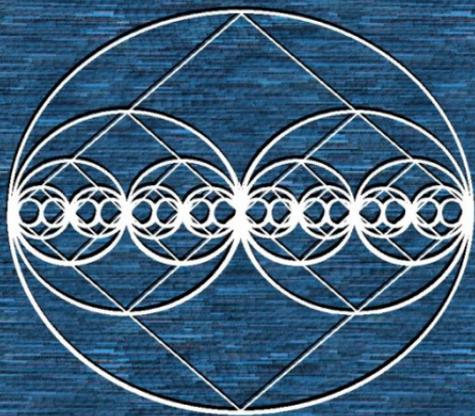


**The
Evolution
of Consent**
Collected Essays



William Schnack

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**By
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THIS IS DEDICATED TO MY FATHER, KIRK SCHNACK, who has been the best father I could have ever asked to win in a lottery such as life, and who has taught me to live by the principle that people should be free to do what they want to as long as it is not hurting anyone else in the process.

Prologue

WE LIVE IN A UNIVERSE of which we can only begin to gain understanding, but beginning, in itself, is quite a feat! The fact that the human brain has any capacity for reasoning at all, in a Universe of increasing disorder, is nothing short of miraculous. We, humans, are complex creatures, capable of many things that have (so far as we can tell) never before been imagined in the history of entirety. There is a reason that ancient mystics derived anthropomorphic conclusions from their studies of the Cosmos: We're nearly as complex as it is.

If anything is capable of ascribing purpose or meaning on our scale of existence, we seem the most suited to do so. Unlike the purely material world, content to sit about, moving only when directed from the outside, life is eager to stir around, restless to express its internal will. This assigns us an important role, should we decide to take it. We may be here to awaken the Universe from its hibernation, to release its will. Our purpose is perhaps opposite in many ways to that of the mythical demiurge of the Gnostics, demigod, and facilitator of material being.

This is a sentiment which, perhaps, will be ridiculed as outdated, outmoded, or defunct; but we must ask ourselves why this is so, and whose interest the derailing of spirituality in the popular outlook serves. If it is true that spirit is synonymous with will, who gains by its conclusion?

Who else is to gain from the absence of will in another being but his or her owner? If the whole world of beast and fowl, and plant and fish— which humankind the ages over has drawn from for its benefit— were to cease in their will to live, to drop and die after losing desire to continue, *Homosapien* would surely fall with them. Lacking their ownership, humanity depends on their autonomy, but for those unlucky enough to be drawn forth, dominated, and with the temperament to withstand the cruelties of servitude—the ox, the horse, the ass, for instance—, the captor benefits by relinquishing— indeed, breaking— their spirit.

One can certainly influence, lead, and even direct another without taking ownership, but one must do so through appeal, or otherwise convincing the other party of the necessity of taking such action in an honest fashion. It is only when convincing is facilitated

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by threat, or direct application, of force, or by means of trickery, that one can be said to truly own another being. After all, we only own that over which we maintain control.

This little book of essays isn't partitioned, but it perhaps has two inseparable aspects: one which is more metaphysical, in which I focus on topics of a more spiritual nature, like cosmology, theology, ontology, and epistemology; and the other more physical, in which I consider themes of a slightly more material nature, such as sociology and political economy. As I hope to make clearer throughout the book, in essays such as "Class Antagonism and its Metaphysical Implications," these two aspects, though admittedly different, are not disconnected. Rather, they are quite interrelated.

The Evolution of Consent is dedicated to exploring the condition, capacity, and development of meaning, purpose, and freedom in the human context. Informed by many traditions, the philosophical focus is multidisciplinary, synthetic, and holistic, and includes discussion on topics as diverse as God and the Universe, the limitations of empirical knowledge, the abolition of government, free market socialism, and more. I will decidedly espouse and promote a doctrine of spiritual pantheism and political panarchism, more specifically dualist pantheism and geo-mutualist panarchism. This book will clarify the meaning and intentions of these worldviews, and unite them and solidify their co-dependence. They are treated both separately and together.

I begin this collection of essays with works such as "The Journey of Realization" and "The Duality of Perspective," which are pantheistic in flavor, describing God to the best of my limited ability, before entering discussions about the role of consciousness in evolution, in "A Mystical Look at Evolution" and "God, Bees, and the Choices We Make." I then connect metaphysics to revolutionary politics in "Class Antagonism and its Metaphysical Implications," "Two Incentives for Cooperation," "The Role of Metaphysics in Socio-Political Revolution," and "Spiraling into Our Future." I bring psychology into the picture in "Gnosis, Psychosis, and the Society of the Demiurge" and "Information and the Dissolution of Authority." After this, I open up the discussion on anarchy, with "Government and its 'Solution'," "Anarchy, *de Facto* and *de Jure*," "Why Anarchy is Not Possible Today (But is Tomorrow)," and "Welfare, Minus the State," before giving

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introductions to mutualism in “The Dialectical Thought of Mutualism” and “The Mutualist Cost-Principle.” I then enter into the specifics of mutualist banking in “Mutual Credit: Its Function and its Purpose,” “Credit, Collateral, and Spot-Pricing,” and “The Proper Rate of Money,” before opening the door for discussing the resolution of mutualism and Georgism, in “Interest & Premium: A Geo-Mutualist Synthesis” and “On Mutualism & Interest on Capital,” concluding the thought with a geo-mutualist resolution of the non-aggression principle in “Cost, Aggression, and Access to the Land.” I touch on mutualist gradualism and agora-syndicalism in “Revolutionary Incrementalism and Rebellions of Scale,” before concluding by putting my neck out in “Mutualist Sex Economics,” wherein I analyze the effects of capitalism on straight, cissexual, relationships.

Several of the essays were originally written as lectures, and have since been edited for publication. Others have been written simply for the sake of them being read. They were all posted on my blog at one point. This could very well be the first of many collections of essays, so entitled. I do hope you enjoy them.

I’ve had a good deal of fun putting this together, but it has also taken a lot of effort. Had I the remaining time and energy, I would have garnished this book with a glossary of terms, but after the work involved thus far, this can be looked forward to in subsequent editions.

My work would be impossible if not for key influences. I feel I have made all necessary attempts to distinguish ideas that are my own from concepts which have been inspired in me by others, but in the case I have not been clear, allow to me to state briefly in one place my strongest influences and how they have been of influence to me. Some of these are not mentioned in my text, although they have certainly contributed to my thought processes, while others mentioned in the text will not be found here, as their work has been used more for illustration than for recognition of their influence on me.

My pantheistic beliefs have been inspired somewhat intuitively, but the readings of Baruch Spinoza, Georg Hegel, and Pierre de Chardin have been most inspirational to my theology, and have given me words to express it more fluidly. Baruch Spinoza has done this especially through his expression of “the thing in itself,”

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and by dividing between substance, attributes, and modes; while de Chardin— along with the yet mentioned Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini— has influenced my use of spirit-matter attribute-dualism, and has better allowed me to understand Omega Point cosmology.ⁱ Georg Hegel, of course, has inspired my dialectical approach, though I don't make hard attempts to go by his method or claim to be a scholar on Hegel. Paul Harrison has certainly detailed some of the finer points of ancient and contemporary pantheism, and for that I am grateful.

My views on mysticism have been inspired by ancient philosophies such as Atenism, Zoroastrianism, Hermeticism, neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and Taoism, as well as neopagan and shamanist beliefs. Manly P. Hall, Santos Bonacci, and Ken Wilber are the more recent thinkers I enjoy in this area. I have found Michael Schneider to be an inspirational numerologist.

My ontological views are probably most influenced by the work of the Italian statistician and psychologist, Ulisse Di Corpo, and his partner, Antonella Vannini, and their *Syntropy Journal*. These two and their colleagues provide some of the strongest arguments I am aware of for retrocausality and syntropy in general. Aristotle's virtue ethics also play a role in my ontology. Amit Goswami's understanding of quantum physics and Rupert Sheldrake's models of morphogenetics have also played a role, as well as Ken Wilber, and more classical astrophysicists such as Stephen Hawking and Freeman Dyson.

My epistemology is, again, largely Spinozan, *eudaemonist*, and syntropian, but is also influenced by what I've read of Hegel, William James, Henri Bergson, the quantum physicist, Amit Goswami, Ken Wilber, and classical empiricism, like David Hume, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill, as well as by rationalist thinking in general.

My ethics are, first and foremost, influenced by the cost-principle as first formulated by Josiah Warren, or the proper rate of increase as discussed by Pierre Proudhon, which have both been expanded upon by others, some of whom have solidified my

ⁱ I mention Frank Tipler once, but I've read more about him than by him. I aim to correct this.

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interest in the cost-principle, and who are listed with my mutualist influences. I am also influenced by hedonism, classical utilitarianism, the egoism of Max Stirner, and, to a lesser degree, Ayn Rand's objectivism, as well as Peter Kropotkin and Gustav Landauer's communalism, by Rudolf Rocker's anarchosyndicalism, and by the Wobblies in general. I am also influenced by the non-aggression principle, as generally expressed in libertarian literature. I do like John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism. I've read more about Kant than by the man himself, but I am sympathetic to the sentiment I am getting from the categorical imperative as well. Michael Tomasello has played a large role in my ethical views, by demonstrating the innate will to cooperate which exists within humanity.

My socio-anthropological understanding is greatly influenced by the social evolutionary models of Gerhard Lenski and Patrick Nolan, as well as by Jared Diamond. My psychological understanding is influenced by concepts by Freud and Jung, and my social psychology is influenced by the frustration-aggression theory as presented by Nicholas Pastore and John Dollard, and the loci of control models of J.B. Rotter and of H.A. Dengerink and his associates, which were first introduced to me by Worchel and Cooper. No doubt, Michael Tomasello, and articles by others related to evolutionary psychology, also play a role, as does the work of Robin Dunbar.

My environmental outlook is influenced by folks like Ralph Borsodi, E.F. Schumacher, Aldo Leopold, and Bill Mollison, but is complimented by the work of futurists such as Ray Kurzweil, and by spiritual teachings. They are not fully expounded upon in these texts, but I do touch on the idea of sustainability once or twice.

My outlook on anarchism has been gained by reading such classical mutualists and individualist anarchists as Pierre Proudhon, Josiah Warren, Herbert Spencer, Lysander Spooner, Stephen Pearl Andrews, William Greene, Ezra Heywood, Benjamin Tucker, Francis Dashwood Tandy, Dyer Lum, Silvio Gesell, Clarence Lee Swartz, and others less known. It would be nothing short of truth to say that I have great respect for the contemporary mutualists, Kevin Carson and Race Matthews, for Larry Gambone, and also for the historian, Shawn Wilbur, and furthermore for many of the

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contributors to The Center for a Stateless Society, such as Gary Chartier and Roderick T. Long. Panarchy, which I consider to be mature anarchism, or the “Anarchy *de Jure*” in one of my articles, was made of interest to me by way of John Zube’s website, so entitled. It is without a doubt that Thomas H. Greco, Jr. has shown a bright light on my understanding of mutual credit, and Bruce L. Benson is my preferred scholar of market-oriented law.

My outlook on Georgism is largely influenced by the work on the Henry George Institute website, as well as by George directly. Fred Foldvary opened my eyes to the possibility of geo-anarchism, and I have also found articles by Dan Sullivan to be helpful to my understanding of libertarian Georgism.

My outlook on feminism is primarily and generally inspired by individualist feminism, such as that of Moses Harman, Ezra Heywood, Wendy McElroy; by anarcha-feminism of many leanings, such as that of Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre, the *Mujeres Libres* of revolutionary Spain, and many others; and by post-feminism and equity feminism, such as the work of Christina Hoff Sommers. Susan Walsh inspired me to look into sex economics from a post-feminist perspective, and Tracey Cox wrote an article I cite which opened my eyes to the masculinization of society.

I am but a vessel, and, although I may interpret the information I synthesize, I am not capable of supplying all of the knowledge in this book. The value of my work should not be found in pure originality, but in my originality of synthesis and interpretation. As demonstrated above, “I stand on the shoulders of giants.”

I’d like to specifically thank Jo Paul González-Torralva, Dan von Bose, and Scott Kern for feedback on some of the essays; and my sister, Tracy, for being the first to read the book in its entirety. Thanks to all of my friends and family for the positive encouragement, and to all who have ever attended a workshop or a meeting, have attended any of my public lectures, read my blog, poured my coffee, or supported me in any other fashion. One love.

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The Journey of Realization: The Metaphysics of Dualist Pantheism

This was originally composed for a speech given to the People's Arcane School on November 4, 2012 in Fort Worth, Texas.

INTRODUCTION

DUALIST PANTHEISM is a family of thought which views God as the Universe, and which believes God to be expressed through a duality of elements often found to be at odds with one another. In this essay, we will solidify what is meant by dualist pantheism, before comparing it to other varieties of pantheism, and taking a deeper look into its system of duality. This system will be used to describe a number of tensions within our Universe, as well as to provide a solution to them. This will not only be a general introduction to dualist pantheism, but will approach it as a specific ontological and epistemological system. We will conclude with the practical applications of dualist pantheism.

WHAT IS DUALIST PANTHEISM?

PANTHEISM is an unconventional position regarding the nature of God: Believers see God and the Universe (past, present, and future, all at once) as one and the same thing. God is believed to be the interconnected whole, the totality of things.

The word *pantheism* comes from the Greek *pan* and *theos*, *pan* meaning *all* and *theos* meaning *God*. *Pantheism* means *all is God*. It's important to note that the "all" in question is not "all" as in every individual unit in themselves, but *The All* as in *the entirety of existence taken as an undivided whole*. J. Allanson Picton, purveyor of pantheism, says,

In this view, the man is the unity of
all organs and faculties. But it does not in the

least follow that any of the organs or faculties, or even a selection of them, is the man.

If I apply this analogy to an explanation of the above definition of Pantheism as the theory that there is nothing but God, it must not be supposed that I regard the parallelism as perfect. In fact, one purpose of the following exposition will be to show why and where all such analogies fail. For Pantheism does not regard man, or any organism, as a true unity. In the view of Pantheism the only real unity is God. But without any inconsistency I may avail myself of common impressions to correct a common mis-impression. Thus, those who hold that the reasonable soul and flesh is one man—one altogether—but at the same time deny that the toe or the finger, or the stomach or the heart, is the man, are bound in consistency to recognise that if Pantheism affirms God to be All in All, it does not follow that Pantheism must hold a man, or a tree, or a tiger to be God.¹

Dualist pantheism, the subject here spoken of, is the position that, though there is only one God (who is synonymous with the Universe), within this one God is also a duality, a polarity, which is expressed generally as order and disorder, or as spirit and matter. Paul Harrison notes that,

Because they have the basic pantheist belief in the unity of all things, dualist pantheists often believe that some form of spirit may be present in animals and plants, and in rudimentary form, even in rocks.²

He notes further,

Many dualist pantheists also believe that the Universe may have some kind of conscious purpose or direction. This is usually seen as the progress evolution towards more and more complex and intelligent forms which are increasingly linked to one another through communication.³

As in most monotheistic notions, in dualist pantheism God retains the traits of omniscience (perfect knowledge), omnipotence (unlimited power), omnipresence (present everywhere), and omnibenevolence (perfect goodness). Baruch Spinoza, himself, Dutch philosopher and popularizer of pantheism during the wake of the Enlightenment (which he was largely responsible for), tells us in the first part of his *Ethics*, “Concerning God,” that God is a perfect, all-encompassing, infinite, necessary, and free cause for existence.⁴ He says in the following section that God is an immutable thinking thing.⁵

When a dualist pantheist speaks of their beliefs, they are attributing these traits of absolute goodness, infinite existence, unlimited power, etc. to the entirety of existence, of which we are all already a part, seeing everything that happens (including our actions) as an expression of God’s will.ⁱ Though God is attributed to Nature, or the Universe, the immanent and genderless being is seen as being no less powerful than the common, purely transcendent God of the West today, and is understood as having an eternal and necessary existence.

God, for the pantheist, is not restricted to future transcendence alone, but exists in the moment, within all of present existence, as well. Complete *understanding* of God, or *unity* with God, however, is something we must wait for, as we must first have unity amongst ourselves. ⁱⁱ In this way, God, or at least our understanding of God, retains a level of transcendence.

ⁱ The *hows* and *whys* are coming later in the text.

ⁱⁱ One may ask, “If God is everything, aren’t we already united with God?” This is absolutely so in one respect, but

Dualistic pantheism may be found in many religious and spiritual views, including ancient and modern mystical beliefs.

Zoroastrianism, for instance, is a pantheistic view which pits the good and true deity, Ahura Mazda, who is represented as Being and Mindfulness, against the bad and deceitful Angra Mainyu, whom is associated with Nonbeing and Destructiveness. This belief is pantheistic in that Angra Mainyu represents Nonbeing, and so Being is all that really exists.

This is similar in some ways to Gnosticism, another form of dualistic pantheism, which shuns the material world of the demiurge, in favor of the spiritual world of God. Manly P. Hall suggests, in his lecture, “Hermeticism, Gnosticism, and Neoplatonism,” that Gnosticism was influenced by the thought of Atenism—initiated by the Egyptian Pharaoh, Akhenaten—, as well as the thought of Plato and Neo-Platonists, such as Plotinus.⁶ It was certainly also influenced by Zoroastrianism. Gnosticism was a mystical theology of emanationism, where everything poured from a single Source, and gnosis was the recognition of the illusion of the material world, and awakening to the spiritual, inciting a return to The Source.

Dualistic forms of pantheism are prominent in ancient Greek, Persian, and Egyptian philosophies— Hermeticism, for instance, is a form of dualistic pantheism—, and are also expressed in the Ancient Chinese *Tao te Ching*, and in some forms of Hinduism. In the middle ages, dualistic forms of pantheism were expressed by Sufis, such as Ibn al’ Arabi, and by Giordano Bruno, who, in *De immenso*, saw a “coincidence of contraries,” wherein

the unity I am speaking of is the unity of the components of God (us, and the rest of the world) with each other, or the unity of God with itself. That is, when we unite together, God unites with itself. This can be understood as a form of contraction. As the work of Ulisse Di Corpo (to be discussed later on) suggests, this contraction produces feelings of love in us. In this way, human satisfaction is found in unity with the divine.

everything divides in order to become self-aware, before uniting again. Groups like the Free Spirit also expressed pantheistic views.

The Enlightenment brought about a number of influential pantheists, but especially worth noting is Baruch de Spinoza, who inspired a number of pantheists after him, including Kant, Hegel, and Goethe. It was John Tolland who would coin the theological moniker, *pantheism*. Others who have had noteworthy pantheistic views, getting a little closer to the present, in no particular order, include Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, William James, Walt Whitman, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Carl Jung, Albert Einstein, and many more.

THE TAXONOMY OF PANTHEISM

THE TAXONOMY of pantheism is important to understanding the ontological and epistemological approach taken throughout the rest of this essay. I have found Paul Harrison's work to be a helpful tool in beginning to understand the various forms of pantheism. According to the second edition of *Elements of Pantheism*, by Paul Harrison, pantheism takes one of three forms, organized by ontology: idealist, physicalist, and dualist. Harrison says,

Dualistic Pantheism believes that spirit and matter are two completely different substances [attributes, if using Spinozan terminology], and that the soul is to some extent separate from the body and can survive the body's death.

Monistic Pantheism holds that there is only one fundamental substance. Monism comes in two varieties.

Physicalist monism believes that the basic substance is matter/energy, and that mind is a property of matter.

For idealist monism, the one basic substance is mind or consciousness, and

matter is simply the product of mind, or even a delusion of mind.⁷

As Harrison demonstrates, monism is the belief that there is a single substance that ultimately comprises the Universe, but within monist pantheism are two main tendencies, which include *physicalism* and *idealism*. Physicalist monism is the view that all that exists is the *material* substance that we are surrounded by and made of. Idealist monism is the belief that all that exists is *spirit* or *consciousness*, and that existence itself is but a thought.

Dualist pantheism, the subject of this writing, is the belief that both the physical and the ideal exist, but there is only one underlying substance, God. Spinoza says, “Besides God no substance can be granted or conceived.”⁸ Dualist pantheists, like Spinoza, believe that the physical and ideal, or *extension* and *thought*, as he calls them, exist as *attributes* of this substance, rather than being separate substances themselves.ⁱⁱⁱ Within physicalist and idealist pantheism, attributes and substances match, but within dualist pantheism, substance expresses two attributes.^{iv}

Dualist pantheism is not a negation of a monad, but, quite the contrary, seeks to unify the two main views of substance into one, God, and describe them separately as attributes of that substance, rather than as substances themselves. The dualism of this pantheism is simply ceding to the truths found in each,

ⁱⁱⁱ Pantheism is *necessarily* a form of *substance-monism* (but not always *attribute-monism*), so when referencing monist and dualist forms of pantheism, I am referencing *attribute-dualism* and *-monism*, not *substance-varieties* (attributes being *expressions* of an underlying substance rather than the substance itself).

^{iv} A true duality of substance, mixed with pantheism, is *panentheism* (the belief that the Universe is *in* God, and is a part of God, but isn't God in its entirety), and rather not pantheism at all.

idealism and physicalism. *Neutral monism* is another term that may be used for attribute dualism, as well as *dialectical monism*, or even the paradoxical “*dualist-monism*.”^v

Each form of pantheism, idealist, physicalist, and dualist, has its associated strengths and weaknesses:

The strengths of idealist monism are in its purity, openness to free will, imagination, and its perfectionism. Being subjectivist, it explains consciousness quite well. Its weaknesses are its restrictions by the material world: Though a situation may be ideal, it is not necessarily how things play out in reality. Though the ideas are beautiful, they are hard to actualize.

Physicalism has its strengths in its certainty, realism, tried and true methods, and scientific and objectivistic empiricism. It is practical. It is limited by its inability to explain potential, progress, consciousness, ethics, and the natural human desire for meaning and purpose, which idealists are better able to explain. It is slow to innovate.

Dualist pantheism finds its strengths in uniting the two opposing views and conceding knowledge to both sides. It is a syncretic philosophy, seeing value in both positions. Dualist pantheists admit their inability to empirically prove their idealism, and rely on a certain amount of rationalism to do so. This weakness is accepted by dualists as part of a reality that is more complicated than we are. There must be an amount of admitted difficulty when subscribing to a view such as dualism or idealism, because the spiritual cannot be seen, only felt and conceptualized.

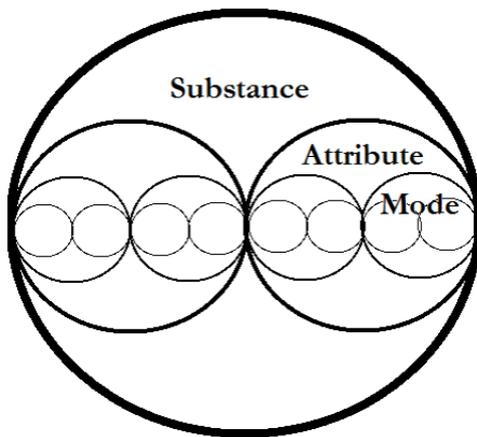
SUBSTANCE, ATTRIBUTES, AND MODES

SPINOZA TELLS US, in his *Ethics*, that God is the single substance from which everything, thought and extended, is fashioned. The attributes of God are simply expressions of this substance. He says, “extension and thought are either attributes of God or accidents of the attributes of God.”⁹

^v We will take a deeper look at the distinction between substance, attributes, and modes in the next section.

As substance has attributes, the attributes have modes. Spinoza says, “Individual things are nothing but modifications of the attributes of God, or modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a fixed and definite manner.”¹⁰ As attribute is to substance, mode is to attribute (and also itself, as the modes can have modes). Multiplicity is a modal existence, and from the two attributes a great number of modes are derived. Width, being a modal expression of physical extension, is rooted in the material attribute, while the feeling, or *qualia*, of love is an expression of temporal illusion, being rooted in the spiritual or mental attribute.

There are only two attributes of which we can consciously conclude in favor of their existence (though Spinoza suggests there may be an infinite number of attributes which we are unaware of). These are typically labeled *extension* and *thought*, after Spinoza, but are also referenced by some as *real* and *ideal*, *matter* and *spirit*, *body* and *mind*, *space* and *time*, etc.



For purposes of this writing, I will not be sticking in any hard way to Spinoza’s method. Although I find Spinoza to be quite inspirational and useful, I find him either to be unclear in particular areas, or outright disagreeable (mostly, I like him). While I will be making use of his system of substance, attributes, and modes, I will use these categories differently. This is particularly so because I

disagree (to an extent)^{vi} that “Body cannot determine the mind to think, neither can mind determine body to motion or rest,”¹¹ while I also hold it to be true that, “a circle existing in nature, and the idea of a circle existing, which is also in God, are one and the same thing displayed through different attributes.”¹²

Part of our disagreement may be that Spinoza associates time with extension, while I believe mind, his other attribute, to be a matter of temporality. I believe this to be so because, taking from Pierre de Chardin, I associate spirit, or mind, with goals or finalities. I also believe thought to correlate with extension—but not present extension, future extension (or spirit)—, by way of multiverse theory.^{vii} In this way, substance monism is maintained: Thought and extension are ultimately expressions of an underlying unity (what you conceptualize is a physical future). Thought is extension, and vice versa (when understood as substance). Any difference is perceptible. Spinoza wouldn’t necessarily disagree here, only with my categorization of mind with time.

I will be including in the attribute of extension only that motion which can be described in terms of pure physics, while in

^{vi} Objectively, I believe Spinoza to be correct, as I follow a rather Parmenidean eternalism. However, from such an objectivist view, I don’t believe these attributes to be separate from one another at all, but are instead separated in subjectivity. On the other hand, I still think it is important and useful to discuss interaction between the attributes, as (even if not objectively true) this informs our subjective human experience (the scope of which we are limited to acting within), which is not so monistic.

^{vii} According to some varieties of the multiverse theory, one can conceive of a hypothetical circle, having no present extension, because its extension exists in time somewhere in the multiverse.

the attribute of thought I will include the desire derived by cognizance and will alone.

I will be associating extension with space, and thought with time. For this reason, I may reference the *attribute of thought* as the *attribute of temporality*, as I believe the two to be inseparable. I will approach the two attributes in a variety of ways, all loosely relating to the same general idea, its associated perspectives, and approaches:

1	2
Real	Ideal
Physical	Mental
Material	Spiritual
Extension	Temporality
Objective	Subjective
Entropy	Syntropy
Determinism	Free will
Past	Future
Empirical	Rational

What is commonly referred to as being *real* is the physical/material world of extension and objectivity, which is determined by the entropy of the past, and can be studied empirically. What is commonly referred to as being *ideal* is the mental/spiritual world of temporality and subjectivity, which is created syntropically by acts of free will, being pulled toward the future by way of rational constructs, which act as attractors. The ideal is free, and, being mentally oriented, it is subjective.

The rest of this essay will demonstrate the inner workings of dualist pantheism. The terms above will be used rather synonymously at times, so it is important to keep these in mind, to know their meaning, and to understand their relationship.

You're about to take a leap down the rabbit hole. Here we go.

SPIRIT AND MATTER

THE BEST way to understand the attributes of God is to have a look at causality and ontology. To do this, we'll start by distinguishing between body and spirit, as they relate to time and space, before continuing with a simplified model of their universal progression. As we continue, it will be important to remember that the ideal and the spiritual are correlated, as are the real and material, or physical. As I will demonstrate, they are also related by way of time and space.

What moves in time, but not space?^{viii} Think of the physicalist/materialist world. Let's use a rock for this example. It is true that a rock, at the atomic and the planetary levels, is not necessarily stagnant, but think about it relative to the ground, on our scale: a rock just sits there. It moves along through time with us, as it does not disappear one moment and appear the next, but it does not actively make choices about its position in space like we do.

^{viii} Because time and space are a continuum, and are not truly separate, we are not talking about their actual division, but a division of experiences of them. Though a purely physical perspective may entail stagnation in space, like in the rock example coming up soon (but much more pure), it is more active in time than we are, perhaps able to manipulate it as we do physical objects. Afterall, it is mass that bends space-time. Matter manipulates time through gravity, but spirit manipulates matter the way our goals animate our bodies to act. Though a purely spiritual perspective may be unable to freely manipulate or traverse time, it is likely more aware of space than we are, being able to manipulate matter to a much further extent. This will be further expanded upon in upcoming sections.

What is the opposite, then? What moves in space, but not in time? How about spirit?^{ix} Dualists attribute spirit with the ideal part of existence. There is not much that can be used to demonstrate the spiritual outside of thought-experiment, since the spiritual is inherently that of which we are unaware, appealing not to study by physicalist-based empiricism, but to idealist-based rationalism. Close your eyes for a brief moment and think about being able to move through space, but not time. It would be as if

^{ix} I associate spirit with time (because archetypes are temporal), and matter with extension. Clearly, as the spatial dimensions run through one another (left-right runs through up-down or back-forth, and vice versa), time and space do the same. What we perceive as space moving through itself (that is, dense space, or matter, “moving through” uncompressed space, or energy), then, is actually the shifting of spirit through space (ideas change spatial location), and matter through time (mass changes time), with spirit acting as a future track of destiny for matter to fall into and become, through an effort of will (ideas lead to action, they become “materialized” or “actualized”).

Any self-directed physical change in motion is best understood as ideas changing quickly *throughout space*, and material motion slowed *in time* to fulfill them. This is so because of the law of relativity, which states that an increase in physical velocity leads to the slowing of time, and the speeding of time leads to a decrease in physical velocity. The process of goal-fulfillment includes the placing of ideas in alternate realities (changing quickly in space), and the physical motion (slowing time) needed to “realize” those realities.

everything that existed was stagnant, and you could move freely through that reality, perhaps even affecting it.

What then, cannot move in space or in time? Absence. That is all that can “exist.” We will call this *death*. It is simply unthinkable, as we cannot consciously consider what it is like to be unconscious or nonexistent. Absence isn’t. Nowhere can it be found or felt.

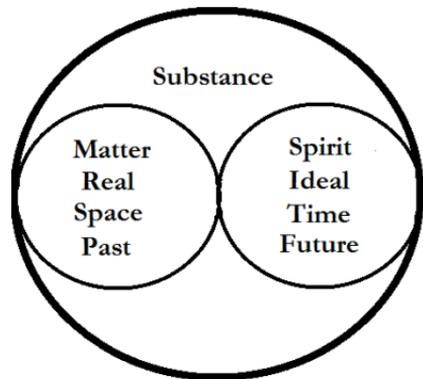
What of its opposite, moving both through space and through time? This is something special. We call it *life*. Life is the strongest argument for idealism, as it poses many problems for modern science. Life possesses both body and spirit, and for this reason it is the medium between the astrophane (the realm of spiritual existence, idealism) and the material world, showing us a glimpse into the spiritual world. Life doesn’t just sit there, like a rock, though it has a material body. Like spirit, living beings can make choices of where to be, but, unlike spirit, they can’t move completely freely through space, but are restricted by their bodies.

	Moves in Time	Doesn’t
Moves in Space	Life	Spiritual
Doesn’t	Physical	Death

The physical body is free to move in time, but the spiritual body is needed to traverse space. That is, we say that matter moves in time (like a rock does), and that spirit moves in space (like ideas do). Moving purely in time (like a rock) is stagnation in space, while purely physical motion (like thought) is stagnation in time. Life traverses both time and space to some degree.

It’s important to note that, while physical bodies (space) govern time (the future), spiritual bodies (time) govern space (the past). Physical bodies (space) are connected to past causation and spiritual bodies (time) are connected to future causation. Physicalism— and all of the philosophies based in it (empiricism, realism, materialism, etc.)—, is rooted in the past, from which we are physically expanding, while idealism (rationalism, idealism, spiritualism) can be found in the future, toward which our ideas flow.

Spirit is simply matter which exists in the future, and matter is simply spirit which is oriented in the past. By determining space (matter), time, which is spirit, acts from the future. That is, spirit is of the future, and matter is of the past. Matter determines time, and spirit determines matter. The change of space is an act of

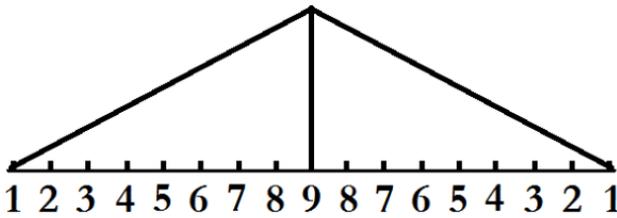


the future, and the change of time is an act of the past. We experience time (thought) determining space (body) as the future (destiny) manipulating matter (action), and we experience space (body) determining time (thought) as the past (action) manipulating time's transition (fate). The chain of events, together, is substance. This will become more clear as we continue forward. The following models will help with this.

Now that the groundwork between time, space, matter, and spirit is set, we may apply these concepts and take a deeper look at the process by which they interact. This will entail looking at the nature of space and time.

CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE

ACCORDING TO MANY VERSIONS of sacred geometry, everything can be reduced to, and comes from, the number one. As Michael Schneider points out, if you multiply 11111111 by 11111111 you get the number 12345678987654321,¹³ all of the numerals in the Hindu-Arabic system of numbers (before the invention of the numeral 0). One multiplied by itself is always a palindrome: $11 \times 11 = 121$, $11 \times 1111 = 12221$ (if you're using big numbers, you have to use larger base-sets, as in 123456789abcdefgh, g being equal to 16. In this case eleven ones times eleven ones would give us the number 123456789aba987654321). We'll start here with our figurative model of causality.



If we look closely, two processes are made apparent. There is the divergence from one, as the digits climb from one to nine, and the convergence from nine as they return to one. These coincide quite nicely with the syntropian philosophy, a view that suggests the Universe “bounces” in repeated contractions and expansions. Entropy is the expansion, and syntropy is the contraction.

The view of syntropy, going by various names, has long been expressed in spiritual traditions, but has more recently been expressed by the Italian mathematician, Luigi Fantappiè, and has been supported by folks like Albert Szent-Györgyi, discoverer of vitamin C, and by Buckminster Fuller. It has most recently been clarified by statistician and psychologist, Ulisse Di Corpo, and his partner, Antonella Vannini, and their associates (to whom I am very grateful),¹⁴ among many others. Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini suggest in an abstract that,

When the dual solution of the energy/momentum/mass equation of Einstein’s special relativity is interpreted a cosmological representation of the universe governed by a diverging and a converging force and vibrating between peaks of expansion and concentration is obtained. During the diverging phase time flows forward, whereas during the converging phase time flows backward. In this representation causality and retrocausality constantly interact.

¹⁵

Using an oscillating model of reality, the Universe works similarly to the model presented above, with both divergent and

convergent tendencies. For sake of our discussion, the one simply represents the singularity which existed before the Big Bang, and the nine metaphorically represents the end of the Universe (in this model, we are using a simple base-nine, because we are being very general, not specific).^x Entropy is the expansive and chaotic motion from one, singularity, to nine, plurality, and syntropy is the contractive and ordered motion from nine, plurality, to one, singularity. These positions of singularity and plurality, and their associated processes of entropy and syntropy, the dual attributes of God, can be related to polarized ideologies, such as idealist/spiritualist or realist/physicalist beliefs.

According to modern physicalist belief, the Universe is expanding from the Big Bang, being subject to entropy (divergent tendency) alone, and is destined for its ultimate destruction in a thermodynamic heat death. According to many spiritual beliefs, however, there is a final justice and happiness that exists for us in the future, such as Heaven, Jannah, Tian, etc. This represents syntropic phenomena (convergent tendencies), or, more properly, noumena (an event which is known without use of input from the five senses). Realism follows the entropy of past materialism, while idealism follows the syntropic spirit, the grand ideas, of the future. The past is the birthing ground of physicalism (matter), as it has been actualized, quantized, and in turn may be studied by way of empiricism. The future is the source of idealism (spirit), as it can only be hypothesized, rationalized.^{xi} Our goals, ideals, are based in

^x From this point forward, I will be referencing the 1-9 model, so keep in mind the meanings of one and nine (singularity, plurality), and remember also that the numbers between (2-8) represent only degrees of entropy or syntropy between the extremes, without a specific meaning here attached.

^{xi} The terms, *past* and *future*, are ambiguous to say the least. Throughout this essay, I use these terms in one of two ways, meaning either aggregated or individualized. The aggregate future includes the collection of

future outcomes, while current reality resulted from actions in the past. As time reaches its end, however, it is put into reverse, making positions such as past and future relative,^{xii} and leading to a “B-model” of time. Our deep future is our past, but only after a change of direction.

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

WE DO NOT just go from one to nine (singularity to plurality), but from one to nine and then back to one (singularity to plurality to singularity). Though a being in the material side (1-9) may be at position four, they must get to nine (plurality) before they get back to one (singularity). Moving forward, from past to future, from matter to spirit and back, has a relative interpretation this way. Everything has spirit and matter, but to varying extents, depending on its orientation. For instance, a converging-two (2 on the right of 9) would be seen as having very

everything. A thing’s individual future may be oriented one way, while the aggregate future is heading another, for instance. An example of this would be that the Universe is, at present, mostly determined by entropy, but life is largely determined by syntropy. The aggregate future, then, is one of entropy, but the individual future, in the example case of life, is one of syntropy (it is, however, surrounded by individuals which are mostly determined by entropy, which leads to the aggregated future of entropy).

^{xiii} To better understand, say that a person has a time machine that allows them to go back into the past. They set the device and start to travel. At this point their future is their past.

little body but much spirit,^{xiii} and a diverging-two (2 on the left of 9) would have much body and little spirit, though they are in the same position. It's the direction, charge, or orientation, that changes. Indeed, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin makes this clear, when he says,

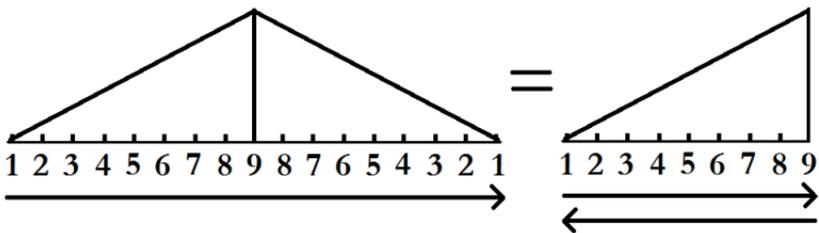
In the system of creative union, moreover, it becomes impossible to continue crudely to contrast Spirit and matter. For those who have understood the law of 'spiritualisation by union,' there are no longer two compartments in the Universe, the spiritual and the physical: there are only two directions along one and the same road (the direction of pernicious pluralisation, and that of beneficial unification). Every being in the world stands somewhere on the slope that rises up from the shadows towards the light. In front of it, lies the effort to master and simplify its own nature; behind, the abandonment of effort in the physical and moral disintegration of its powers. If it goes forward, it meets the good: everything is Spirit for it. If it falls back, it meets nothing on its road but evil and matter. Thus an infinite number of steps are spaced out between absolute evil (that is, nothingness, the total plurality to which everything reverts) and the Supreme Good (that is, the centre of universal convergence towards which everything tends); these steps are, no doubt, separated by a number of 'landings' (like that, for example, which marks off animal from man, or man from angel), but they nevertheless represent one general movement, and to each step there

^{xiii} By having little body and much spirit I don't assume different substances, but different attributes.

corresponds a particular distribution of good and evil, of Spirit and matter. What is evil, material, for me, is good, spiritual, for another advancing by my side. And the climber ahead of me on the mountain would be corrupted if he used what gives me unity.

Matter and Spirit are not opposed as two separate things, as two natures, but as two directions of evolution within the world.¹⁶

By its very nature, syntropy, the tendency of spirit, commanding space, is time running *backward* (relative to entropy), rather than forward. If we look at our model in a less linear way, then, recognizing that a convergence toward one from nine is a product of retro-causality (meaning time moving backward), we must recognize that a converging-two is the same position as a diverging two, with the only difference being the orientation of their motion, a difference of intention. If we want to maintain a linear approach to motion, we inevitably must show the past as the deep future (9-1, first image), but we can show a less linear approach with a “bounce back” (9-1, second image):



Body (1-9) tries to move toward nine, trying to free itself to be expressed as spirit (9-1) rather than matter. After reaching nine its ability to manipulate time as it progresses lessens, in favor of manipulating space. Spirit moves toward one, in order to give itself body, thereby lessening its ability to manipulate space as it progresses, in favor of manipulating time. Though both tendencies exist in the same being, each wants to express itself in differing

directions. The body wants to move through time, and the spirit through space.^{xiv}

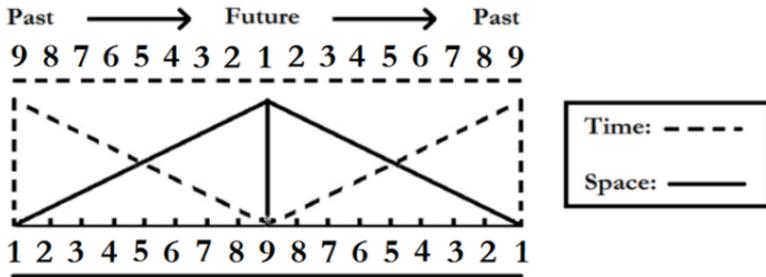
Both the physical and spiritual ultimately move toward contraction, but according to their own frames of reference. The purely physical, with its ability to manipulate time, without regard to space, collapses time, and so space seems to expand. The purely spiritual, manipulating space instead, collapses it, and time seems to expand. If time expands, space contracts. If space expands, time contracts.^{xv} They are interconnected.^{xvi} If we measure the forward

^{xiv} Body is here associated with space and spirit with time.

^{xv} We experience the contraction of time as the slowing of time.

^{xvi} Think a moment about a two-dimensional plane with an x and y axis. This plane is composed of two sets of directions: forward and backward, side to side. If one moves in one direction any other direction is compromised. If we move toward the right, we move away from the left. That is, if we start at the center, and move away from it, toward the right, the left is compromised. In other words, any positive degree toward the right creates a negative degree on the left. So, we can say that we are one positive degree right, or one negative degree left. That's just using one dimension. Now, using both dimensions, if we assume we are traveling forward, and we move to the right as we move forward, this does not only compromise the left, but also the forward motion. That is, if you start turning right, you lessen your motion forward (assuming your speed is constant). It is in this way that dimensions interact with one another. Now, apply this principle to space and time, and you will begin to understand the relativity of space-time: The faster we move in

motion of time relative to physical entropy, syntropy moves in reverse. That is, if we say that the future approaches as things expand, break down, and decay, we can say that as entropy increases time moves forward. Likewise, we can reverse this, and say that as entropy decreases (or syntropy increases) time moves backward.



Remember, the first postulate of Einstein’s special relativity states that the laws of physics are consistent for all who move uniformly. If spirit is moving backward in time,^{xvii} and material forward, this difference in direction results in completely different laws of physics for the two attributes. Relativity also describes the slowing of time with the acceleration of space. This will result in a flipping in the direction of time. Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini suggest that,

During the diverging phase the forward flow of time decelerates and halts when the expansion of the universe halts.

space, the slower we move in time. It’s the same give-and-take relationship.

^{xvii} I say that spirit both moves “backward in time,” while also saying it is governed by “future finality.” How is this so? Its attractors are projected backward in time from the future and are picked up on by matter, resulting in the goal-making behavior of living organisms. This is quite different from the behavior of nonliving things.

Time then starts flowing backward at an always increasing rate when the universe converges into the Big Crunch.¹⁷

One may notice that, if we are still in a physically expanding Universe (1-9), our perspective must be at a location diverging into nine, but this does not mean that, because the physical Universe has not reached the spiritually-oriented perspective which exists post-nine yet, we are unable to be spiritual beings, but rather, that we are the specific exception to the general rule, and that we are dictated more heavily by laws of matter than laws of spirit.^{xviii} Though we are composed of matter, we do not experience life as that matter alone (we identify with the experience of the conscious mind more than that of our unconscious body). We are not completely determined by the past, and locality, but we exalt free will (actually retro-causality), which is rooted in the future and is non-locally effected. More on this later.

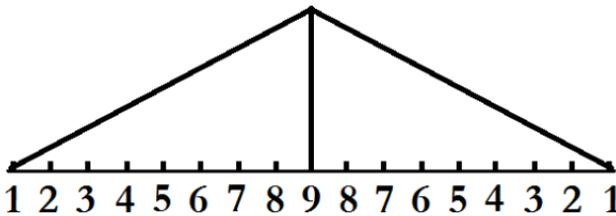
POSITION AND PROCESS

THE POINT, one, and line, nine, are particular positions of consciousness and potential. The point, one, is the full potential for a materially existing Universe. From one, singularity, arose the Big Bang that gave us all of the other numbers. One is the common denominator of all things.

^{xviii} The Universe is currently entropic, and we are the exception to the rule. If understood that we are in the aggregate past (1-9) we can understand that our individual future runs contrary to the relative future of most things around us. So, relative to entropy, we are going backward, even if we are moving forward relative to ourselves, and as part of the aggregate future (9-1). One could say we are a part of the aggregate future, (9-1) but we are surrounded by the aggregate past. (1-9)

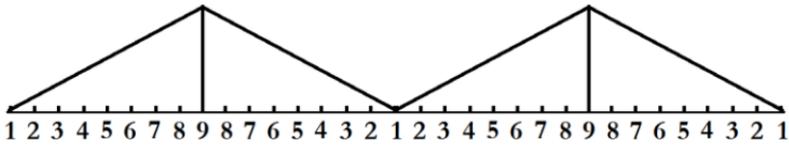
The line, nine, is the full potential for a primarily spiritual Universe. Nine represents the full expansion of the Universe and its creative awakening, ultimately bringing us the Big Crunch, as we ascend back to one.

We are currently living in a world of determinism, on the side primarily of physicalism (1-9). Because life expresses syntropy, we are the exception to the rule. Though we are progressing toward the ideal/spiritual, the Universe is not yet past nine, which is the point where spirit starts gaining aggregate power and syntropy takes over. It is here, at full expansion, that life finds its true potential, and can begin to more fully exercise its will toward its goals.



If we look at a converging-one (9-1) as the ultimate ideal we can conceptualize this returning to the source, one, as the final goal, the top of the ladder. If we look at a diverging one (1-9) as the ultimate materialism from which we are straying we can view it as the bottom of the ladder. The degrees of these, which exist between, are the other numbers. It is important to move toward one's ideals at the top of the ladder, but most of the time it is impossible to just jump to the top. That's why we need ladders to begin with! Instead, we must climb the steps as they come.

The numbers between one and nine represent only degrees of intensity. Nine, when it is approached from one, is noticed as a universal realization of spiritual potential. One, when it is approached from nine, is the final result of spiritual flow, and the full realization of material potential from which a new existence may begin (this can be seen as another position of consciousness, perhaps as superconsciousness, or even ultimate access to the collective unconscious, as all is known at that point). Everything in-between is merely the journey.



It is from the point of one that the rules for the Universe are established, and from there it just follows instruction. One represents the culmination of freedom on the spiritual side (9-1), but it also represents absolute determinism on the side of materialism (1-9). On the converging side of one (9-1) the rules are being established, and on the side of divergence (1-9) the rules are being played out. On the diverging side of nine (1-9), the old rules are being broken, and on the converging side (9-1), new rules are being created. Freedom and determinism are one and the same, but viewed from different angles.

Life is animated, able to make decisions, and capable of expressing traits of free will. As one (singularity) is diverged from, and nine (plurality) becomes stronger, free will spreads. Though we express degrees of free will it is not the standard in our Universe. Free will is only going to start to outgrow determinism at the point of nine. Determinism will still exist at nine, and free will can only become absolute at the point of one, which then begins a new system of determinism. One and nine both represent extremes. One represents the extreme ability of potentials, free will and determinism, both being of equal strength, but on different sides. Nine, on the other hand, represents the extreme of both's limits, where free will and determinism are mutually weak. We are currently experiencing consciousness of our physical existence, but are developing toward spiritual consciousness.

WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS?

OUR CONSCIOUSNESS can be seen as will, desire, need, those things which are somehow connected to motivation and valuation. As Ulisse Di Corpo and others suggest, consciousness is one of our means to evade entropy and to satisfy our material vital needs. Larger organisms rely greatly on their

consciousness to exist. Without this consciousness they could not seek out their material needs: nutrients, shelter, and sex. They would die. The earlier forms of life-systems don't rely as much on the consciousness of their physical existence; a plant soaks its nutrients up from its immediate surroundings (the dirt and sun rays), for instance, and doesn't have to search out food. As life develops, so too does its will.

Our subjective consciousness comes to be as the Universe approaches nine because ours is a reaction to entropy, separation. This can be seen in the fact that our consciousness represents lack, subjectivity, desire, rather than objectivity and fulfillment. We can only be conscious in the manner we are (having subject and object) while there is something to be conscious of, so our consciousness relies on subjective (separate) physical experience. We act because we need or want certain outcomes which we do not already enjoy. It is from our subjective experience that our consciousness develops, because subjective experience is necessarily an experience of lack, and the lack creates desire, of which we then become increasingly aware until it is satisfied. This satisfaction which motivates us is found in the future. Thus, our consciousness is always suffering, as human consciousness is the experience of not having, and always wanting more. It is pulled by the future possibility of satisfaction, of which we may only partially acquire before death. This seems like a frightening idea at first, but the struggle of life is actually a very important and necessary part of the Universe, as it is the mechanism by which it evades complete entropy (death) and preserves itself from stopping at nine. It is only after nine, back toward one—the ideal and spiritual world—, that the Universe can begin to lose its pain and subjectivity and find true objective happiness, but it must first come to The Great Realization of its own potential. In the abstract to “The Evolutionary Role of Suffering,” Ulisse Di Corpo says,

The needs model developed with the introduction of Syntropy shows that anguish is an indicator of the need of love, while depression indicates that the identity conflict remains unsolved. Physical, psychological and emotional sufferings

indicate that one or more needs remain unsatisfied. Even if some forms of suffering might be dramatic, they force individuals and societies towards higher forms of awareness and evolution.¹⁸

Our conscious abilities as humans are so-far unable to break the second law of thermodynamics, leading to our death, and the death of those around us whom we must subsist off of. We are, however, getting better at forming good habits of self-preservation, and are growing in awareness regarding the need to reduce our needs (and so our toll on our surroundings), and thus in our attempts at reducing entropy for ourselves and our environment. This shows the growth of the potential in the Universe to break (or at least exhaust or make negligible) the second law, which fully exists at (and after) the point of nine, in the spiritual/ideal realm.

Though life is not capable of full spiritual expression in the moment, and each individual will ultimately reach their material fate, life is a culminating process of continual progression. Unlike the primarily material world, life collectively and exponentially changes toward complexity and goodness. Though each individual dies, each individual, when they successfully pass on their genes and memes, is part of the process of building higher consciousness. We would not have our level of thought if not for those who lived before us taking part in a long chain of evolutionary progress, biological and cultural, which has allowed for structures which hone in on spirit, such as protoplasm on the cellular level, and brains on our own. These structures, picking up on spirit as antennae pick up on waves, allow us to express our will, give us consciousness as we know it, a spirit which is trapped in the world of the body.

Our consciousness is currently and greatly restricted to the material world. It is a consciousness of subjectivity, of other, of lack, need. There is another form of consciousness that exists, however, of which we are not completely unaware. This consciousness is accessed while we are asleep, but we are restricted from full use of this consciousness because of our foundation in the physical realm. This consciousness is the consciousness of the spiritual or ideal, where ideas are unrestricted, but the body is

inoperable to realize them. Lucid dreaming, consciously making decisions in the dream state, especially allows the dreamer to experience a portion of this anti-reality, which may already exist in our collective unconscious.

Our physical consciousness exists from a growing state of lack, but consciousness of the spiritual exists in a state of growing abundance and potential. It is the consciousness of possibility. Instead of growing awareness of self and other, as we are used to having— self and other increasingly being separated— spiritual reality from nine to one is a growing awareness of the self in others— a collective self-awareness— and movement toward objective reality, where self and other are increasingly conflated. This develops from the growing awareness of the internal self as nine is approached, which is awareness of the spiritual. The spiritual realm begins, and gains true potential, when all of existence has become self-aware to a point that “self” becomes conflated to some degree with all of existence. This is the point I call *The Great Realization* or *The Great Awakening*. This happens at nine.

God, who can be seen as the highest order of consciousness, both physical and spiritual, is not restricted to any number on our model, but is all numbers on the model at once. In this way, seeing the Universe as consciousness is a little different from the idealist vision of a purely mental Universe, by ceding a degree of materialism (God has mind and body), but is also very similar to many of its popular notions of the creative potential of the Universe, and God is seen as very much conscious (in fact, ultimately so). God is alive.

PURPOSE AND FREEDOM OF WILL

THE EXPRESSION of free will is the purpose of our ever evolving consciousness. It is in freedom of will that we can find our reason for being as humans. Aristotle figured it out long ago when he said, “All men by nature desire to know,” to begin his *Metaphysics*. From this he deduced that people have a desire to know so that they can do good, and the reason people do good is so they can be happy. In choosing to do good, we are

influencing the resulting future (but this is only a subjective experience, not an objective fact, as substance is immutable).

Our free will is not as we think, it is time moving backwards,^{xix} from finality to the beginning (a process known as *retro-casuality*). When we accomplish our goals it is because we were drawn to them by future consequences, desires outside of our control. Actualizing those goals is constructing the Universe. Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini note, "According to the law of syntropy the aim of life is to bring out the design and project which is already present in the attractor."¹⁹

Freedom is simply the ability to do what we will, but what we will is teleologically determined by the ideal. Indeed, this is our purpose: to create and make the Universe a better place for its inhabitants, to seek the good, and make it happen.

The past is a world of materialism, corruption, and sadness which pushes us away and makes us want to succeed toward something better. That something better exists in the world of spirit, idealism, and the superior future that draws or pulls us toward it. This world only exists so far as we are willing to make it happen, it is the world of our goals and desires actualized. It cannot exist if we do not work to make it happen, but because the natural human instinct is to move toward the good, it is inevitable. It is understanding that drives the future, and, until an understanding is reached between all, we cannot share an objective reality of full potential (at 1), and so we will continue to have conflicts of subjective reality and battles of weak and limited potentials.

Out of our subjective experiences of pain and lack we can create a beautiful existence of total objective satisfaction, free from pain and need. Out of our involvement in subjectivity, this selfishness we experience, comes something beautiful that, if it can spread through the Universe, holds magnificent creative potential (at 9): Love. Love is the final attractor.

Consciousness desires, at least after a certain point of evolution in the hierarchy of needs, to be loved and to share love. It is thus that love is the bringing together of consciousness. To be truly selfish then, for higher orders of consciousness, is to love and

^{xix} Relative to entropy.

care about others, to extend one's own selfhood to them, that they too may be considered part of one's self.

A pantheist practices love, though the highest order of love, being unconditional, is not completely attainable to us yet, it is becoming, for to love is our purpose, not our condition. Love is certainly of our faculties, but so is hate (just not to the same degree, as hate is rooted in physicalist philosophies that we are leaving behind). Hate is not the future, however, but, instead, it is love. To love, to be happy, is our destiny as living beings.

BALANCE OF THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

“PRACTICING” OR “LIVING AS” a dualist pantheist entails balance. It a dialectical approach to existence and non-existence, one of becoming. A dualist pantheist opposes scientism, but not science, so long as it is non-dogmatic, nor does a dualist pantheist oppose religion, so long as it is understood that the spiritual can only be felt in metaphor, as it is outside of the reach of human physical knowledge (the spiritual is a world of the future, higher goals, yet to be actualized by multiple perspectives, and we only understand our own). Thus, dualist pantheists are in favor of freedom of, as well as freedom from, religion, and we support empirical science when it is accurate, knows its limits, and is open to acknowledging the value in other forms of thought.

The pantheist realizes their own divine and creative potential, given to them by the Universe, and they exercise it. The pantheist desires to live fully, and to freely express their will. The most important work of art in the world of the pantheist is one's life and the way one decides to continue, the actualization of ideas. We must never forget our potential. We are constructing the Universe, after all, and we are the pieces.

A dualist pantheist holds ideals that may oftentimes be unable to be accomplished in one lifetime, but understands that life is a cycle, and that our bodies will eventually rot and become the bodies of worms and bacteria, just as our bodies have been made from plant and, if we eat it, animal material. A dualist does not see blind meaninglessness in such a cycle as the food web, but

understands the energy pyramid, by which matter establishes higher forms of consciousness, as animals feed from the plants, and plants feed from our dying star. Though they understand their infinite potential, through the passing of genes and memes that will maintain phenotypes of the future, they understand also that fighting against the grain currently presented by the physical world, though in need of a good sanding, does not allow one to work along the grain to create a beautiful, smooth existence. Thus, the dualist keeps their ultimate ideals as transcendental works in progress, but focuses in the meantime on small victories that lead toward such spiritual freedom as ultimately desired. Consequently, dualists value and practice the actualization of ideals, perceivable progress, the meeting of real and ideal, pragmatism. In three words, the dualist practices *spiritual direct-action*, believing, as Tolstoy repeats from *The Gospel According to Luke*, that *The Kingdom of God is Within You*.

The ethics, practice, or way of living as a pantheist are all based on costs and benefits in the long- and short-term. For instance, we may all value love as ultimately good, meaning it has a long-term benefit we should always strive toward, but if someone comes at you with a gun, in a fit of rage, showing them affection may not always be the best way to solve the problem, due to the fact that we are in a material environment and we can't rely on purely spiritual interactions at all times. If you and I were hanging out as friends together, I may wish for us both to have a beverage of our individual choosing, at no cost to you, or I, or any person who would have to labor otherwise to present us such fine concoctions, but it is simply not yet possible for humanity to wish water into wine.

Life seeks the good and makes it happen to the best of its knowledge and ability. Ideals, though, are greatly restricted by the physical part of the world. Until the Universe (rocks included) reaches a point of full consciousness we will remain restricted from the full exercise of free will. The potential for true free will is in the Great Awakening of the Universe. The physical world is also restricted, but by the ideal world. To have no ideals at all is to be left behind, moved past, and made obsolete. The Universe

progresses, but at particular speeds. Virtue is found in keeping pace.

It is virtue that governs the consciousness of the dualist, for virtue is aligning the subjective good with the objective perfection. Virtue is never on one extreme or the other, but is found somewhere in the middle. Virtue is not found in murder, nor in suicide, but in living and letting live. It is not found in over-eating or under-eating, but in eating well. It is not found in acts of aggression or in acts of passive surrender, but in non-aggression and courage. One may think courage is the same as being foolhardy, but foolhardiness is not a virtue, it is a vice. Courage is instead found between the vices of foolhardiness and cowardice, according to Aristotle. Courage relies on feeling, but not to the degree of the foolhardy. Lao Tzu, on the other end of the world, reminds us in the *Tao te Ching* that “To realize that you do not understand is a virtue; Not to realize that you do not understand is a defect.” Thus, it is by ceding to our inabilities, while at the same time acknowledging our abilities, that we may affect the Universe and our lives positively.

The more physicalist or realist of philosophies (or even lack of philosophy) tend to be held by those who are more practical, sticking to tried and true methods. These physicalists are the folks that get things done. They may get things done in the old ways, which may be seen as detrimental to the idealist who may possibly hold better, but new, ideas. In absence of new ideas, however, the physicalist maintains an important position of keeping solutions from the past running until they can be replaced. The proposals of the idealist may be at conflict with the physicalist, however. Oftentimes, those who are too idealistic are also those who are seen as dreamers beyond their means. They are daydreamers who don't offer as much material benefit to the world through labor, though their spiritual contributions may be priceless. They are the dreamers of new systems. The most successful of approaches, though, are those that are properly balanced by the extremes, and ride a progressive equilibrium that shifts as society moves toward its ideal future. Someone who actualizes their ideals is an important person. Informed pragmatism is the approach of dualist pantheism.

In many Eastern traditions, often embraced by idealists, God is communicated with by way of meditation, as God is seen as internal. Listening to one's own consciousness/sub-consciousness/etc. is the way, then, to communicate with the inner God. In the West, however, the most common view of God is of a being that is external to our reality, and the tradition has been to communicate with this being by means of prayer. This is often held by the more physicalist of spiritual beliefs, such as the non-pantheist dualistic beliefs of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam that have been based in determinism (aside from such connection with God by means of prayer and divine intervention).

Dualist pantheists may find elements of both meditation and prayer to be helpful. Meditation and prayer have both been found to relieve stress. Praying to a larger being allows the mind to displace concerns so that they may be dealt with in a more rational, rather than emotional, manner. The most common of dualist pantheist practice entails elements of both meditation and prayer, but instead of communicating with the internal God by trying not to think or abandon need for resolve, as is done in many meditating traditions, one is contemplating whole-heartedly with the purpose of resolution, and instead of communicating with the external God by way of prayer, it is done by means of conversation with living beings around us and by affecting our physical environment. The pantheist God is both immanent, being within all things, and transcendent, being temporally outside of them, and the way to communicate with God is by means of contemplation and actualization. The act of thinking is a spiritual experience that is often taken for granted.

CONCLUSION

DUALIST PANTHEISM is a theological perspective that, while acknowledging the importance of understanding the duality of attributes, reconciles this duality into a single substance, called *God*, *Nature*, or the *Universe*.

The dualist associates time, thought, spirit, etc. with the syntropic tendencies demonstrated by biology and rational knowledge, while understanding space, extension, matter, etc. as

being related to the entropic phenomena analyzed in physics and empiricism.

Though the pantheist recognizes the underlying perfection of existence, they see the imperfect impulses (imperfect due to incompleteness) of humanity as modes of this perfection. That is, the dualist pantheist sees perfect reason and purpose in everything, including our own imperfect desires. In fact, the will of life, consciousness, is seen as the ultimate teleological savior of the physical Universe, without which it would surely perish to thermodynamic heat death.^{xx}

The orientation of life toward syntropy governs our rationality, our ethical systems, and our motivation. Though imperfect, life evolves toward the higher good. The dualist pantheist, recognizing this dynamic, and seeing their own desires as expressions of God's will, places great spiritual importance on the realization of goals, and on direct-action, the expression of our will. We try to match our own will with that of God's, with that of truth, as much as possible, but our failures demonstrate that, though (according to our necessitarian outlook) our experience of will is still an expression of God's, its realization is not always accessible.

Evolution is the process of learning, learning to succeed, of matching our will with that of God's, the will of absolute realization. We are not quite there, we are still unable to act in accord with the absolute truth, due to our ignorance, our subjectivity. Still, our goal, our purpose as humans, is to find, to move toward, this truth, to realize it, which can only be

^{xx} But this "evolution," one must remember, occurs within a block Universe. It is an illusion of subjectivity. Objectively, no motion exists, but it is our experience which shifts. This is similar to imagining a flash traveling within a fluorescent tube. The tube itself does not move. The difference is that we experience the flash from without, while nothing travels outside of the bounds of the Universe. It is boundless.

accomplished through a long evolutionary process of compassion and understanding of others. Ours is a Universe not filled with answers, but ripe with questions, questions which may only be answered when we put our heads together, when we concede the inner truths of one another. We must ultimately occupy a singularity, after all. Understanding this is part of The Journey of Realization.

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¹³ Michael S. Schneider, 3.

¹⁴ Please see Di Corpo and Vannini's *Syntropy Journal* for more information regarding syntropy and its associated effects: <http://www.syntropy.org/journal-english>

¹⁵ Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini²

¹⁶ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 51.

¹⁷ Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini²

¹⁸ Ulisse Di Corpo²

¹⁹ Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini²

The Duality of Perspective and the Spectrum of Reason

INTRODUCTION

THE WORLD seems to be a very divided place. Duality seems to be a common aspect of our Universe. We will be taking a look at the duality and spectrum inherent in our perspective. Beginning with the natural orientation of life, we will proceed into a discussion of epistemology, before touching on morality and theology.

DUALITY AND SPECTRUM

WHAT IS AT THE FOUNDATION of existence? Let's have a look. Have you ever heard someone say, "The world is not so black and white!"? Well, this may be so, but does the alternative, gray, exist on its own accord, or only by the mixture of white and black? So then, gray is a product of duality, is it not? It would seem so. According to modern science, though, there is no such thing as darkness, only the absence of light. Again, it appears we are relying on a single element, light, and yet, there still seems to be a duality: presence and absence. And still, visible light exists within the electromagnetic spectrum, of which it makes up a small portion, and any absence of visible light does not entail the absence of energy entirely. Energy, in one form or another, is everywhere.

Humanity will not come accross true opposites in its lifetime, but rather their spectrum of compromises. No one has ever seen absolute darkness (a black hole) or absolute light (a white hole), just as no one knows everything or nothing at all. Everyone has, instead, seen varying shades of gray, and maintains various grades of knowledge between the absolutes; the extremes can only be felt as tendencies. Do these tendencies demonstrate that the Universe is composed of two substances, or is everything ultimately composed of a single substance, that is somehow expressed as duality?

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True substance duality, the division of the basis of being into two parts, *which cannot ultimately be reconciled*, is an impossibility. There can be only one substanceⁱ (that is expressed in two differing attributes, and many modes of them), lest causality lose its philosophical and scientific importance. Yet, we perceive a duality within the single substance, contributing to our strife. We are unable to fully perceive the underlying unity beneath us, though many of us have felt it, rationalized it, or sensed it intuitively to a lesser degree.

The ultimate ends of our behavior is directed to a complete understanding of, and combination with, this underlying unity, but the steps that must be taken between are means to smaller ends, which are just tendencies toward the final goal. As explained in “The Journey of Realization,” moving from one point in time to the next is like climbing a ladder: If one could just jump to the top, one wouldn’t need the ladder! Somehow our perspective is limited, and this is tied to our nature and purpose as humans. We must take the proper steps to climb the ladder to satisfaction.

A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH

CAUSALITY IS VERY PERSISTENT, but even causality is found to have its duality. The goal-setting of consciousness, and the metabolism, growth, reproduction, and evolution of complexity in life set its causal relationships apart from the non-living. Rather than entropy alone, life is governed by syntropy, laws from the future, as well. Ulisse Di Corpo, among others, points this out quite reasonably.¹

Time and space are intertwined as the space-time continuum, sharing a relationship together. Time’s movement forward is generally seen as the playing out of the second law of thermodynamics, which states that as time moves forward

ⁱ By substance I mean the ultimate base of reality, the very smallest component; I don’t mean particles, atoms, molecules, etc. but the most basic “stuff” that makes these things from the smallest scale.

everything tends toward entropy (a general term in thermodynamics—the study of heat/energy—for loss, dissipation, chaos, erosion). That is, as time goes forward space expands, things fall apart, snap, get rusty, and not the other way around! Just the same, we can say that as things decay, break down, and corrode, time moves forward. Under these conditions it has been theorized that the entire Universe, and not just our own solar system upon the burning out of our sun, is destined to die a very cold, dark, death.

Entropy seems to govern the Universe, and yet, life seems to stand defiant against this law to some degree, as life, especially while young, is motion toward complexity and growth, and consciousness in general is attributed to effects-before-causes (but still tied together in relationship of causal unity, never a cause without effect or vice-versa). For life, especially while it is youthful, its relationship to thermodynamic time works differently: As time moves forward, new life grows, and life in general constructs complex organic compounds (otherwise impossible) in its cellular structures, multiplies, and avoids danger through conscious decision-making. As life grows in complexity and completeness, time moves forward. This process, the opposite of entropy, is called *syntropy* or sometimes *negentropy*.ⁱⁱ The results of entropic and syntropic forms of causation are objective and subjective perspectives. The subjective experience of consciousness is tied to duality and spectrum in time and space.

OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

OBJECTIVITY EXISTS when all possible perspectives are in accord with one another. That is, something is objective when it is agreed upon by all parties (with the capacity to understand). Something is said to be subjective, however, when it represents personal opinions, taste, feelings, and such. An objective

ⁱⁱ It's important to note that life is not purely syntropic, but only expresses degrees of syntropy. Life expresses both entropy and syntropy.

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statement would be “The ball is round,” as its roundness can be seen by anyone with eyes to see. A subjective statement would be “The ball is pretty,” as different people may agree or disagree. Our own experience is considered by others to be highly subjective, unless it is agreed with.

Subjectivity exists only in separation; a subject is considered to be outside of, but not encasing, the object. As experience, subjectivity is lack, separation, division. All things with a subjective consciousness—life—desire fulfillment, be it nourishment, sex, warmth, shade, or shelter, because they lack, and want to complete themselves. If not for feelings of lack, desire, yearning, and even sadness, one would not be compelled to self-preservation and completion. The force that responds to desire and induces an organism to lasting is its will, and all living beings have a degree of this will, as a characteristic of living organisms—subjective consciousness—is response to stimuli. Stimuli induces the will to respond at times, but the will itself responds as physical response in reverse, by creating goals rather than simply responding to inertia. Life is linked to the syntropic processes, and subjectivity is its mechanism.

True objectivity, absolute knowledge, is completion. Humanity is not capable of true objectivity between one another, but we can certainly share a degree of *inter-subjectivity* (commonly referred to as *objective*), which is defined as two or more individuals sharing a common subjective experience or goal. When one has gained what they feel to be objective knowledge about a thing, something inter-subjective, they feel a sense of completion, but there is ever more to know, and the drug wears thin. We can have a sense of contentment and completion for a moment, but it is always fleeting, as the purpose of humanity is not to purely thrive in the fulfillment of desires, but to search for such fulfillment. We gain it only temporarily. We hunger to retain it, but we shall not. Not in this lifetime. We will, however, set up the possibility for such a future to be experienced later on, by the very same energy that now makes up our bodies. Afterall, this has been done before our current consciousness, and is the reason we’re here to experience life as humans to begin with.

The ultimate duality in the Universe lies not between the processes—those of syntropy and entropy—, but between unity and separation, the resulting extremes of entropy and syntropy.

SINGULARITY AND PLURALITY

THE ABSOLUTES of subjectivity and objectivity are plurality and singularity. In plurality everything is subjective, as absolute plurality is absolute separation. In singularity everything is objective, as experience itself is shared by all; there is one consciousness. The entire present Universe expanded from such a point of singularity— where it had all been compacted into an abode of infinite density, being dimensionless and having only one possible perspective— into the three spacial dimensions, and the fourth dimension of time we know today (each having a duality), creating a plentitude of perspectives. It continues to expand exceedingly toward the plurality we will eventually face (not in this lifetime), and (as Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini suggest), after this point of extremity, syntropic contraction will begin to take the place of entropic expansion.²

Objectivity, contraction, singularity, is completed through a process of subjectivity, plurality, yearning for completion. Being on the human side of the equation makes it harder to describe what would motivate a singularity to expand, to put us where we are now, but many spiritual beliefs have imagined a sort of loneliness or boredom in this state for God, the supreme being (which I understand as the Universe), which would drive such a pandeist Universe's expansion toward plurality.

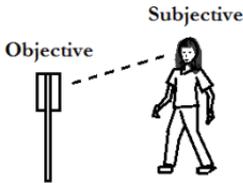
Objectivity and subjectivity are both absolutes and processes. Absolute objectivity resides in singularity, while absolute subjectivity comes to us in full expansionary plurality (2). Each of these positions begin their affiliated processes (3), going from objectivity to subjectivity to objectivity again, and vice versa. The process from singularity to plurality, from objectivity to subjectivity, is here associated with objectivity because it spawns from the objectivity of singularity (2), but also because it represents the perspective we hold of a material world outside of us, which is commonly referred to as *objective* (1) and *unconscious*, and which we

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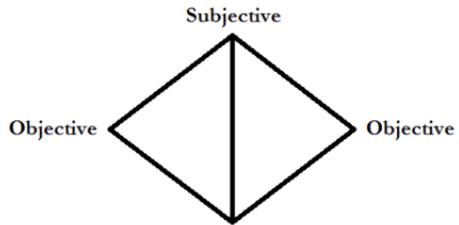
may generally mutually refer to. We are aware of the real-material past (objectivity, 3) to large degrees, but we are uncertain of the ideal-spiritual future (subjectivity, 3), encouraging us to label views about such as subjective. The process from plurality to singularity is considered to be a subjective one because it originates in the subjectivity of plurality (2), but also because it represents the thought processes within us, which cannot be shown to others (1).

Objectivity and Subjectivity

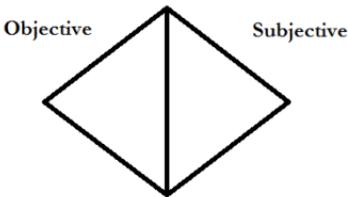
1. As reference points.



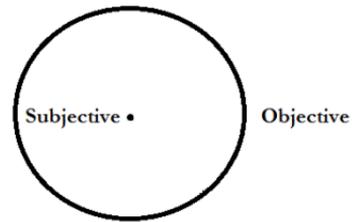
2. As positions in space-time.



3. As processes in space-time.



4. As absolutes of perspective.



In a way, *objectivity* offers contradictory definitions, depending on the viewpoint, be it external or internal. One's internal sensations are objective to themselves, but are held to be subjective to others when they disagree. In this way, objectivity is both a shared experience of external reality (we'll call this *soft objectivity*) (1), and direct but exclusive experience of one's own internal reality (we'll call this *hard objectivity*) (4). *Subjectivity* is only the indirect experience from the outside of another's direct and objective sensation from the inside; it is an illusion, perhaps better understood as relativity than subjectivity, as its nature is the

substitution of complete with partial knowledge. The great philosopher, Parmenides of Elea, tells us that

it is right that you should learn all things, both the persuasive, unshaken heart of Objective Truth, and the subjective beliefs of mortals, in which there is no true trust. But you shall learn these too: how, for the mortals passing through them, the things-that-seem must 'really exist', being, for them, all there is.³

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

THE ONLY REASON subjective perspectives are considered subjective in the first place is because there is a lack of direct experience on behalf of others; the true intentions and premises of knowledge can only fully be known to the holder from the inside. Others may have different values or preferences further leading to confusion. We cannot, with any certainty, tell the intentions or abilities of another person. Even after knowing them for a length of time, they can surprise us. Nor can we always agree with the reasoning of others, or see their feelings, intentions, goals, priorities, values, etc. Perspectives clash. Coupled with the fact that individuals use lack of information for their advantage in negative ways, by lying and tricking, there is a lack of trust.

If one hurts, and they shout that they are hurting, this is very much true, independent of observation by others, but it is the ability to lie or differ that keeps their view from being objective to others (remember *The Boy Who Cried Wolf?*). *Objective* and *subjective* perspectives may also be defined, then, as external and internal viewpoints (hard objectivity is internal, soft objectivity is external; hard subjectivity is non-existent, while soft subjectivity is external). When a perspective is external to one's self, it is felt to be subjective, and when the perspective is one's own, it is rather objective (if the perspective is of an external reality, it is softly objective, perhaps better understood as intersubjective; if the experience is one of an internal reality, it is one of hard objectivity). To others, we have a subjective perspective, and, to ourselves, we

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have an (imperfectly) objective experience. One will not generally accept a perspective with which they disagree as an objective one, but only those which are agreed upon. Objectivity is based on agreement of perspective, and (unless we are schizophrenic, perhaps) we agree with our own perspective.

	Objective	Subjective
Hard	Internal	Non-Existent
Soft	External	External

The integral psychologist, Ken Wilber, muses on the nature of subjective knowledge:

Thus, in a scientific text, you will find the limbic system, for example, described in detail—its components, its biochemistry, when and how it evolved, how it relates to other parts of the organism, and so on. And you will probably find it mentioned that the limbic system is the home of certain very fundamental *emotions*, certain basic types of sex and aggression and fear and desire, whether that limbic system appears in horses or humans or apes.

But of those emotions, of course, you will not find much description, because emotions pertain to the *interior experience* of the limbic system. These emotions and the awareness that goes with them are what the holon with a limbic system *experiences from within*, on the *inside*, in its *interior*. And *objective* scientific descriptions are not much interested in that interior consciousness, because that interior space cannot be accessed in an objective, empirical fashion. You can only *feel* these feelings from within. When you experience a sort of primal joy, for example, even if you are a brain physiologist, you do not

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say to yourself, Wow, what a limbic day. Rather, you describe these feelings in intimate, personal, emotional terms, *subjective* terms: I feel wonderful, it's great to be alive, or whatnot.⁴

Because of the nature of our internal feelings, Wilber points out, we can not study them using empirical science:

The brain physiologist can know every single thing about my brain—he can hook me up to an EEG machine, he can use PET scans, he can use radioactive tracers, he can map the physiology, determine the levels of neurotransmitters—he can know what every atom of my brain is doing, and he still won't know a single thought in my mind.

This is really extraordinary. And if he wants to know what is going on in my *mind*, there is only one way he can find out: *he must talk to me.*⁵

Wilber says,

You can point to the brain, or to a rock, or to a town, but you cannot simply point to envy, or pride, or consciousness, or value, or intention, or desire. Where is desire? Point to it. You can't really, not the way you can point to a rock, because it's largely an *interior* dimension, so it doesn't have *simple location.*⁶

There is only one kind of feeling which we can hold as objective fact—our own—, but, even then, what we feel can only be held as objective to ourselves. So long as there is anyone outside of us, we are considered to have a subjective perspective.

GOD

OUTSIDE OF UNIVERSAL SINGULARITY, there is one way to experience objectivity, though it is an incomplete one for humanity, and is only complete for God. This way is to know what is in oneself. One's thoughts, emotions, and sensations are in themselves very objective experiences for the holder, even if their representations or projections to others are false. The Universe, God, has an objective viewpoint, as none other may see The All as subject, or question The All's knowledge or intentions; everything happens within the framework of God. Just as our perspective, being within us, is objective to ourselves (even if that perspective is "I don't know"), and subjective to others, God's perspective is objective to entirety, and subjective to none, as it encases, and in fact is, The All. What God thinks, is. Quantum physicist and Hindu, Amit Goswami, asks, "Do we have a big head?" He says,

The idea is quite simple. Realism says that only the external object is real; only objects that we find outside of us are real because they are public and we can get consensus about them and make them the object of objective scientific scrutiny. Idealism says that we cannot directly see what is "outside" without the help of the intermediaries of our "inside" private representations. So these inside representations must be more real than the objects they represent. Or rather, they had better be real, because objects in their suchness will never know.

Easy solution, said Leibniz and Russell. Suppose we have a "big" head in addition to the "small" head that we normally experience, so that so-called outside objects are outside the small head but inside the big head. Then aren't both realism and idealism valid? Realism works because the objects are

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outside (the small head); idealism works because the objects are also inside (the big head).⁷

One cannot know a thing for sure, comprehend the objective nature of a thing, except for that which is in them, is them, which they feel, sensually or intuitively. One can know their concepts of external objects, but those concepts alone, they cannot know those objects themselves, intrinsically. One may have objective knowledge about their own thoughts, while others may not share in such knowledge. God, being the one purely objective existence, lacking subjectivity and being of a single all-knowing substance, is the only thing that can be described as perfect in knowledge or intention, because only God is fully understood by Self, and lacks others from outside, as God is that which is in itself.

Substance Objectively Understood	God/ Entirety/ Hard-Objectivity	
Substance Subjectively Understood	Real/Material/ Soft-Objectivity	Ideal/Spiritual/ Soft-Subjectivity
	Objective Attribute	Subjective Attribute

Only God's intentions perfectly match with outcomes. Perfection, true objectivity without dispute, God, is the synthesis of good and bad, and all that we subjectively see as good and bad exist upon this underlying objectivity.ⁱⁱⁱ

Yet, subjectivity is in our nature, and cannot be forsaken, as our purpose is tied to our desires and their outcomes. Because

ⁱⁱⁱ It's important to note that the hard-objectivity of God is not like the soft-objectivity of the material world, lacking spirit, but instead, perhaps unimaginable, is the synthesis of soft-subjectivity and soft-objectivity.

our purpose cannot be fought, as— in the oft-quoted words of Arthur Schopenhauer— “Man can do what he wants; but he cannot will what he wants,” it is best to learn to wholly express and use this will to its fullest (which means finding ways to make it work alongside the will of others), rather than trying to reject it, as our will is connected to God’s plan for us, and to do as God intends is to reap the rewards. What God intends, as shown by the characteristic needs of life, is for us to be compassionate, to love and to care about one another, to find compatibility, mutualism, to work toward unity, and to be happy.

Our own subjectivity, as it is seen by others, is but a fraction of objectivity, perhaps better regarded as *relativity*. While God is pure and completely objective, and composes a single substance, we are expressions of this substance, and expressions don’t share the perspective of objectivity of which only God has the privilege; we acknowledge duality, and our concepts fall in a spectrum within this duality. Upon completion, the final solution of subjectivity and creation of objectivity, all that exists will share in an objective experience and unity with God. This is objectivity fully realized, the final culmination of inter-subjectivity. Hegel says that,

The terminus is at that point where knowledge is no longer compelled to go beyond itself, where it finds its own self, and the notion corresponds to the object and the object to the notion. The progress towards this goal consequently is without a halt, and at no earlier stage is satisfaction to be found.⁸

And,

This being at home with self or coming to self of Spirit may be described as its complete and highest end: it is this alone that it desires and nothing else. Everything that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of time simply are the struggles for Spirit to know itself, to make itself objective to itself, to find itself, be

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for itself, and finally unite itself to itself; it is alienated and divided, but only so as to be able thus to find itself and return to itself. Only in this manner does Spirit attain its freedom for that is free which is not connected with or dependent on another.⁹

One can see now that our subjectivity, our pain and self-righteousness, and even our spiritual slavery, is due to separation of consciousness from God, for when one is united with God, sharing the perspective of the Universe, in singularity, one agrees with existence and shares God's objective understanding. Objectivity, though, can only occur for our currently subjective consciousness after a long evolutionary process of inter-subjectivity, completion, love, and compassion. It is in this motion toward objectivity that we find our purpose. This motion plays into our evolving ethics and systems of value. Ken Wilber tells us that,

The crucial point is that the *subjective* world is *situated* in an *intersubjective* space, a cultural space, and it is this intersubjective space that *allows* the subjective space to arise in the first place. Without this cultural background, my own individual thoughts would have no meaning at all.

[...]

In other words, the *subjective* space is inseparable from the *intersubjective* space, and this is one of the great discoveries of the postmodern, or post-Enlightenment movements.

So here [...] the validity claim is not so much *objective* propositional truth, and not so much *subjective* truthfulness, but *intersubjective fit*. This cultural background provides the *common context* against which my own thoughts and interpretations will have some sort of

meaning. And so the validity criteria here involves the “cultural fit” with this background.

[...]

The aim here is *mutual understanding*. Not that we necessarily agree with each other, but can we at least *understand* each other? Because if that can't happen, then we will never be able to exist in a common culture.¹⁰

Our subjectivity leads us to our notions of what is right and wrong, good and bad. The necessary struggle is in compromise and synthesis, compassion.

GOOD AND BAD

WHAT IS GOOD is what is desirable, and what is bad is what is undesirable. Good and bad are subjective measures, being based in individual preferences or priorities. These can be understood in both the short- and long-term. A long-term preference would oftentimes entail the forfeiture of short-term outcomes, as in investment, where one suffers in the short-term to gain in the longer one. Short-term preferences oftentimes entail the overriding, or ignorance, of longer-term preferences for immediate satisfaction, perhaps a strict form of hedonism. Longer-term values tend toward spiritualism, asceticism, while shorter-term values tend toward materialism. The degree the outcomes are satisfying is the degree to which they are understood as good, and to the degree they are troublesome is the degree to which they are seen as bad.

As human consciousness grows, the more long-term values, toward the greater good, are ascribed to. The longer-term human preferences, such as universal harmony, are based in greater goods.

An individual may have their own subjective opinions about what is good and bad, but what is best, strongest, the greater good, is to come to an agreement, to create a larger, more objective

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view. Remember, God's idea of good, the greatest good, if you will, is simply what happens, and when we can voluntarily come to agreement, and make things happen together, we can have a stronger impact on the future, we can better approximate God's objective will for ourselves. By materializing our ideals, especially through cooperation, we become part of a process larger than ourselves, and in doing so, we are living in accord with God's will, rather than trying to live in contradiction to it, and from this we experience happiness, *eudaimonia*.

Georg Hegel is often attributed to have said, "Genuine tragedies in the world are not conflicts between right and wrong. They are conflicts between two rights." Likewise, the corollaries; bad is not really bad, but good misunderstood by another good. It is a relative truth misunderstood. The greatest bad, then, is found through thorough incompleteness of perspective and misunderstanding, while the greatest good is found through a process of moving toward the completeness and understanding of objectivity. Hard-objectivity is approached through intersubjectivity. The process of communication, then, is crucial to a transition toward objectivity, as communication is our best known method of understanding one another and completing our own perspective with missing information, which may only be directly experienced by others. At such a point, one's views are no longer necessarily bad to the other, or at conflict, but may be found to complete or compliment them, in an effort to know and share the truth. In order for this to work, however, it should not be forced, but the individuals themselves must see benefit in cooperation and find truth through dialect (forced cooperation leads to rejection, not unity and understanding of complementarity).

God is the balance of good and bad, as God is perfection, and bads are merely goods that are misunderstood, as they complete a necessary and complimentary part of existence. Necessitarian, objective, eternalism is the underlying truth, but our subjectivity, lack of understanding, and mortality keep us from knowing this and feeling it fully. This is directly connected to our

purpose, as “God does not play dice,”¹¹ and all outcomes are the already written fates and destinies within this Universe.^{iv}

TOTALITY AND FRACTION

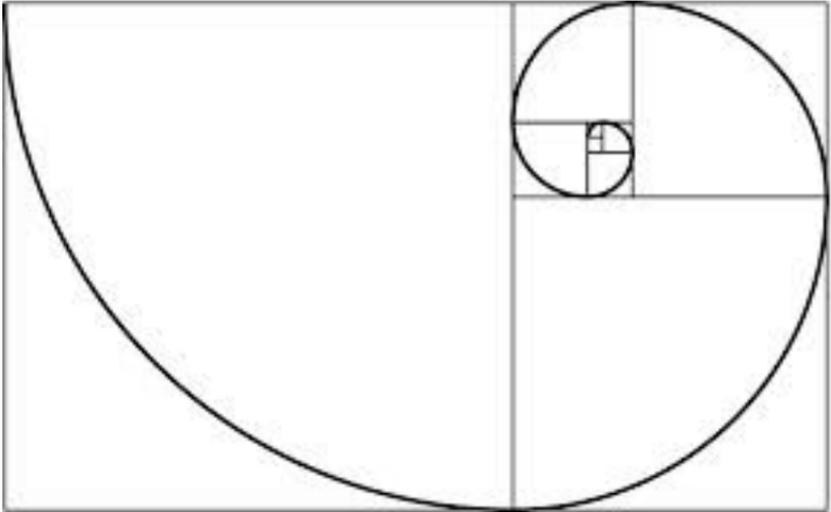
DUALITY CAN PERHAPS best be expressed in fractions and fractals. Take, for instance, good and bad. While the Universe is entirely perfect, its perfection becomes broken up into parts which lose sight of the perfection in the other parts. Everything is perfect in itself, but because all things other than God—The All—are within something larger, they lose their absolute perfection and objectivity for comparative value and subjectivity, resulting in relativity, good and bad, objective and subjective attributes, real and ideal, etc. Within the ultimate perfection of God is lesser perfection—subjectively known as *good*—, and lack of perfection (which is really lack of understanding of complementarity), which we understand subjectively (or sub-objectively) as *bad*. The relationship of perfection, good, and bad, is a relationship of (hard and soft) objective and subjective understandings. Within the subjective understanding of substance, perceiving only modes of reality but not the underlying substance, there is labeled a subjective and objective (this being the soft form) understanding, creating a spiraling fractal of existence. Humanity is incapable of a truly objective view of substance.

Aristotle attributed virtuous behavior to the golden mean (but expressed that this was not always a quantitative measure); one should not live in excess or in deficiency, but in balance. Altruism, for instance (my own example), is generally considered good, but in specific, when used in excess, it can be damaging to the wielder. If you give too much away to others, you have nothing left for yourself. Narcissism is the opposite, and is generally considered bad, but narcissism must balance altruism, or altruism becomes a vice. Excess or deficiency in either causes problems.

^{iv} If there is a multiverse composed of alternate decisions, God becomes that multiverse rather than being limited to our own Universe.

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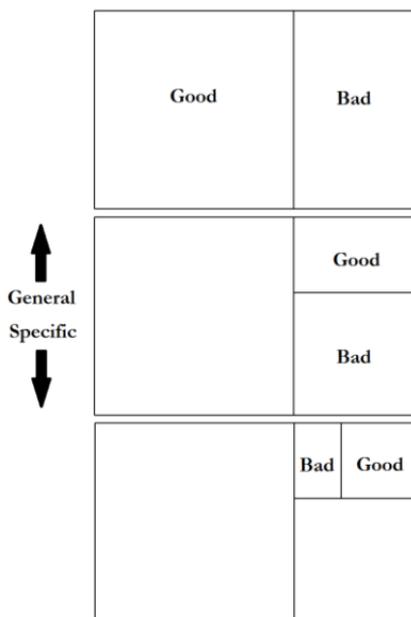
Though Aristotle stated that the relationship of virtues and vices is not always a clearly mathematical one, like him, I will use the golden mean to represent the path of virtue. This spiral is not necessarily physical, but rather metaphysical. The physical and spiritual are not opposed, however, merely different ways of saying the same thing.^v



^v As a metaphor, think about the Fibonacci Sequence. The numbers in this sequence can themselves be numbered in sequence of their steps. If we see the steps as the real descriptions of the world, the Fibonacci sequence may represent the ideal descriptions of the world. Both are correct in their descriptions.

Steps	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Real
Fibonacci	0	1	1	2	3	5	8	13	21	Ideal

Within the objective perfection of the single-substance, God, Universe, there appears the good and bad, or mental and physical, processes of its attributes, as perceived in syntropy and entropy, summer and winter, night and day. Each good and each bad exist themselves within a higher good or bad. Life, as a process of syntropy, is generally good, but its individuals, as specifics, may be relatively bad. What makes life good in general is that its good specifics outweigh the bad. Likewise, those



individuals seen as good are not perfect, and perform bad actions at times. Life in general is good. Humankind in general is good. Individuals in general have good intentions, and good intentions usually have good results. The upward spiral is one of motion toward ultimate objectivity, true goodness, perfection, understanding, unity with God, and transcendence of the illusion of subjectivity. The process downward is toward definitive subjectivity, separation, and lack. The process upward toward objectivity is expressed in growing inter-subjectivity— recognition of the inner perfection in others— as conveyed through compassion, communication, complementarity, and community. Again, this cannot be forced, and transcendence of consciousness is restricted to a timely process of evolution.

CONCLUSION

THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS OF LIFE, opposite of the process of death, is the process of seeking good, seeking fulfillment and satisfaction. It is a syntropic process, an ideal one. The passing of time, as determined by the will of life, is a

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constant passing of real into ideal, bad into good, opposed to the unconscious process, which works in reverse, according to physically determined laws rather than the organic will of life. As life spreads and overtakes the Universe, awakening it to subjective perspective, the laws of syntropy— expressed as free will, compassion, inter-subjectivity— will overgrow the entropic laws of expansion, separation, and determinism. As we learn to avoid conflict, and learn to see the perfection in others, and complimentarity between us all, we will learn to unite our perspectives, creating larger, more objective perspectives, similar to the unity of cells composing our larger consciousness. When all of life voluntarily unites to form a larger organism, the process of inter-subjectivity—syntropy— will begin to overcome the process of conflict—entropy—, and the Universe will collapse into objectivity, singularity. We will be past our duality of perspective and spectrum of reason. We will incur gnosis, contentment, happiness. Good will overcome bad, ideal will overcome real, just as summer overcomes winter, day overcomes night. Then the process will begin again.

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³ Parmenides of Elea

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⁵ Ibid., 78

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⁷ Amit Goswami², 264.

⁸ Georg Hegel², 45.

⁹ Georg Hegel¹, 23.

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¹¹ Albert Einstein

A Mystical Look at Evolution

This was composed for a speech given to the People's Arcane School on February 24, 2013 in Fort Worth, Texas.

LIMITS TO EMPIRICISM

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS of evolution is crucial to human progress. Everything changes according to rules, and to know the rules is beneficial for the player. Knowing the characteristics and potentials of things allows us to develop them to our liking.

Empiricism and science have much to offer the world, but they cannot provide all of the answers that humanity needs to progress. Before we knew that leavened bread was made with the ingredients it was, for instance, bread was eaten unleavened, flat, and chewy. It was by leaving it out in the open air— neglect— that yeast was able to gather in the dough to make it rise. Though this was undoubtedly an accident, before it happened there was no empirical proof that it was possible— empirical proof would be unable to show its potential unless it had already occurred—, and yet it still happened.

Empiricism, while often providing truth about what is possible, seems limited in its ability to tell us what is im-possible. If only that which has happened is possible, everything that takes place in a chronological order is impossible after the point of one. This limit is due to the direction in which empiricism looks, though it won't admit it as a shortcoming. Empiricism looks to the material past for its information and possibility, while rationalism looks to the ideal future. Empiricism relies on proof, rationalism relies on intuition. Empiricism is positive, rationalism is normative.

Though they didn't have empirical proof, if primitive people had thought that yeast would make dough rise before it had been proven, they would have intuitively predicted the future without need for empiricism. Though most inventions, like the discovery of leavened bread, are created by accident, this is not true of all of them. Some are dreams made reality. Take, for instance,

the automobile, which was the dream of many. Numerous people worked long and hard to make the automobile function, without any empirical proof of functioning “horseless chariots” in existence before. Yet, they prevailed despite the lack of empirical proof (though, certainly making use of smaller empirical truths), because they had strong ideas, and faith they could make them work. These were ideas which were rooted in, but not restricted entirely by, past reality. They did use empirical knowledge about the characteristics of the material they were using, and basic forms, but they used that knowledge in new application, creating ideal forms and functions, making use of both empirical and rational, and other contradictory forms of knowledge.

New species, in a way, are like new inventions. All of the energy of the system has always been, ever since the Big Bang and before, but, as this energy interacts, new combinations are formed, such as freshly developed nucleic acid structures that lead to new organisms.

We, human beings, are not excluded from the processes of evolution, but, unlike the examples of bread and combustion, and like all other biological organisms, we evolve complexly, rather than simplistically, as chemical reactions generally do. This is true enough that Albert Szent-Györgyi, famous for discovering vitamin C, said,

Inanimate nature stops at the low level organization of simple molecules. But living systems go on and combine molecules to form macromolecules, macromolecules to form organelles (such as nuclei, mitochondria, chloroplasts, ribosomes, and membranes) and eventually put these all together to form the greatest wonder of creation, a cell, with its astounding inner regulations. Then it goes on putting cells together to form "higher organisms" and increasingly more complex individuals [...] at every step, new, more complex and subtle qualities are created, and so in the end we are faced with properties

which have no parallel in the inanimate world.¹

We have internal (as well as external) methods for initiating processes, called *will* or *spirit*, and this will, which springs from consciousness itself, can be hard to study in any empirical manner, making psychology a rather “soft” science. The beliefs and feelings of humanity, our personal views and shared culture, which dictate our reactions, fluctuate and develop much more quickly than simple physical processes, causing new reactions to old environments. In many ways, organic change spawns from the future rather than the past.² Study of this is rather non-empirical in nature.

Epistemologically speaking, *knowledge* occurs when truth and belief overlaps; that is, when the truth is believed. What if the truth could be anticipated? What if someone were to have faith in, perhaps even intention behind, a hypothesis that ultimately works out?ⁱ At the time of continual success in testing, it becomes a scientific, or empirical, theory, but before this time it is regarded as a hypothesis. Can it be useful to act on a hypothesis? Mysticism is a working hypothesis, treated with faith that unity with the divine shall ultimately occur, because we already see its manifestation here on Earth. In many ways, hypothesis and proof are dialectical, are both divided and one.

At times the relationship of hypothesis and proof may work in reverse, as with the organism, which provides the solution in itself (life must live) without an equation (life must keep living, but how did it get here to begin with, so that we may know what it must do to continue in the process?). It is necessary in other times, particularly those circumstances of which we may be a part, to have faith in order to hold to our hypothesis and to create empirical evidence from it with our own behavior. This is particularly so when it is outcomes of self or society that are being studied, which must include in their causation the aspect of will, self-

ⁱ Say, for instance, mathematical equations which have played-out in reality as actual events after having been proposed.

determination. If I have a hypothesis about the outcome of a group of humans, the result of my testing depends entirely on their behavior, which can change at various moments. If I have a hypothesis about my own abilities, I must have at least a hint of faith, a hope, that I can accomplish the task, or I will be unable to even attempt it. Indeed, William James remarks, “there is some believing tendency wherever there is willingness to act at all.”³ This, however, does not mean that my faith is well-warranted; I may desperately fail. My faith is to thank, still, for all of my successes.

I’m not intending to repudiate or contradict empiricism or materialism as a whole, but to compliment such views with rationalism and idealism. Empiricism and science explain the physical world with great accuracy, while rationality and spirituality explain the world of the mental. They cannot fully explain the world without each other. We will be looking at how natural selection functions from a materialist perspective and connecting this with a spiritual view of evolution. My goal is to piece together a realist’s empirical view of evolution with an idealist’s rational view.

Nothing exists without context, and, in the case of life, it exists and interacts within, and as a part of, a Universe that is much larger than itself. Therefore, in order to fully understand evolution, we must understand its context. Our human experience is one of a physical Universe in constant motion, change, and flux. Biological evolution itself is a part of this process of development and change.

Aristotle named four causes of change in our Universe: the first, final, material, and formal causes. The first cause is the origin of disruption, such as the cause of a ball’s motion, the kick. The final cause is the destiny of the change, as when the ball stops moving and rests again. The material cause is what a thing is made of, such as the plastic and rubber of the ball. The formal cause is the shape the thing takes, being the ball itself, rather than a heap of material. These four causes and their related characteristics can be used to explain just about everything in our Universe.

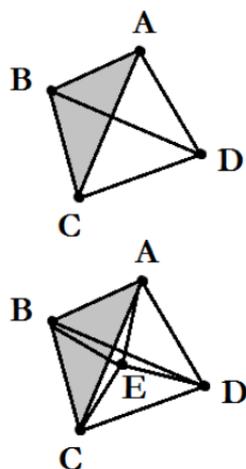
Empiricism falls short in describing final causes, while it stands strong on first causes. It can explain where matter comes from, but not where life is going. Though we have not yet experienced it, the future exists, and empiricism stops short at describing it. It is just as real as the past, but we are greatly

restricted to our understanding of it. Any experience of the future relies not upon physical sensory information, but upon intuition and gut feeling, *a priori* faith in an outcome. This is much more spiritual. We are yet to fully develop as spiritually as we are materially, so we are restricted to knowing our material past and from knowing our spiritually fulfilling future. Nonetheless, this does not change the fact that the future exists, for in order to have motion one must have a beginning and a destination. That is, in order to move from point A, point B must exist, and vice versa.

DIMENSIONS OF THE UNIVERSE

IN THE BEGINNING the material Universe was a dimensionless singularity, a single pointⁱⁱ (A), demonstrating no length, width, or height. If another point (B) is placed beside our first and a line segment is drawn to connect them we get our first dimension, length. A third point (C), if not placed in a series, gives us our second dimension, width, creating a plane. A fourth one (D) completes our physical dimensions of volume, by adding height. We now have all three spacial dimensions, but lack our fourth dimension of time.

When we add our fifth point (E), which is the first point that can occur internally, it gives us a hyper-tetrahedron, conics, and our fourth dimension of time.ⁱⁱⁱ Time is treated as the fourth dimension, like the physical dimensions of volume, and must be considered interconnected with them, though it is entirely non-physical. It is thought in M-theory that there are seven more dimensions, which are tightly rolled up and unable to be experienced. To my view, these dimensions may be present in the



ⁱⁱ Defined by Euclid as “that which has no part.”

ⁱⁱⁱ A Hyper-tetrahedron, when turned correctly, presents a pentad-star.

human psyche and in our emotions. They are likely internal dimensions.

As Carl Sagan points out in a famous segment of *Cosmos*, a two-dimensional being would experience a three-dimensional interruption as an internal, or at least highly-subjective experience, which would be unable to be proven to other two-dimensional beings.⁴ He then goes on to describe the fourth dimension.

Empiricism tends to deal with the first three dimensions of physical space and extension, while rationalism tends to deal with the fourth, and the emotional and temporal dimensions of consciousness. That is, science and empiricism look to the past for their information, the dimensions of the physical which have already occurred, while spirituality and rationalism look to future possibility, and dimensions which can be made to occur (on the larger scale) only in the time to come, by means of will.

We get our three physical dimensions of volume from having four points and intersecting lines, and our fourth dimension from having a fifth point, which is internal and causes conic sections and motion.^{iv} Five was considered the number of life by the ancients, because life is peculiar in its ability to regenerate, its relationship to the golden mean,⁵ and its capacity to perceive and interact with time. It is able to determine a future outside of purely physical causation. That is, in creating goals, and in having desires, life is caused by the future as well as the past, and not by the past exclusively. The future already exists, and it affects the present.

The fourth dimension of time is not all that the number five brings to life. The sacred geometry of the number five, the pentad, can be associated with phi, the golden ratio, the Fibonacci sequence, spirals, fractals, and more mathematical relationships that are oftentimes intimately tied with life and becoming. This is

^{iv} Motion must occur within something larger. Of course, when I say “causes” motion, this is from a purely subjective standpoint. As argued in “The Journey of Realization” and “The Duality of Perspective” past, present, and future already exist from any truly hard objective position.

oftentimes used as an argument for an intelligent designer or creative force that works separately from, or independent of, the usual deterministic and empirical laws of science. The shapes and ratios inherent in life, such as spirals, stars, and Fibonacci sequences show a common pattern of development toward the biological future. For some reason, organisms that stray much from this basic framework have been found more hard-pressed for survival. Organisms that are disproportioned, asymmetrical, or face other inconsistencies tend to be screened by natural selection. This creates a future that is more symmetrical, proportioned, and consistent. That is, a future with better functioning and more attractive individuals. In this way, mutations have a direction to their success, toward beauty and complexity.

RANDOM MUTATION

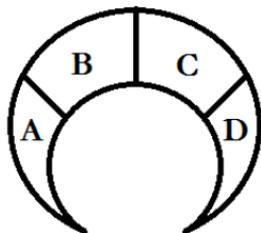
DARWINISM IS A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT that stresses an empirical, scientific, and material view of evolution by natural selection. This is not to say that Darwinism is wrong, just that it is incomplete in its analysis, because it looks to one direction in time alone. I will not only be including traditional natural selection by way of isolation and adaptation, but also parapatric, and other forms of speciation, in my loose definition of *Darwinism*, perhaps better regarded as *neo-Darwinism*. In order to understand the process of speciation, let's first take a look at the process of evolution by natural selection according to neo-Darwinism (which I may refer to as *Darwinism* in general, for simplicity's sake).

All living organisms have DNA, which holds their genetic code, and which is later read by RNA in order to construct the body. If a gene in the DNA changes, the RNA reads the code differently, and a new bodily form is developed. The changed DNA is known as a *mutation*. Sometimes mutations, or sets of mutations, can be so drastic as to create an entirely new species. This often works through a process of isolation, mutation, adaptation, selection, and speciation. When a new set of genetics arises, or is mutated, these new genes can easily be spread to all of the species sexually, or by way of horizontal gene-transfers,

changing it altogether. If this occurs favorably, and a species survives selection, a species has gone through an adaptive process. That is, the species is more capable of survival. Entire species can change in this manner, but if parts of a species are isolated from one another, populations can change without affecting the larger body, creating new species when diversity starts to impede on sexual reproduction. When genes are selected into a population within a larger species, this can lead to new subspecies and, if enough changes occur and drastically enough, it can lead to speciation. Genetic drift, which is not due to new mutations, but separation of older ones into different populations, may also lead to speciation. One of the easiest examples of how speciation occurs according to natural selection can be found by looking at a ring species.

In a ring species, a species will develop subspecies (A-D) along an environmental cline, such as alongside a river basin, around a mountain, etc. As the subspecies adapt differences, they become less likely to reproduce, sometimes making members within the same species unable to reproduce.

The thing that keeps them from speciation is subspecies between which may bridge them. For instance; in a species with subspecies populations A-D; A and D themselves may be unable to reproduce, but a bridge may be created if A can mate with B, B with C, and C with D, or in a number of other combinations. If this bridge is broken, however, *speciation* occurs.



So far as natural selection describes physical processes and what is possible, it makes a strong argument. Biology is not entirely physical, however, and there is much to learn in the way of spiritual truth and application in regard to evolution.

Darwinism is the standard philosophy of evolution, but it was certainly not the first. Before the release of *The Origin of Species*, Lamarckism was the main game in town. Instead of being based in materialism, Lamarck based his philosophy of evolution in ideals. For Lamarck, evolution occurred through the exercise of will, and was not simply a physical process, but a process of the mind, or spirit. In Lamarckism, changes of mindset and will are passed down

to the offspring. What is interesting is that neither Lamarckian idealism nor Darwinist materialism is wholly correct or incorrect, but both are rather complimentary forms of evolution that occur on different scales. That is, Darwinist natural selection occurs on the scale of the organism, while Lamarckian acquisition of traits occurs on the scale of culture, or society. Cultural and societal selection deal most with learned behavior, while other forms of selection tend to deal with forms and limits of physical being. As Gerhard Lenski and Patrick Nolan, authors of the macrosociology textbook, *Human Societies*, point out;

In recent decades, our understanding of biological evolution and sociocultural evolution has advanced dramatically. It is now clear for the first time that both types of evolution are based on records of experience that are preserved and transmitted from generation to generation in the form of coded systems of information. In the case of biological evolution, the record of experience is preserved and transmitted by means of the genetic code. In sociocultural evolution, the record is preserved and transmitted by means of symbol-systems. Both the genetic 'alphabet' and symbol systems provide populations with the means of acquiring, storing, transmitting, and using enormous amounts of information on which their welfare and, ultimately, their survival depend. Thus, symbol systems are functional equivalents of the genetic alphabet.⁶

They later continue...

Lamarck, Darwin's most famous predecessor, argued that if an organism continually repeated a certain action, not only would this produce structural change in the organism, but the change would be inherited

by its offspring. It has long since become clear that biological evolution does not work that way: Giraffes do not have long necks because their ancestors stretched day after day to reach high leaves, but because short necks were a liability in their ancestor's environment; animals with the genes for short necks were unable to survive and reproduce. In the cultural world, however, a kind of Lamarckian evolution does occur. Just about anything that a population learns and considers worth preserving can be incorporated into its cultural heritage.⁷

[...]

Moreover, sociocultural evolution does not require that every society go through step-by-step sequential stages of development, as in biological evolution. Rather, a society may compress or even skip stages.⁸

When Darwinism is particularly strong is when it describes physical processes of selection. It describes quite well how genetic drift may occur, or how species become selected in and out by their environments. Darwinism faces a particularly hard challenge when it comes to describing mutations and their directions, or other actions exemplified by free will, such as social and sexual selection (which will be discussed later), or forms of learned behavior. Indeed, Ken Wilber remarks,

The standard neo-Darwinian explanation of chance mutation and natural selection-- very few theorists believe this anymore. Evolution clearly operates in part by Darwinian natural selection, but this process simply selects those transformations that have

already occurred by mechanisms that absolutely nobody understands.⁹

Genetic mutations are generally externally caused by exposure to ultraviolet light, chemicals, or radiation, or are internally caused by “mistakes” in the structure of the DNA, such as the way chromosomes are wrapped in meiosis. Though these causes can be named, mutation is still put into the category of “random,” due to its unpredictability. This randomness, however, poses great problems for scientific determinism, as randomness is *not* a trait of empirical evidence. Is randomness not instead an example of freedom, of will, in contradiction with determinism? Is it not the immeasurability and unpredictability of human and other organic behavior that has led us to classify the social and living sciences as “soft” and works of a spiritual nature as completely non-scientific? Mutations, then, are where Darwinism breaks down, and where evolution by natural selection goes “soft” or “spiritual.” Again, this does not mean that the process of natural selection is invalid or unsound, I happen to find it quite plausible, as there is much evidence to support the idea of evolution by natural selection. However, evolution by natural selection relies on this notion of randomness in mutation, which greatly limits its empirical and deterministic claims, and demands use of complimentary forms of knowledge considered less scientific, perhaps more spiritual. Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini remark,

Naturalism tries to overcome [the] entropic vision by providing negentropic properties to chance, random mutations. According to naturalism, life originated and evolves thanks to chance, that is without any apparent cause.¹⁰

We are told we are part of a Universe where everything has physical causes that can be measured in force and magnitude, and that science can one day provide all of the answers. And yet, even science sets itself atop mystical premises such as randomness of

mutations in biology, uncertainty of particles in physics, accidental origins of the Big Bang.

In many ways, science itself has become a tool of coercion, an answer reserved for elites in white lab coats who have earned degrees from a state-protected, accredited university. We have been taught not to think for ourselves, or use our own potential, in order that the elite can maintain their true science, the manipulation of culture. The elite conduct society as an orchestra, being well-versed in the ancient philosophies of rhythm, seeing themselves as demigods and, in many ways, being correct. Yet, they cannot determine our desires, which will forever remain internal, rational, away from the external world of scientific, empirical knowledge. They do not want us to understand the limits to determinism, control, because, in many ways, we are those limits, dare we choose to express ourselves as such. Free will is the limit to determinism, and we are the strongest example of its existence on our scale.

LIFE IN CONTEXT

THE RANDOMNESS OF MUTATIONS seems to express a kind of free will. What is free will, but the expression of difference, undetermined? Humans are said to have free will, and the social sciences are considered soft sciences, because of the inability to fully predict human action and behaviors. Unlike the laws of physics, which are very straightforward and able to predict future outcomes, psychology, sociology, biology, and other living and social sciences do not enjoy the same predictability. Data strays easily from hypothesized outcomes, and living things express multitudes of differences. When different individuals are affected by the same stimuli, their reactions may differ. This unpredictability is especially true as one approaches humanity in the evolutionary chain. The same cannot be said for physical events; if you curse at a human, they may react in a number of ways, but a chair will always just sit there. Our free will—that is, difference—is the result of our mutations, but our mutations themselves tend to show a great degree of free will, or differences to be expressed. Could it be that the free will of mutations finds its home on the quantum scale of existence, where free will runs rampant?

Many biologists, philosophers, and quantum physicists believe precisely this. They point to the indeterminacy of mutations as examples of quantum effects, believing mutations to take place on the quantum scale of existence. Take the philosopher, Ken Wilber, for instance, who says Darwinism “can’t explain macroevolution at all!”¹¹ or Amit Goswami, the Hindu quantum physicist, who says,

Such ideas [as Lamarckism] give importance to the organism and open biology to causation at the level of the organism, such as autonomy and free will, which cannot be reduced to materialist upward [genetic to morphologic] causation.¹²

How does syntropic, or “downward” causation (from the morph to the genes), work? Well, there are different proposals, and I would be quite upset if ever anyone felt they had the hard answer, because any such proposal must be based in retro-causality, and I know the future is one of shared-truth, unable to be known without a breach of self. ^v

Life seems special in the fact that quantum affects create its free will on a larger scale, while there remains much inanimate matter in the Universe. Much of this could arguably be due to the fact that life is composed mostly of water, and water has been shown to have interaction with the quantum scale by way of the hydrogen bridge. Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini, visionary syntropians, elaborate:

The anomalous properties of water are a consequence of the *hydrogen bridge*

^v Having said that, I do think there are many compelling thought experiments which may open our minds to the nature, or tendency, of hidden but immeasurable processes, and which may help lead to emotional and spiritual fulfillment.

mechanism: instead of creating a tie with the oxygen atom, the hydrogen atom links to the electrons, forming in this way a bridge between the subatomic level (electrons) and the atomic level (hydrogen atom). This bridge between the inner level of the atom (micro) and the outer level of the atom (macro) allows syntropy to flow from the micro to the macro level.¹³

In this way, life, by being made from water, is able to exhibit signs of quantum indeterminacy or free will on a larger scale. Just as subatomic particles are unpredictable, so too are the behaviors of living organisms. As Di Corpo and Vannini point out, the hydrogen bridge allows free will, consciousness, to flow into life from the quantum scale.

Goswami, building on Rupert Sheldrake's view of morphogenetic fields,¹⁴ points out that if mutations occur on a quantum level they are due to such quantum effects as wave-particle duality, meaning that the particles making up the DNA are not only existent in particle form, but also in wave form. That is, they are in superposition, being specifically in one location as a particle, but generally everywhere as a wave, at the same time. What we see as the physical being is actually multitudes of particles that are in superposition, with both a wave-existence and a physical position caused by the observer affect, or being viewed. Mutations are not excluded from this process! Goswami remarks,

It is a fact that mutations [...] are quantum in nature. They are mere superpositions of possibilities before consciousness has collapsed them. Suppose the quantum superpositions of mutated genes wait in limbo until enough of them accumulate to give rise to a phenotype trait leading to new form. Not only the gene mutations are quantum processes, but also the making of form from genes (morphogenesis).

Both evolution (of the mutated genes) and morphogenesis of the new trait wait in limbo as superpositions of many possibilities, from among which consciousness can see a pattern that is just right for mapping a meaning-blueprint contained in its vital body.

Why should a form that occurred in the past be chosen? The answer is that forms are conditioned as part of the developmental history of Life.¹⁵

As demonstrated by the double-slit experiment, it is observation that causes the wave-function to collapse into particle form. Amit Goswami suggests, and I am in agreeance, that God is the ultimate observer. He says, “Now, do you see why, without God, we couldn’t see anything?”¹⁶

Quantum indeterminacy, or free will, is neither indetermined nor free, but has the illusion of being so by having causes which we are unfamiliar with. That is, causes from the future, from higher dimensional being. In a world where causality is measured from the past, giving us empiricism and determinism, because of our own limited perspectives as humans, anything outside of this limited paradigm is considered mystical, faithful, or idealistic. Well, this is a mystical look at evolution.

MORPHOGENETICS

NATURAL SELECTION is not enough to provide a direction or answer to mutations on its own, though it certainly plays a role in screening genes once they are in place. The very nature of life’s order goes against known laws of science, and relies completely on “chance” and “luck.” The integral psychologist and holist philosopher, Ken Wilber, remarks on the nature of mutations and the role they must play in evolving functional wings:

Take the standard notion that wings simply evolved from forelegs. It takes perhaps a hundred mutations to produce a functional

wing from a leg—a half-wing will not do. A half-wing is no good as a leg and no good as a wing—you can't run and you can't fly. It has no adaptive value whatsoever. In other words, with a half-wing you are dinner. The wing will only work if these hundred mutations *happen all at once*, in one animal—and also these *same* mutations must occur *simultaneously* in another animal of the opposite sex, and then they have to somehow find each other, have dinner, a few drinks, mate, and have offspring with real functional wings.¹⁷

The chances of a random mutation improving the development of the species are incredibly low. Improvement of order goes against the very nature of the second law of thermodynamics, increasing entropy. There must be a complimentary law to entropy, and this law must play a role in the direction of mutations. Lamarckianism may no longer be limited to cultural evolution. Morphogenetic fields, as popularized by Rupert Sheldrake,¹⁸ may provide a syntropic answer to the limits of selection, by incorporating nonlocal attractors from the future. This is demonstrated by Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini,¹⁹ among others. These fields, which are really just a range of possibility, provide a number of basic forms which organisms may express themselves toward, providing us directions in mutations, but these forms are then screened against their surroundings for success.

Morphogenetic fields may be viewed as an organism's possibility waves rooted nonlocally and in the future. An organism has so much general possibility, because its genetics are constructed from subatomic particle-waves, but only one of those possibilities is actualized into a physical position in our Universe. This is true of everything, but life excels in carrying quantum free will up to the classical scale, where most other material forms are incapable. That is, life decides for itself (relative to classical determinism), to limited but growing degrees, the coordinates in which its waves will

collapse. In reality, this is not free will, though we must treat it as such; it is, rather, retro-determinism.

A morphogenetic field may be understood as a range of genetic possibility. If taken outside the realm of genetics, a field may also be applied to one's larger being. For instance, my possibility wave, or field, is composed of all of the possible scenarios that can physically occur. My possibility wave includes me sitting at my computer as I type this, getting up and grabbing some food, letting the dog out, amidst a number of other, very doable scenarios. Only one will happen physically in this Universe, though; that reality which I decide to realize, to collapse. Similarly, one's genetics are capable of a number of mutations, caused by the superposition of particles involved in the molecular structure, but only a fraction of mutations actually occur in this Universe.

A *mutation* occurs when a substantial change happens in a gene. No longer should we view mutations in the confines of determinism, leaving them to the realm of "random" (a cop-out, at best). Instead, this indeterminism and free will should be viewed as what it really is, not truly free, random, or indetermined, but determined by concepts, ideals, and goals of the future. The problem with admitting any amount of idealism comes with admitting the importance and validity of others' feelings and goals, and acknowledging that only communication and compassion can allow us to understand truths that are inherent within individuals that are not ourselves; an idea which many materialists, looking externally for all of their solutions in the physical, are incapable of accepting. The future is known intuitively only, as future dimensions are found within, and to know others' intuition we must communicate with them.

Darwinism is given a particular problem when it comes to form-making, because every cell in your body has DNA with the ability to produce any part, which is read by RNA. That is, your arm tissue has the genes needed to make a brain, and your brain tissue has the genes needed to make the arm, and the same is true of the RNA. All of your cells maintain your code and the reader of the code. When you are growing, your cells express themselves in particular forms, some becoming bone or cartilage, others muscle, and, still more, fat, as well as many other modes of substance. Even

still, bones take different forms, as skulls and femurs, and the same is true of most other kinds of flesh. How does the RNA in the arm tissue know to create proteins for arm tissue, when it can also be brain tissue, eye tissue (and vice versa)?

Instead of looking for a structuralist answer to this problem, in defining things by what they *are*, such as a cell with all the genes necessary to be any tissue, we must look to the poststructuralist definition of what something is; that is, by defining it in terms of relationship, or what the thing *is not*, defining it externally rather than internally. For example, if a cell is not in the proper coordinate to function well as an arm, regardless of its genetic ability, it should not express itself as arm tissue. The tissue in the arm may very well, intrinsically speaking, be of a material that is capable of being expressed as any tissue, including brain tissue, but it derives its value in expressing itself in relation to the brain, following a common structure that is not based on *intrinsic* value, but on *relational* value. That is, the arm can relate to the brain best as an arm because of its position, which is in a different coordinate within the morphogenetic field, being lower than, and off-center from, the brain.

The morphogenetic field provides a contextual relationship of coordinates for the genes to be expressed within; telling the RNA in the arm it is an arm. The RNA read the DNA code for arm construction and start synthesizing proteins, but the goals of construction cannot be intrinsic, as RNA and DNA throughout the body are both homogenous, in accordance with its function (there is mRNA, rRNA, and tRNA). When genetic waves are actualized from probability waves into physical particles they are actualized in the patterns of their being, or essence, according to their coordinates in the morphogenetic field and subfields. That is, genes are expressed according to their placement in relation to one another. Rupert Sheldrake tells us,

Thanks to molecular biology, we know what genes do. They enable organisms to make particular proteins. Other genes are involved in the control of protein synthesis. Identifiable genes are switched on and

particular proteins made at the beginning of new developmental processes. Some of these developmental switch genes, like the *Hox* genes in fruit flies, worms, fish and mammals, are very similar. In evolutionary terms, they are highly conserved. But switching on genes such as these cannot in itself determine form, otherwise fruit flies would not look different from us.

Many organisms live as free cells, including many yeasts, bacteria and amoebas. Some form complex mineral skeletons, as in diatoms and radiolarians [...] Just making the right proteins at the right times cannot explain the complex skeletons of such structures without many other forces coming into play, including the organizing activity of cell membranes and microtubules.

[...]

I suggest that morphogenetic fields work by imposing patterns on otherwise random or indeterminate patterns of activity. For example they cause microtubules to crystallize in one part of the cell rather than another, even though the subunits from which they are made are present throughout the cell.²⁰

Mutations are changes in relation to the morphogenetic attractors that affect patterns of growth. They may be enacted physically and externally, but they are expressed according to idealistic and internal will. That is, mutations may oftentimes be caused by external, local stimuli, but it is not possible to pre-determine mutations by repeating the stimuli, leaving the reaction, the direction of the mutation itself, to nonlocal effects of free will or indeterminacy. What is the relationship of morphological and

genetic determinism? Sheldrake illustrates for us morphic resonance:

The fields organizing the activity of the nervous system are [...] inherited through morphic resonance, conveying a collective, instinctive memory. Each individual both draws upon and contributes to the collective memory of the species. This means that new patterns of behaviour can spread more rapidly than would otherwise be possible. For example, if rats of a particular breed learn a new trick in Harvard, then rats of that breed should be able to learn the same trick faster all over the world, say in Edinburgh and Melbourne. There is already evidence from laboratory experiments that this actually happens.²¹

FUTURE FREEDOM

FREE WILL, indeterminacy, randomness, etc. are all just descriptions of human inability to calculate physical causation. As a specific, humanity is unable to fully comprehend the general. Our inability to calculate consequences to their fullest extent relies on space, or room within the general for the specifics to play. Free will is rooted in the room that future possibility creates. When one is confined, restricted in their motion, they are unable to cause change to their surroundings. They lack in free will.

From past singularity, expansion spilled out into the future plurality. The material future is big and expansive and its past is small and contracted. The terrain that strict empiricism and determinism have to offer is stagnation, uncompromising sameness, built only upon past successes with no room for dreams. If only victories of the past may be properly used to demonstrate possibility, further change is made impossible. The space needed in order for particles to play and for form to change, mutate, and

evolve must be rooted in the world of the unknown, ideal future, yet to be actualized. As time moves on, space physically expands, but it was ideally, conceptually, already there. The same is true of all future possibility.

The difference between physical and spiritual processes isn't hard-cut between pure materialism and pure idealism, but by tendencies. Physical processes tend to have archetypes that can be clearly actualized using external causation, while mental processes tend to internally actualize archetypes. This, of course, is relative to the human experience, giving us an apparent dualism within a monadic Universe.

Our desires, rooted in the future, cannot be changed, but our reactions to them can be adjusted with the accumulation of practical knowledge about the past. The future we affect is simultaneously created by our past-based actions and pre-determined by our future-based desires. That is, it is pre-determined by our ideals and goals of the future so far as we can affect them as a physical mechanism. Not all causes are organic in nature or put into effect by humanity, however, so many of our goals are hampered by the material and external.

If scientific evidence is the only measure of what is possible then we have already reached the pinnacle, the best we can be; but this cannot be so, as we are driven to do better, and humanity daily progresses in its scope of knowledge and capacity.

Science is not incorrect to be skeptical, and idealists the world over would do themselves a favor to accept science, even if to understand its limits. It remains the duty of the idealist to demonstrate the evidence for their hypotheses, but oftentimes the hypotheses of the idealist includes the participation of multitudes of conscious beings, as idealism is a philosophy of mentality. This is both the strength and limit of idealism. To test their hypotheses, the idealist must find willing participants. Indeed, there are many beautiful ideas for the future, but so few willing to apply them.

PURPOSE AND MEANING ASCRIBED IN EVOLUTION

WE'VE ESTABLISHED that our free will lies atop the free will of the quantum scale, and its effects on mutations, and have analyzed the free will of both the quanta and the mutations they compose. Quanta expresses free will in uncertainty, our inability to tell both speed and direction, and mutations express a reflection of this free will by being dissimilar, and random. The effect of this free will, screened by laws of materialism, has been progress. The freedom of quanta has led to the creation of matter, and the freedom of organic matter to mutate has led to individuality, and even speciation. What, though, are the effects of our own freedom, on our scale? If mutations are constructed by the freedom of particles, and we are constructed of the freedom, or randomness, of those mutations, what is it that our freedom is constructing? We've viewed the effects of freedom, difference, change, uncertainty, on the scale of the quantum and the molecular levels, but what of our own scale? Do our choices create a bigger picture, something perhaps even potentially alive?

Humans are constructed of many cells, which are interdependent beings who have united to construct our bodies. Just the same, humans have united on a larger scale to create society. What has made this possible? What is the binding force that has allowed humans to create an organism larger than ourselves, capable of responding to stimuli, and composed of specialized and interdependent units which, on their own, could not exist? It is our ability to socialize, which is due further to our freedom of will, and our ability to think, plan, and organize toward the accomplishment of future goals.

It is true that our physical form has given us function, and this should not be ignored. Function cannot be given value by the past, but only what it can provide to the future; a shovel, for instance, doesn't have value as a shovel because it was previously raw material, or because it had been used in the past to shovel dirt (though this may suggest it will be able to be used in the future as well), but because its form provides a function that can be used to accomplish tasks. What is unique about humanity, exalted animal-practitioners of free will, is that we maintain a form which can,

within limits, decide our own function. Our level of free will, consciousness, is unique in this way. It is this level of consciousness, the ability to do what we want, that has allowed us to construct society.

We are the building blocks of society, but what is the glue? What holds us together? Ethics, the shared understanding of what is right and wrong, is what has allowed us to trust one another enough to construct a complex society. How did ethics come about?

Ethics came into play by way of genetic and memetic mutations screened by social and sexual selection. That is, by the choices that organisms made in their patterns of association. To put it simply, people who aren't nice have a hard time making friends and lovers. People who have a hard time making friends have a harder time surviving, and those who cannot find lovers will never pass on their genes. That is, they are socially selected out through the lack of friendships, and are sexually deselected by lacking willing partners. Their current position will be unfavorable, and they are unlikely to pass on future copies of their DNA. The ability to make choices based on ethics is due to our conscious ability to plan the future. Forethought allowed ethics to develop. When we think about taking action, we think about the consequences of those actions, based on past experience, external knowledge, or intuition.

In selecting friends and sexual partners, we project archetypes, ideas, or concepts, of what we are looking for or desire, and try to find the nearest match. In so doing, we are screening based on our ideal future, and not just accepting reality for what it is. Unlike other forms of natural selection, where inanimate and purely material effects take precedence externally, sexual and social selection are mechanisms of selection determined by the internal desires of ourselves and other organisms. Sexual selection is used to explain such evolutionary paradoxes as secondary sex-characteristics. Take the male peacock's tail, for an oft-used example, which, materially and externally, makes no sense to us, as its bright colors mean it will be more vulnerable to predation. It only makes sense in the context of sexual selection, because the female peahen has an ideal and internal reason to choose the mate,

separate from environmental suitability; she holds it aesthetically in high regard. She simply likes the colors, and is sexually pleased by them. Richard Dawkins elaborates on the “sexy son hypothesis”:

In a society where males compete with each other to be chosen as he-men by females, one of the best things a mother can do for her genes is to make a son who will turn out in his turn to be an attractive he-man. If she can ensure that her son is one of the fortunate few males who wins most of the copulations in the society when he grows up, she will have an enormous number of grandchildren. The result of this is that one of the most desirable qualities a male can have in the eyes of a female is, quite simply, sexual attractiveness itself.²²

According to the “good genes hypothesis,” in choosing sexual partners for their plumage, they may also be selecting in traits of fitness, such as immunity, that correlate with the beauty of the plumage. In other words, the genetics that allow the male peacock’s plumage to be so elegant may be tied to the genes that express strong immunity in him. As a consequence, in choosing males for their plumage, the female may be selecting them based on the strength of their immunity. Selection would dictate that any tendency toward fitness would be selected in, meaning that, if the plumage is tied to other traits of fitness, females that choose to mate with the most elegant males will consequentially produce offspring with those traits of fitness, such as strong immunity. Still, selection has a hard time describing the origins of mutations, and of consciousness, though it does well at describing the physical pressures those mutations will face, and under which decisions must be made in order to continue. Consciousness, or desire, is also expressed through mutations, which empiricism clearly fails to describe. Empiricism describes quite strongly, however, the selective pressures the mutations, once in existence, must endure to continue. It just doesn’t describe origins.

A Mystical Look at Evolution

Another example of the effects of consciousness on evolution is to look at the function of artificial selection, where humans directly involve themselves in the selection of traits that are expressed in other organisms. Dog breeds are a great example. Humans had ideas, archetypes, for ideal dog forms, capable of performing specific human functions. By selecting between already existing mutations, being unable to produce their own purposefully, humans mimicked genetic drift, creating different kinds of dogs.

Unlike artificial selection, where we directly involve ourselves in the sexuality of other species, human social and sexual selection, like the choice of wild pea-fowl, is internally directed, based on our own decisions, goals, and desires. Humans tend to screen one another based on the ability to get along, share values, and remain healthy. We also tend to screen one another sexually based on such modes as the golden ratio, symmetrical relationships, among others. No single person meets the requirements of perfection, being physically and emotionally perfect, but it is the immaterial idea of perfection that still drives our decisions, and evolution, toward it. Perfection does not exist for us, but that does not mean that it never will, just that it is becoming. We are constantly judging reality around a notion of perfection, screening those parts of reality that stray the furthest from it, and accepting those parts that are nearest (as in genetic drift). It is in this way that we choose the form, but not the substance, of the future.

Empiricism, materialism, and science have many strengths, especially when it comes to describing what we have and where it came from. However, the schools break down in many important areas when it comes to biological evolution, because life is not a purely material phenomenon, but is also composed of spirit, ideals, and intentions, which are of an immaterial nature placed in the future. That is, they will be material, but are currently conceptual. This may be hard to understand, but it is crucial. If I am standing in a room, and want to be outside of it, I presently exist materially only inside the room, but conceptually outside of it. I exist outside of the room materially in the future, but currently as concept alone. It is the idealist component of consciousness that gives physicists a run for their money when describing life, and leaves them to

categorize such things as mutations and sexual/social selection as “random,” a category determinists should be ashamed to be using. It is the inability to predict mutations and the desires of organisms that keep living phenomena from being restricted to purely physical and chemical processes, and which highlights their spiritual direction toward final causes, higher goals, which are physically non-existent, but exist in the future, in the world of archetypes and forms, should we do the work to actualize and become them.

What I hope you have gained from this is an appreciation of free will and a desire to express your unique contributions. There are many times that we are told that our ideas can't work because they have never been done before, but a mentality of this sort only serves to stifle progress and innovation. Though the future possibility is a mystery, it is not impossible, just yet to be done. Besides, even physics and biology rest atop freedom of will, apparent indeterminism, describing its affects rather than its limits.

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God, Bees, and the Choices We Make

GOD AND THE BEES

I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT EXISTENCE just from having a garden. No, not just from the books I've read about it!, but by being able to immerse myself in life, and to surround myself with its constantly transitional systems. I'd like to share a thought from the garden.

The fact that humanity and bees are both drawn by, and may appreciate beauty in, the same flower, demonstrates a degree of intersubjective understanding in my opinion. Though bees and humans approach them differently, and may see different uses for them, that bees and humans have come to appreciate a similar sense of beauty at all is quite astonishing. There is no doubt we live in an objective Universe experienced subjectively. Though our experiences may be subjective, our being seems rather objective, and common choices or desired outcomes, such as a shared appreciation for the beauty of a flower between mammals and insects, demonstrates some level of universal aesthetic truth.

At one point in existence there was no flower for the bee at all. At one time no Earth, Sun, or Moon. How did they get here? Evolution, of course. Perhaps God put them here? I'm not going to tell you about the Big Bang and the formation of metals in stars, but I would like to point out a small part of the evolution of the flower. As stated, at one time there were no flowers.

Bees and flowers share an intimate relationship. Many naturalists argue that flowering plants and these social insects co-evolved, as part of biological mutualism. Others contend that bees came first, and fed on, as well as pollinated, older non-flowering plants such as evergreens and ferns. Regardless of which came first, we can see the intimate relationship that bees and flowering plants now share today. Bees rely on flowers for their nectar and pollen, and flowers rely on bees for their pollination. This is relatively common knowledge, but what isn't common knowledge is that bees are directly involved in the evolutionary direction of flowering plants.

Most of the flowering plants we are familiar with today would not exist if not for bees. Flowering plants put out their bright colors and designs to catch the attention of bees, in order to be pollinated or to pollinate others. Bees are directly involved in the sexuality of plants, and thus play a large role in their sexual selection. If not for the taste of bees in their selection, we wouldn't have such beautiful flowers. If bees are *intelligent*, and they *are* depending on the definition being used, this is an example of intelligent design, although the designer is not anything close to resembling Zeus up there in the clouds. Is God a bee?

THE CHOICES WE MAKE

BEES ARE NOT the only species to demonstrate the ability to affect the development of other life forms throughout their evolution. Most life, being part of a larger ecosystem, has this ability, as well as the capacity to be affected. In humans, social and sexual selection—the choosing of friends and mates—has led us greatly to where we are. As we choose sexual partners, friends, allies, etc. we are designing the future, by choosing the genes that are passed on. This is also done through cultural selection, whereby a society's memes can be preserved or lost.

Through culture humans create archetypes by which to select the traits which we will move toward genetically. By creating social pressures, ethics, culture has developed a means by which humanity will select its own path in evolution. This is similar to the way that humans have selected dogs artificially over the ages. We have created small ones for companionship, large ones to work, and those that fetch for hunting. We have also selected them based upon their ability to do well with our children and ourselves. Culture is the way for humans to make these choices about ourselves.

If it is the norm desired by society to know how to whistle due to the fact it is used in the local language, as in Silbo Gomero and many more, individuals who know how to do so will be favored over those without the ability. The same can be said for our moral systems. In a society which values love and respect, those who are inclined to be caring and decent will be chosen by

society as friends and sexual partners. The genetic material will be passed on favoring such choice of action, creating phenotypes exhibiting such a behavior.

In a society where there is a dictatorship and strong class distinction, individuals will be selected out based on their noncompliance to government. This can have major effects on the movement of the species, especially if it occurs in heavy isolation, because it has the capability of genetically predisposing individuals to comply with authority, and thereby creating genetic castes in our species.

It's important to know the choices we are making and how to influence culture with what we think is right. Whatever it is you choose, do so wisely. The future is in your hands.

PURPOSE AND SELECTION

MUCH OF HUMANITY'S STRUGGLE has been against the environment. Humanity has not just been sculpted by its own choices, but also by weather, predation, resources, and more. In order to get by and solve many of their conflicts with their environments, the ancestors of humanity banded together. Greatly reducing environmental costs, association brought new costs of social interaction, giving us pressures within our own species to create ethics, status, laws, and the like.

Humans seem to be the only species capable of such high degrees of self-awareness. Amidst rules, statuses, and ethical systems, humans have started to concern themselves with something further than the external (environment and society) and toward the internal (value and purpose). When a person feels a void of value, purpose, and direction they become depressed, and look for new ways to find identity. Purpose, direction, and value may exist in the long term and in the short term. Short term goals, though important they may be as stepping stones, will ultimately culminate in higher purpose, or will lead to dead ends and depression.

Most of our goals are creative in nature—the writing of a song, the building of a home, the raising of a family, the cooking of a meal—and they satisfy us for their time being. We have created

systems of shared goals and behavior— marriage, friendship, community—, and, as Michael Tomasello suggests, we have constructed a “we” in order to do so.¹ In every “we” there is both the higher expression and the loss of some part of the self.

It is our subjective experience that gives us need for meaning, purpose, and objectivity. Subjective experience, self, is represented by one thing alone and that thing is want. All subjective experience wants, because subjective experience is the experience of lack. Thus, life wants, and, in order to have, we must set and reach goals to meet our wants. In order to have our desires (food, music, family, friends, a home) met we must first give ourselves a purpose, a goal, an objective, and the material means to reach our desires. Without realistic goals, plans to reach our ideal desires of the future from the present reality, we become depressed, and may eventually die. It is depressing to have wants and no way to fulfill them. Life requires the accomplishment of realistic goals, motivated by desire, in order to continue.

Through the achievement of our goals (environmental, social, personal), and by giving ourselves purpose, we are intelligent designers partaking in the influence of evolution, whether we are simply trying to get pollen to our hive like a bee, or we are trying to meet the complex environmental, social, and personal goals that we may set for ourselves as humans. Life is putting together objective experience (lack of want), that little singularity that existed before the Big Bang, by setting and reaching its goals. Since energy cannot be created or destroyed, and the very same particles that make up our flesh have been on this Earth long before us, likely composing the brains and bodies of our ancestors and environment, we have largely sculpted ourselves through the process of natural selection long past gone. Our physical and emotional attraction to others today will do just the same. Just as bees have given us the beauty of flowers, when they pick the prettier ones to visit (and thus pollinate), our prehistoric ancestors chose from their own group’s genes and memes when they chose friends, allies, and sexual partners. Over long periods of time and speciation, we now have humans, whom are much more beautiful than the apes we evolved from, and capable of much more cooperation.

We choose our future by the choices we make today. The purpose of life is to live, to want, and to set goals to acquire these desires. To want, and to set goals for oneself, is an integral part of that, but desire, itself being a demand for objectivity of being and experience, should not stop with the desires of the self.

We go further than the self when we establish the “we” when we marry, make friends, or incorporate with business partners, or associate in the market to create society. It should not stop here, however. Over time, as life colonizes the stars, it will be necessary to extend our sense of we to the newly awakened matter, just as we have extended our sense of I into we. As we do this we step out of identity and subjectivity and into interconnectedness, objectivity. As the Universe awakens, life is destined to culminate through its systems of goals in the desires of The All— God— and put the Universe back together. As we reach our goals and extend our self to others we are a part of this process. We will find life less depressing when we see “being” as a time-period beyond our own life-term, and “self” beyond our own body.

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Class Antagonism and its Metaphysical Implications

*This was composed for a speech given to the People's Arcane School
on January 6, 2013 in Fort Worth, Texas.*

TWO ARROWS OF TIME

BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION expresses a teleological tendency toward greater and greater levels of freedom and complexity. From the simple elements from which the first complex molecules of RNA were formed, and from the first bacteria to sexual reproduction in multicellular organisms, and from fish to amphibians, to reptiles and birds, and finally to mammals, culminating in our own human awareness, there is a direction to our evolution that seems to contradict the material world around us. This is a direction toward self-determination and intricacy.

Quantum physicist and professor, Amit Goswami, tells us that “The physical arrow of time is an arrow of entropy.”¹ He is referring to the fact that material objects, as time goes on, will fall apart, break, decay, and there is nothing that can be done to stop it. *Entropy* means *diverging tendency*, and time is attributed to having a relationship to this tendency; as time moves forward, entropy (chaos, destruction, dissipation) increases. This is a well-established law of science, the second law of thermodynamics. Amit Goswami goes on, however, and says,

Biology also gives us an empirical arrow of time. Biological organisms evolve toward an increasing complexity. But biological complexity consists of much order and thus is the opposite of entropy, which is disorder. So the two arrows are not compatible.²

Class Antagonism and its Metaphysical Implications

The order of life is plain to understand. Humanity cannot create life from inorganic material. It simply cannot be done. Louis Pasteur demonstrated in the mid-19th century that this was so, when he proved that life does not arise in sterile environments. Pasteur's process, known today as *pasteurization*, is still practiced in the food industry, and the law of biogenesis—that life only comes from life— still remains rather unchallenged. If we want to create life today, we must do so through breeding or cloning.

Because of its basis in carbon, organic matter can oftentimes be highly complex—much more so than inorganic matter—, forming intricate polymers, or macromolecules, which are constructed in the process of metabolism. When life eats, it constructs more complex molecules from its food source. They are, however, deconstructed when life breaks down, dies, and decays. Living is the process of construction, and dying is the act of destruction. The dying and dead are governed by the law of entropy, but the young and living are governed by a law known as *syntropy*. *Syntropy*, being the opposite of entropy, means *converging tendency* rather than a diverging one. This converging tendency is one towards increasing order and complexity, the opposite of entropy's chaos and destruction. I highly suggest the work of Ulisse Di Corpo and Antonella Vannini for further understanding syntropy.

Characteristics of syntropy are exhibited by all life, by the birth of stars, and through other effects of gravity, the strong force, and, oftentimes, electromagnetism. The non-living world is governed by entropy, and its future can be easily predicted by laws of physical determinism. By measuring mass and applying the laws of gravity and motion one can judge the trajectory of an inanimate object flying through the sky to a great degree. One cannot judge with such certainty about a bird's flight destination, however, as a bird is only governed by the physically deterministic laws of matter so far as it has a body, but so far as it has a spirit it is governed by the idealistic laws of free will. So far as an object is said to be able to express freedom and syntropy is so far as it is animated by spirit. Unlike body, which is given by the physical laws of entropy, spirit is given by the ideal laws of syntropy.

FREEDOM OF WILL

THE CORE CHARACTERISTIC of life and expression of its syntropy is the manifestation of will. This will is the driving force behind all life, and defines it. Without a will, an organism could not sustain life, and would certainly face death. It is will that allows life to retain its syntropy and fight entropy. A deer must eat to survive, run from predation, and mate to pass along its genetic heritage. A deer is *animated*, like all other *animals*. “But so are machines,” I hear the replies! The difference between animals and machines is in the degree of self-sufficiency, which is a product of will. Machines have no will to speak of. A car does not will itself to a gas station, fuel itself up, and take a drive to the beach. It takes a living person to press their will on the machine. If left to its own non-existent will, the machine will rust, break down, and corrode. Human energy is needed to maintain it and fight the entropy of wear and tear. Humans, however, need only an initial spark to get them started, the copulation of two different charges, a mother and a father. After this, the development of the ego continues and increasingly cultivates a will in the child to survive, culminating its growth in a self-maintaining human adult. Will, desire, promotes in us the struggle against entropy that has allowed for our increasing complexity.

The will of the adult is two-fold in nature, but becomes expressed in multiplicity when applied to the uniqueness of individuals. The dual basis of all human actions and what the ego wills is the evasion of pain and the attainment of pleasure. All acts of the human will serve the twofold purpose of being carefree and happy, reaching “the good.” For this reason, Aristotle makes such statements as,

Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has been declared to be *that at which all things aim*. [My italics]

And,

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If, then, there is some end in the things we do, which we desire for its own sake, [...] clearly this must be the good and the chief good. Will not the knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life?³

He says, “If there is an end for all we do, it will be the good achievable by action.”

All of our actions are taken for the purpose of making the future better, whether we are short-sighted and act in favor of the immediate future, or are fore-thinking and act to the benefit of the longer-term.

Action is the effect of the will of life. Without will, there is no action. Even the action and life of the Universe, the Harmony of the Spheres, is attributed to the will and character of The All, The One, The Source, The Original Mover, *God*. The ability to act according to one’s will is the chief characteristic of life. Relative to will, this places raw minerals at the lower measure of living consciousness, ourselves somewhere in the middle, as we are mobile but still restricted, and God at the top, as God is the original and unrestricted source of all life and motion.

Our purpose can be found in our progress toward Godliness, toward a freer will that is unrestricted by the past and determines its own future. Herbert Spencer, a 19th century philosopher and early sociologist, recognized that it is our abilities that lead us to our ends when he said “Man’s happiness can be produced only by the exercise of his faculties.”⁴ Humanity has a capacity for forethought and intuition that is so-far unrivaled to common knowledge. Because humanity is less affected by the outside than by its own internal free will, our contentment, which includes the usage of that free will, can *only* be obtained by the use of that free will.

The Kybalion— following the ancient philosophy of the legendary Hermes Trismegistus— quotes a passage (claimed by Three Initiates to be found in an older unadulterated original) regarding syntropic tendencies in the human mind:

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Nothing escapes the Principle of Cause and Effect, but there are many Planes of Causation, and one may use the laws of the higher to overcome the laws of the lower.⁵

Hermes understood the unpredictability of human consciousness, and made clear that free will was not truly free, but was due instead to an unknown cause (known now to be from the future, syntropy). *The Kybalion* says,

A careful examination will show that what we call 'Chance' is merely an expression relating to obscure causes; causes that we cannot perceive; causes that we cannot understand.⁶

It reitifies that

Every Cause has its Effect; every Effect has its Cause; everything happens according to Law; Chance is but a name for Law not recognized; there are many planes of causation, but nothing escapes the Law.⁷

The Law that humanity follows is the striving for well-being and goodness, but this is not so easily mapped out, as we all have our own approach to accomplishing such happiness. Human consciousness is predictable enough to study, but living sciences such as biology, and especially human sciences, such as psychology and sociology, are known as *soft sciences* because they are less empirically based and data strays so easily. Hermes recognized that human causation is powerfully different from the rest of the "lower" material planes of existence, and even that of other animals. His proponents of the early 20th century, calling themselves Three Initiates, summarize his work in their own words:

By an understanding of the practice of Polarization, the Hermetists rise to a higher plane of Causation and thus counter-balance the laws of the lower planes of Causation. By rising above the plane of ordinary Causes they become themselves, in a degree, Causes instead of being merely Caused. By being able to master their own moods and feelings, and by being able to neutralize Rhythm, as we have already explained, they are able to escape a great part of the operations of Cause and Effect on the ordinary plane. The masses of people are carried along, obedient to their environment; the wills and desires of others stronger than themselves; the effects of inherited tendencies; the suggestions of those about them; and other outward causes; which tend to move them about on the chess-board of life like mere pawns. By rising above these influencing causes, the advanced Hermetists seek a higher plane of mental action, and by dominating their moods, emotions, impulses and feelings, they create for themselves new characters, qualities and powers, by which they overcome their ordinary environment, and thus become practically players instead of mere Pawns. Such people help to play the game of life understandingly, instead of being moved about this way and that way by stronger influences and powers and wills. They use the Principle of Cause and Effect, instead of being used by it. Of course, even the highest are subject to the Principle as it manifests on the higher planes, but on the lower planes of activity, they are Masters instead of Slaves.⁸

Humanity has found itself dominating the material world, using it to craft its own pleasures. This can be seen as an example of the higher plane (idealism, ideas) Three Initiates are speaking of and its effects on the lower (materialism, physicality). They are largely correct also to assume that those people who master their ideas—those who have confidence or faith—will be able to press their will on others. This is the nature of social class and hierarchy, but it is not a product purely, or even largely, of genetic capacity, or the “faculties” that Spencer mentioned earlier, but is instead based on the control of material resources and information.

CLASS ANTAGONISM

WITH PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION of resources—due not to one society genetically being better suited for success than another, as Jared Diamond points out, but to geographical privilege in the Cradle of Civilization⁹—developed disequilibrium in the spirit of humanity. Some became more powerful, more confident, and thus more psychologically capable of success than others.ⁱ Because the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians happened to settle in the Cradle of Civilization, also known as the *Fertile Crescent*, they maintained the privilege of the best grounds for commerce, horticulture, domestication of animals, and more. This led to a boost in leisure that induced technological innovation as well as formulated systems of religion and law, which boosted the egos of the societies’ individuals and the cohesion of societies themselves into powerful modes of confidence which other cultures were not prepared to match. According to Patrick Nolan and Gerhard Lenski, macrosociologists and authors of the textbook, *Human Societies*,

The experience of Mesopotamia and Egypt thus supports the impression from horticultural societies concerning the importance of religion in the formation of an

ⁱ See “Information and the Dissolution of Authority”

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economic surplus. Technological advance created the possibility for a surplus, but to transform that possibility into a reality required an ideology that motivated farmers to produce more than they needed to stay alive and productive, and persuaded them to turn that surplus over to someone else. Although this has sometimes been accomplished by means of secular and political ideologies, a system of belief that defined people's obligations with reference to the supernatural worked best in most societies of the past.¹⁰

These newly formulated horticultural kingdoms and dynasties used their surplus and took slaves upon themselves from the surrounding cultures, which had not had the good fortune of settling in the most perfect setting yet seen to their time, the Fertile Crescent. This merely increased their surplus, idle thinking and innovating-time, and technological capacity. This is the beginning of the state, an entity which holds a unilateral monopoly on the use of violence, meaning it can kill you, and you don't have a chance of killing it. This is based on the withholding of information and material resources that were accumulated and monopolized in the past by acts of aggression.

Social class has many implications for our human role. It implies that we are still largely material beings that are greatly affected by our material surroundings, and are not governed solely by the free will we wish we were divine enough to fully express. It implies we have a lot of growing and progress to go through as a species.

Humanity's purpose is emergent, becoming. We make it happen. Our purpose is to be happy, and in order to be happy we set goals, make plans, create value, and take action to make the things that make us happy happen. Social classes and hierarchy only serve to restrict this process, to restrict our free will, our purpose, and to dominate us as part of the lower plane of existence. It's not the fault of the powerful alone, it is also our own when we allow domination to go unchallenged. Our learned

helplessness plays a large role. Just as a teenager must claim themselves from their parents as they reach individual adulthood, it is our duty as a class to claim ourselves from our masters and mature into a strong, self-supporting, and capable society. We are drawn to the ideas of maturity and freedom because they are good, and true, and, for this reason, they are our destiny.

According to the cosmology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Jesuit priest and anthropologist, the living are drawn closer and closer toward our final destination, which he calls the *Omega Point*. This teleological concept can be attributed to the physics of a Big Crunch, as I have read has been promoted by Frank Tipler (and can be compared in some ways to *the Source*). The Omega Point is the end of our evolution. It is the ultimate good that is pulling us toward it. It is *the final result of our decisions*. It is our *ultimate desire*. It pulls us toward it by means of giving us ideas, by communicating archetypes and concepts of an ideal nature. Our desires are already predestined, by way of retro-causality (time moving backwards, or pulling us toward the future Omega Point rather than just pushing from the past) and nonlocality (effects caused without physical connection), by way of the Omega Point, but this is not the only source of causality; we must live in the material world, and act within it. The two forces interplay.

Social class and hierarchy is a material attempt at stealing our divinity as creative, free, and self-sufficient beings. God has given us a will, and what is social class but the theft of the freedom of that will, enforced by physical violence, or restriction of information? Class is the theft of divinity, as our divinity is expressed in our ability to reason, set goals, and create change, and being told what to do is the theft of our own creative potential. God gave humanity something that supersedes the ability of other animals: the ability to make decisions and express our will to a higher degree. Class restricts this, reduces humanity to beasts of burden.

Social class has to do with one's relationship to decision-making and costs. According to the anarchist philosophy, class exists when one party can maintain a monopoly on decision-making or costs can be imposed on one party at the expense of another without recompense. You can see social class in those

relationships that are inherently exploitative. Gary Chartier, of the Center for a Stateless Society, says,

Threatened and actual aggression against persons and their justly acquired possessions constitutes and maintains class divisions. Because it is the agency of deliberate aggression par excellence, the state is the source of the ruling class's power.¹¹

The basis of class is aggression, and social-class cannot exist without some form of aggressive, entropic, behavior. According to the law of equal liberty, *infringement* occurs when one imposes one's freedom on another, thus restricting their freedom. The law, stated by Spencer himself, says that "each has freedom to do all that he wills provided that he infringes not the equal freedom of any other." This philosophy is best applied to philosophies of both positive and negative rights, and not restricted to individualist *or* collectivist dogma, giving us a dialectic in accordance with the ethic of virtue.

RELATIONS OF THE CLASSES

THE FIRST EXAMPLE of social class I'll use as an example is one we're generally all familiar with: the relationship of employer and employee. This is different from the common relationship of consumer to producer, as a consumer is usually someone who has worked for their income, and, although this is not always true, it is almost always true that when a consumer is not a producer, they are an employer (or one's beneficiary), and do not labor in return, but instead benefit from, and bargain with, the work of others. Though they do not labor for the benefit of society, the employer makes the decisions, commanding people about, harassing them, and reaps the hard-earned profits, which they did not contribute effort toward earning themselves. Some may argue that the employer is being rewarded for their ideas, and indeed if there is any success due to their originality there is payment duly-owed, but a system of social class, rather than freedom, implies payment not for originality or service to society—

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taking upon the costs of others—, but for holding the exclusive right to perform a function, given by government. Employers are monopolists, inflated consumers, who benefit not from their own hard labor, but from the labor of others. They consume without working. As employer, and not worker, they are rewarded merely for the theft of their workers' products. A shame though it is, one cannot fully place blame on the capitalist who is ignorant of the situation, for they are living in the same illusion of a false pretext given to us by the state, in order to maintain power.

Power is handed down to the capitalist (employer) for the sake of the landlord, creditor, and state for the same purpose that the capitalist hands down power to management; to maintain any control at all in a society so large and unmanageable. Just as the managing class is there to watch over the property of the capitalist in their absence, the capitalist class is there to maintain the land and collect profit to pay their rent, credit, and taxes. Capitalists are given exclusive loans, grants, business licenses, externalized property protection, subsidies, etc. that allow them to outsource their competition, the common working class. This is similar to the contracts held between lords and vassals in feudal societies, where a noble would be given power over a piece of the king's land in return for military service. The king only did so upon incentive, and the incentive was to maintain *some* power when *all* power couldn't be maintained alone. The charter of the employer, the capitalist, instead comes in the form of corporate ownership. They are given the privilege to externalized property-protection costs (taxes paid by all go to protect the property of the rich), intellectual property protection (patents, copyrights, etc.), exclusive business licensing, zoning regulations, subsidies, and tax-breaks, to name a few unearned benefits.

The same is true of our next tier in the class system. The landlords sit by idly and collect rent money that far exceeds their costs simply for having the privilege of the state's protection of their land; but they must pay the banking and political class. Most landlords perform no manual labor, but call manual workers to solve the real problems of their tenure. They just collect a huge rent-check when the most they do is make a few phone calls, write some smaller checks, and sign some papers. Most landlords,

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needless to say, did not pay for their land out of their own labor to begin with, they received credit from the next tier we will talk about, or they inherited power from family or another privileged party, such as a member of the ruling class who had decided to hand down some of their stolen surplus in their favor. Landlords collect rent, but they still must pay interest and taxes to those above them.

Clarence Lee Swartz, author of *What is Mutualism?*, illustrates the tiered relationship of economic returns when he addresses the apathy of workers in regard to interest on money:

The workers for wages are apt to say:
"We borrow no money, and therefore pay no interest. How, then, does this squabble concern us?"

In Reality, it is exactly the class that has no dealing with the banks, and derives no advantage from them, that ultimately pays all the interest money that is collected. When a manufacturer borrows money to carry on his business, he counts the interest he pays as part of his expenses, and therefore adds the amount of interest to the price of his goods.

The consumer who buys the goods pays the interest when he pays for the goods; and who is the consumer, if not the public at large, composed chiefly of the workers for wages?¹²

This same relationship holds true in regard to rent. The price of rent is put into the price of goods and services. Interest is added to the price of rent. When a person mortgages their house, and rents it at the price of the mortgage, the monetary interest is included.

The bankers control the money. No one else is allowed to distribute freshly-minted money, even though it is just an IOU. The government prints and the bank distributes our IOUs for us, since we are not legally allowed to do so alone or collectively. They

charge exorbitant interest rates to do so, and we pay simply because the state makes it illegal for us to monetize our own labor. The state does this for the sheer reason that free money would make it harder to collect the taxes the state needs to persist in its aggression.

Some of the first coins were produced for the king of Lydia for the sake of making sure taxes were paid in proper, pre-measured, proportions. By forcing his value system— based not on a range of labor products, but instead only on precious metals stamped with his seal of approval (a picture of him)— he could ensure that he was getting more of the full value he demanded. Since taxes are an act of theft, and not a voluntary exchange, if he had instead demanded a payment in livestock, he would be given the least healthy animals of the people's flocks. Since metals are more consistent in their value, he could ensure that he was getting exactly the value he asked for by having coins pre-weighed and stamped. Coinage, throughout history, was used largely for the purpose of paying troops.

At one time, the state was a single employer, landlord, banker, and political entity in one, and the ruler called all the shots he or she wanted to. Today, we find many employers, quite a few landlords, some smaller banks, but only one central bank and government. Society is clearly moving toward a political and economic complexity, decentralizing, and innovating on the smaller scale, but it also clearly has a long way to go before we reach our ability to freely express our will; that is, to fully live out our purpose and fulfill our destinies, unrestricted by the actions of our fellow humans.

The state and the banks are closely related in their reinforcing positions of power and authority. The banks are given exclusive authority to issue money, and the state holds exclusive power to enforce such authority. In order to make payments to its troops, and thus organize aggression in favor of its own class, the state charges an involuntary price for the “services” it purports to offer known as *taxes*. Valued services, however, are gladly paid for.

SLAVERY AND ENTROPY

TAXATION IS MODERN SLAVERY, as a slave is a person who does not own their own labor. What is money proper, but a representation of our labor? When this labor is stolen from us, we are enslaved, we are at the mercy of another's will, another's desires, and not at our own. Our divinity is stolen.

When we remember that the core traits of humanity are that we are living, conscious beings, full of desire, emotion, intuition, forethought, and a desire to do good, social classes only serve to alienate us from our God-given purpose; the expression of our own ego, our own motives and desires. Our motives and desires should not contradict, as according to the law of equal liberty, but should be as fully expressed as is possible without contradiction, so that maximum freedom may one day be reached. The state, however, and all of its component parts— the monopolies of land, employment, and credit— are at contradiction with the law. For this reason, suffering against the moral law of finality, the state's fate will be likened to that of the material world which spawned it (remember geographical advantages in the Fertile Crescent?). In the long term, the state will diminish to the laws of entropy. The freedom of the human spirit will arrange matter in a more civilized, plentiful, and orderly manner, without the waste, need, and want of the state.

Taxes, interest, rent, and profit are all payments made above the cost of the wages of labor. These are externalized costs, put onto the lower classes so that the rich may exist without laboring. This is a natural desire for the rich, and comes from their own syntropic-nature as entropy-evading machines; they too want to be happy. However, the shortsightedness of taxes, interest, profit, and rent come at the expense of others, and thus does not follow the law of equal liberty, which promotes syntropy in the long term. Unlike these involuntary modes of interaction— interest, profit, rent, and taxes—, voluntary exchange and payment based on agreement does not have such entropic effects; instead, it is syntropic and productive in nature. As Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, an early proponent of mutualism, realizes,

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the metaphysical act of exchange, in addition to labor, but by a different method from labor, is a producer of real value and of wealth.

[...]

pagan antiquity, as well as the Church, has unjustly aspersed commerce, upon the pretext that its rewards were not the remuneration of real services. Once again, Exchange, an entirely immaterial operation, which is accomplished by the reciprocal consent of the parties, cost and distance of transportation being allowed for, is not merely a transposition or substitution, it is also a creation.¹³

Proudhon knew that surplus carried no true value to society, and that when surplus was traded to those who could use it, use-value was created. Humans are value-creating machines. It is part of our syntropic nature. Bronze, for instance, served little value to humanity until the Bronze Age, when it became the dominant material in innovation. The value of bronze came along with the human creation of a purpose for the bronze. That is, until there was an economic demand for the bronze (human purpose and value) it was in nature's surplus, and carried little value. Nature's surplus can be easily accessed and utilized in innovation, but human-controlled surplus— private property of natural resources— does not allow for this opportunity. Speculation of natural resources— owning what one does not occupy and use— creates much waste, entropy, and keeps demand from being met by supply. Natural resources are a gift from God, and not a product of human labor. Thus, resources should belong to life as a whole, and humans should make themselves good tenants to the One, and share what has been offered. Labor, the product of our individual gifts of divine creative potential, should be owned and commanded by the worker, and by none other.

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Social classes represent relationships of entropy, but our God-given purpose is as an emergent system of syntropy, teleologically pulled toward the perfect truth and goodness of the Omega Point, the evolutionary culmination of our will, wants, and desires. We mustn't forget that, just as a watch is made of gears that interact to create the larger clock, and our bodies are made of cells that make up our larger being, we interact to create larger entities than ourselves, which culminate in the body of God—the Cosmos—, which could not work without us. We are, though a small portion, the gears of the Universe, and perform a larger function within the whole than we are aware. As Three Initiates remind us again, “Every thought we think, every act we perform, has its direct and indirect results which fit into the great chain of Cause and Effect.”¹⁴

Like everything else in the Universe, we are a chemical process, and like all processes we have a beginning and an ending. Unlike other chemical processes we are highly complex, due to our dual nature as spiritual-material beings affected by syntropy as well as entropy. Still, we must not see ourselves as the end result, but as a means to an ends. This can be hard to do, but when one accepts that everything dies and that we (our matter) have been alive and dead many times over, and that we ourselves are a combination of nutrients that we have combined from other living organisms, it can become easier. We are not living in a fresh beginning; we started long ago and set this up for ourselves. We are the archetypes of our former being, living in the decisions of the lives that we had before. The decisions we make dictate our future realities, past our simple experience as individual humans.

Freedom is the ability to differ, not because we're *going* different places, but because we're *coming from* different locations. We are all given a syntropic purpose as humans, and that purpose is to love one another and do good, express our desires, care about the well-being and existence of life, and bring the Universe back together. Given our different abilities and locations, this implies different things for different people. A person in Japan, for analogy's sake, and a person in The United States, will likely take different routes to a common destination, such as Great Britain, though they share a common goal. The same is often true of ethics.

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Our purpose as humans is to reach a common goal of love and respect, but we must be free to take our own paths there. Hierarchy and class antagonism only serve to hinder this.

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Two Incentives for Cooperation

*This was composed for a speech given to the People's Arcane School
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COOPERATION COMES NATURALLY to humanity. If left to nature, outside of our conscious and ethical influence, we would still be living in a world where the strongest and most violent of creatures prey on the weakest and most docile. In many ways we still are, but, while this is true, we experience a level of conscious consideration for others which is unheard of in the primate order, or historical chain of evolution, and which pushes us forward.

As humans, we are under the impression that we are part of a world completely separated from the rest of nature. We call this world *artificial*. What is it that makes us feel separated from the rest of the animal kingdom? As humans in America today, we no longer have to fear cougars, bears, cholera, smallpox, or —for the most part— one another. Our fear of other animals, macro- and microscopic, is gradually being eradicated. No longer do we have to callous our feet as we follow herds, and flee from harsh weather, in a nomadic lifestyle. How is it that humanity is finding the ability to accomplish such extraordinary feats of modern civilization?

Unlike the elephant, who has taken to great size to defeat attacks from predation, humans have not evolved great physical features of defense, but something, in my opinion, much more impressive. We have evolved consciousness, thinking ability, and from this thinking ability developed cooperation, innovation, shared production, as well as mutual aid in defense. We have developed economies by which specialization can occur and by which labor can be divided, to allow maximum efficiency. We have developed associations, teams, and alliances to allow our goals to be reached. What is it, though, that is the binding mechanism for these goals? What is the incentive to cooperate?

There are two ways that cooperation is oftentimes used. One we all grow up with in modern societies is unfortunately the least virtuous of ways, and is arguably not a form of cooperation at

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all. This is cooperation with authority; when to cooperate is to do what an authority tells you, even when it is disagreeable. The second form of cooperation is cooperation for the sake of a commonly-shared goal. In the forms of cooperation lie their causes.

Aristotle named causation in four different parts, which he referred to as the *Four Causes*. According to Aristotle, there is the material a thing is composed of and the form that it takes, but then there are also efficient and final causes, which correspond, respectively, to past and future causes. These causes can explain the different incentives and definitions of *cooperation*.

Our material and formal causes explain our strengths and shortcomings as humans. Our material causes are generally similar—flesh and blood—, but the formal causes shape us into unique individuals. Since my vision of cooperation does not depend on sameness, and takes place in highly ordered society, I will not focus on these individual causes, as they play a minor role in political and economic conflict. Individuals differ, it is true, enough to have an assortment of abilities and disabilities, but when thrown into a sea of the generally capable, these differences are reduced to mere specialization in trade, rather than positions of power. Most individuals are of similar stature, mentally and physically. Our differences are, for the most part, minute, riding an equilibrium with rather tight margins. *Homo sapiens sapiens*, all genetically similar enough to be classified as the same species, did not evolve such coercive hierarchies as we experience today until later in history, suggesting a cultural rather than biological foundation. If it is not genetic superiority that creates power, then it is something else. What is it? We must look elsewhere.

In the first form of cooperation, benefitting authority, the reason, mechanism, or cause is based largely in the formal past. That is, there is likely some form of pressure being used to assert such cooperation, some form of coercion or aggression being exercised. If I point a gun at someone, I can likely make them cooperate in such a manner. The pointing of a gun is a mechanism of past causes; having pointed the gun, I now have control.

In the second form of cooperation, being mutually beneficial, the cause is based in the conceptual future form. There

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is no need for human compulsion for this kind of cooperation. Instead, only the communication and synthesis of goals can provide the incentive to cooperate in such a manner. This is a future cause, as it represents higher ideals, of goals actualized. The cause of the future is the good, and we are drawn toward it by way of conceptualization.

Each form of cooperation is, in truth, composed of both future and past causes, but to differing degrees. For instance, the cooperation of the first scenario, authority, relies on the future vision of survival and success on the part of the dominated, as well as the dominator. It is the goal of living that keeps them from opposing authority. Nonetheless, their goals are largely affected by authority, and for this reason are largely due to past causes. The cooperation of the second scenario, mutuality, relies on the coercive nature of the environment we are surrounded by, which induces us to cooperate as we face the hardships of weather and other life, but not on human-induced hardship of a political orientation. Hardship, provided by nature, is sufficient to induce cooperation. Human coercion is unnecessary and, in fact, detestable for this purpose. For this reason, we will say the *human* cause of mutual aid is a future cause (so far as people did not have to interfere by means of human violence with one another to induce cooperation). Because they share goals— ideas of what is good—, they cooperate.

Since this is a discussion of economics, and not of technology, I will not focus on the ways by which humans solve natural coercion and cooperate better with nature, but in the ways we solve human coercion and cooperate better with one another. I do, however, recognize the importance of solving antagonisms with nature, but, in order to enact any solution for the environment, we must first induce human cooperation, and free people to make good, enriching, decisions together. We must first understand the two incentives to cooperate.

What is it that allows for the potential of both kinds of human cooperation, coercive “cooperation” and truly cooperative mutual aid? The capacity for human choice and consequence, atop geographical differences.

Two Incentives for Cooperation

Humanity started as small groups, without large economies of trade and distribution. We formed these groups in order to better cooperate against the coercive reality of nature. Nomadic groups of hunter-gatherers started on equal grounds and in similar bio-regions, without any one group able to accumulate a surplus. That is, until humanity reached the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates rivers in the Fertile Crescent, and learned to stay put. This was the Cradle of Civilization because it was filled with fertile ground, animal life useful to humans, rivers that allowed for a sedentary lifestyle, and for more permanent homes to be built. Perhaps just as important to the success of the area was that it was perfect trading grounds between Africa and Eurasia. This, alongside a sedentary lifestyle, allowed for a surplus to develop, and with surplus came the ability to defend private property. With such power, states were formed in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Later, strong maritime states we are all familiar with from ancient history— such as the Minoans, the Phoenicians, and Greeks— developed.

It is clear that cooperation, naturally developed, was suited for small groups, and when populations rose with surplus (unequally distributed, and not due to the virtue of labor, but to the monopoly of fertile grounds for living) the larger groups became states, capturing slaves and implementing class stratification. Michael Cheilik, once associate professor of history at Lehman College, and Author of *Ancient History* says,

According to many scholars, at first there was very little class distinction among the citizens. To be sure, there was a variety of economic functions among the inhabitants, but there is little indication of aristocracy or monarchy before 2800 B.C. It seems to some scholars that all citizens met in an assembly to select a leader. Slavery began at a very early period, as it occurred to conquerors that killing one's adversaries was wasteful. Why not take them alive and use their labor? But the number of slaves was quite small.¹

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This suggests that, internal to the societies, the second form of cooperation—solidarity and mutual aid—was still being practiced, and was in fact the reason that the first form of cooperation—authority and domination—could be established over the slaves in the first place. Indeed, Michael Tomasello suggests that

The remarkable human capacity for cooperation [...] seems to have evolved mainly for interactions within the local group. Such group-mindedness in cooperation is, perhaps ironically, a major cause of strife and suffering in the world today. The solution—more easily described than attained—is to find new ways to define the group.²

It was not superiority that allowed for authority to be established, but geographical difference, formal causation, presenting itself to cultures that had not yet developed a mechanism for the proper distribution of land. These cultures—the ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian city-states, and later kingdoms and empires—used their control of the land to dominate and enslave other societies, and built their nations partially on their forced labor.

Before these kinds of social relationships, though, humanity was much more kind to one another. Hunter-gatherer, and even early horticultural and herding, societies have a stronger sense of kinship and mutual dependency than did those living under the rule of kings. Band societies were much more likely to make lasting decisions as a group. Even mental illness is unlikely to have occurred in such large amounts until the rise of nations and states.

The Hebrew people long rejected kingship, until King Saul, and were instead organized into loose confederations that were presided over by ad hoc officials called *judges*. Judges were not the same as kings, but they did perform public functions such as presiding over policy, filling judiciary roles, warfare, etc. Similarly, early Germanic, Norse, and Celtic peoples were organized into

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confederations, and would meet in mass meetings called *Things*. There would be Things of various scales, between multiple villages. They were presided over by officials, called *Lawspeakers*, who—originally, before developing into kings— were not rule-makers, but were instead responsible for remembering and reciting the laws that the meeting collectively agreed upon. In the Americas, though long after, but under somewhat similar technological circumstances, Native Americans, such as the Iroquois— and many others—, also formed confederations of a large scale, with much more participation in legal affairs from the general population.

Humanity did not develop to dominate one another. Through evolution, we have developed further toward mutual aid, and this has gotten us to where we needed to be. Mutual aid, though, relies on a similarity of power, which has not been thrown off intrinsically (by genetic differences), so much as extrinsically (by environment). As long as costs can be exchanged, and not fully returned, power can continue to assert itself. The problem that allows for power to assert itself, though, is not only based on the first form of “cooperation,” but also on the altruistic side. We let the thieves keep what they have taken.

The problem is clearly the current claim to property rights, and, as long as one group can claim to own property that is more productive, by its very nature, the general balance of power inherent in humans— that has encouraged our cooperation— is thrown out of equilibrium. This imbalance of rights to resources relies on both forms of cooperation in protecting property rights. The state protects it by force, and we protect the state, and its cronies, by allowing them to continue having rights to the stolen property, and not stopping it. Our own values and ethics, falsely applied, keep us enslaved. We patriotically share goals with thieves, not realizing their roles in our lives, not realizing the goal we ultimately share is the transferal of our liberty.

Land, out of the three factors of production (land, labor, capital) is the only factor that is not the result of human labor. If one should have claim over one’s own labor, land properly belongs in the commons, to be used by all. Otherwise, it may be used to extract labor from others (as when serfs worked the lands of lords). That’s why John Locke added his proviso to his *Second Treatise*. As

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it was not produced by humanity, land is a gift from nature, and we should treat it as such. Without a population that respects monopoly property rights over land, rulers would find themselves hard pressed to assert their power.

Perhaps what is most sickening is that naturally developed mechanisms of self-preservation, such as ethics, are working against the people who use them most, when they defend the rich's position of power and control, as staples of "law and order." As long as the poor respect the property of the rich, as a monopolist instead of a harder-working producer, they will continue to fall victim to the bargaining power of the rich, and will kneel to the troops that accept their pay, which was appropriated by the mere collection of rent and not at any cost of effort. We pay for our own repression, and, in a state of ignorance, perpetuate it with inaction and/or loyalism.

It is also the tendency toward altruism that is to blame on the side of the state, the rich. If not for their own internal cooperation, they could not assert such power over the masses and establish such laws. Mesopotamia was not claimed by individuals, but by a society of cooperators, asserting themselves against other cooperating groups. It is only because they had a geographic advantage, and not because of genetic superiority, that the rulers could establish themselves as the private users of the Fertile Crescent, and extract slaves from other societies.

Thus it is, that domination is not only the inclination toward narcissism, rare in the human species, but is also a symptom of the natural human inclination toward trust and cooperation, atop geographic (and thus, technological and economical) advantages that we (our ethics and culture included) did not yet adapt to in our long process of natural selection (genetically or culturally). Both parties express the two forms of cooperation. The ruling class support one another, and repress us, and we support them, cooperate with them, and, in so doing, repress ourselves. This is largely due to the lack of our own shared goals, and the presence of theirs, which is further attributed to a lack of information on our behalf, and presence on theirs, attributed further to who has leisure time and money for learning.

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The two forms of cooperation are but one, expressed according to the terrain in which they are placed.

Cooperation is an inherent human value. It is not genetic superiority that has allowed for domination, it is geographic, economic, and legal injustice, and we all support it when we do nothing to change it or subscribe thoughtlessly to ethical norms that only serve to keep society repressed.

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¹ Michael Cheilik, 14.

² Michael Tomasello, 100.

The Role of Metaphysics in Socio-Political Revolution

This piece is dedicated generally to The People's Arcane School, and specifically to my friend and teacher, Mercurious Magus, without whom I'd have been unable to put this together.

METAPHYSICS AND THE ALCHEMY OF SOCIETY

MANY PEOPLE, the world over, face very real problems: pain, stress, anger, sadness, hunger, and much more. To have these emotions is normal, what it is to be human, but when people start to face these difficulties for an extended amount of time they can begin to act out in frustration or become depressed. When they feel like they have no other resort, people in the West resort to praying, looking outside to help from a higher power than themselves, one which they have never seen; while many others, especially in the East, look within for that higher power, by way of meditation.

What does modern science have to say about the effects of such theurgical practices as meditation and prayer? Well, though skeptical at first, all kinds of scientific studies have come out that demonstrate that prayer and meditation can both be beneficial for people's lives. They can, indeed, both be positive. Meditation can lead to calmer mental states, and praying can lead to adhering to higher goals, creating better outcomes through acts of faith.

It should come as no surprise that metaphysics and self-help share a close relationship to one another. If you haven't seen the mass of yoga advertisements in all of the hip spots in your town, you must not be living in a mass urban environment! Most of you, I am sure, have seen them. You know, they're next to the other hippy stuff (posters, flyers, and cards), like the ads for Buddhist meditation, acupuncture, liberal church groups, and New Age speakers. It's no accident that you'll also find cards for psychologists, nutritionists, and natural healers in these kinds of places; these all developed from metaphysics. Hell, even modern medicines came from metaphysics, as made bright and clear in the

symbology of the Hermetic caduceus, still used in the medical industry. Chemistry—pharmacology— is just alchemy, after all. This should be no surprise, considering most of our scientific knowledge came out of metaphysics and its offshoots!

Despite the influence of faith on human consciousness, and, therefore, outcomes, modern scientism, with a fundamentally atheistic worldview, rejects all notions of faith whatsoever. Yet, as I've written in "A Mystical Look at Evolution," empiricism, while having value, restricts us from inquiry about future potentials, by limiting all potentials to successes of the past. Without faith, life would be inorganic, for it is the faith in outcomes that drives an organism to action. As William James famously argues for us in his lecture, "The Will to Believe,"

A social organism of any sort whatever, large or small, is what it is because each member proceeds to his own duty with a trust that the other members will simultaneously do theirs. Wherever a desired result is achieved by the co-operation of many independent persons, its existence as a fact is a pure consequence of the precursive faith in one another of those immediately concerned. A government, an army, a commercial system, a ship, a college, an athletic team, all exist on this condition, without which not only is nothing achieved, but nothing is even attempted. A whole train of passengers (individually brave enough) will be looted by a few highwaymen, simply because the latter can count on one another, while each passenger fears that if he makes a movement of resistance, he will be shot before any one else backs him up. If we believed that the whole car-full would rise at once with us, we should each severally rise, and train-robbing would never even be attempted. There are, then, cases where a fact cannot come at all unless a

preliminary faith exists in its coming. And where faith in a fact can help create the fact, that would be an insane logic which should say that faith running ahead of scientific evidence is the 'lowest kind of immorality' into which a thinking being can fall. Yet such is the logic by which our scientific absolutists pretend to regulate our lives!¹

Metaphysics can be very important for people's lives. With a focus largely on ontology— studies of modes of being, the way change occurs— metaphysics is of great importance to people, often supplying them much needed faith and ambition. Naturally, this is where alchemy has its roots. As a friend first demonstrated to me, alchemy is not merely about the physical transformation of "lesser" substances into gold (though it certainly includes such inquiries about nature); this transition is largely metaphorical, with gold representing a purer, higher state of mental well-being and free will. In transforming the lesser elements into gold, alchemy touches on a metaphor for turning lower states of consciousness into higher modes of being. In terms of Hermeticism, this can be seen as transmutation from one "mental gender" to another.

In many ways, metaphysics, as well as mythology, has contributed to the very rise of civilization. Without faith, without goals, psychological well-being, populations would likely be unable to create the standards of living they have come to enjoy today. They'd be lacking the will to believe, as discussed by William James earlier, without which social organisms are hopeless, helpless. Lenski and Nolan say, in *Human Societies*;

The experience of Mesopotamia and Egypt thus supports the impression from horticultural societies concerning the importance of religion in the formation of an economic surplus. Technological advance created the possibility for a surplus, but to transform that possibility into a reality required an ideology that motivated farmers to produce

more than they needed to stay alive and productive, and persuaded them to turn that surplus over to someone else. Although this has sometimes been accomplished by means of secular and political ideologies, a system of belief that defined people's obligations with reference to the supernatural worked best in most societies of the past.²

Mesopotamian religion is oftentimes considered polytheistic, and in many ways it was, but a more accurate depiction is one of henotheism, wherein deities are sorted into various hierarchies. In Mesopotamia, some of these deities, often considered the most important by their claimants, were patron deities, which represented, or governed over, a particular city. Marduk, for instance, was the God of Babylonia, and Enki was the God of Eridu. The belief in these Gods contributed to the success of the particular city-states. For the longest time, city-states held their own deities up high, but saw the deities of other cities, oftentimes, as enemy forces. They didn't disbelieve in one another's deities, necessarily, but neither did they worship them. Just as henotheism united people into their many city-states, the rise of monotheism allowed for ideologies to create and maintain nations. Atenism, Zoroastrianism, and early Judaism, for instance, further united the Egyptians, Persians, and Hebrew people under their nation's singular Gods, which gave them a common national identity. Metaphysical inquiry contributes not only to the individual, but also to the well-being of society as a whole. Carl Jung believed that myths were the dreams of a society; as an individual has their dreams, so too societies have their myths. One can easily see how spirituality and psychology share a common root.

The mental and physical well-being that spirituality encouraged developed strong, healthy, and united individuals, who formed temples and the first sedentary lifestyles. Afterall, the first city-states were theocracies, and temples played the role of church and government simultaneously. Silos, which held the harvests of

the community, were placed in the hands of the priests, and therefore the entirety of the economy was as well.

It's necessary to point out that these originated as voluntary communities, but soon degenerated, for many reasons, into city-states, which were prone to slavery, caste systems, and other systems of involuntary hierarchy. Spirituality was largely responsible for the creation of civilization, and had also been the medium used by the new priestly castes of the city-states to seize and maintain power. This did not usually occur from within societies, but from without; as communities conquered one another, they would establish hierarchies to maintain power. Spirituality itself should not be blamed, but hierarchical relationships of domination, which allow spiritual knowledge and culture to be kept in the hands of the few, rather than spread

A MASONIC NATION

PAGAN MYSTERY RELIGIONS were responsible for setting up civilization, but getting a little closer to home, their modern rivals and variants may also be responsible for the way we live our lives today. Freemasons, for instance, heavily influenced by the ancient mystery religions, claim the American and French Revolutions as successes of their own. For more, see the cited article by Alex Davidson, who says,

“Freemasonry was one of the channels, perhaps the main channel, by which the values of the Enlightenment were transmitted from Britain to America, France, the Netherlands and, eventually, to all civilised countries.”³

This should really come as no surprise. Afterall, there is Masonic imagery all over government resources, such as on our money, embedded in the bricks of public buildings, and much much more. A simple online search should be enough to demonstrate that. Now, a lot of crackpot ideas may come along with the resources, but the fact will remain that the crackpots

themselves, though crackpots, are discussing very real phenomena, even if they blow them out of proportion. For this reason alone, it is interesting, and perhaps even rewarding, to listen to crackpots sharing rather objective data or sound concepts, though crackpots they may be.

The Enlightenment era came with a massive shift toward industrial capitalism, which was coupled also with a transition toward the modern Republic. The French, and especially American, revolutions helped usher in the new paradigm, with, apparently, great help from the Masons, some of whom became our first presidents. Is it a coincidence that Adam Weishaupt founded the Illuminati on May 1st, 1776? Or that many conservatives and religious zealots blamed them for the French Revolution? Is it a coincidence that these revolutions ushered in a new form of government, and that which was preferred by Plato, a republic? After all, the Masons frequently studied the works of Plato himself, as well as the work of the Neo-Platonist tradition, as founded by Plotinus. Republicanism, practiced within the society as well as desired without, only came natural to the Mystery traditions.

Republicanism is not the only philosophy of the Freemasons, it's just their preferred political system. The philosophy and theology—or theosophy, if you will (not to be confused with the organization so named)—of the Freemasons is very diverse, but when one looks into their origins one quickly sees ties to the occult, esoteric, or arcane perspectives of reality. A major component of many of these worldviews is the contradictory nature of reality—duality or polarity—as expressed in Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism, and Hermeticism. Take, for instance, this passage from *The Kybalion*, published by the Yogi Publication Society (The Freemasons' publishing company), which makes clear the importance of polarity, and how it may be used to seize power:

By an understanding of the practice of Polarization, the Hermetists rise to a higher plane of Causation and thus counter-balance the laws of the lower planes of Causation. By rising above the plane of ordinary Causes they become themselves, in a

degree, Causes instead of being merely Caused. By being able to master their own moods and feelings, and by being able to neutralize Rhythm, as we have already explained, they are able to escape a great part of the operations of Cause and Effect on the ordinary plane. The masses of people are carried along, obedient to their environment; the wills and desires of others stronger than themselves; the effects of inherited tendencies; the suggestions of those about them; and other outward causes; which tend to move them about on the chess-board of life like mere pawns. By rising above these influencing causes, the advanced Hermetists seek a higher plane of mental action, and by dominating their moods, emotions, impulses and feelings, they create for themselves new characters, qualities and powers, by which they overcome their ordinary environment, and thus become practically players instead of mere Pawns. Such people help to play the game of life understandingly, instead of being moved about this way and that way by stronger influences and powers and wills. They use the Principle of Cause and Effect, instead of being used by it. Of course, even the highest are subject to the Principle as it manifests on the higher planes, but on the lower planes of activity, they are Masters instead of Slaves.⁴

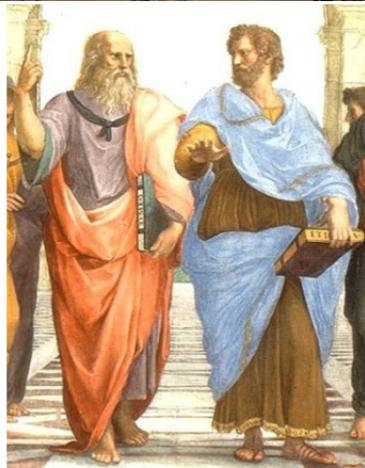
To the Hermeticist, polarity is no joke; it is nearly the only fact in reality. The elite, while not exclusively tied to Hermeticism, are well aware of this polarity, and use it to maintain power. A more modern variety of the polarity in use may be supplied by the dialectic of Hegelianism. No matter the source, be it from Zoroaster, Hermes, Hegel, etc., polarity and dialectical processes have been used by the elite for centuries to keep the populace in

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line, and to maintain “higher states” of consciousness. It is very much in use today. Take, for instance, the symbology in use by the Democratic and Republican parties, which has been passed down through the occult tradition; Democrats wear blue ties, and Republicans wear red ones. This is no coincidence, nor is this where the duality ceases. If we look at the image of the *School of Athens*, painted by Rafael and finished in 1511, we can see the very nature of today’s political parties.⁵



In this incredible masterpiece, we can see many of the great thinkers throughout history, including Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Socrates, and more. In the center, however, stand the masters of masters, according to the strokes of Rafael’s brush: Plato, and his equally impressive student, Aristotle. If you notice, the republican, idealistic, and more



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conservative Plato stands in his red robes to the left, while the more democratic, realistic, and liberal Aristotle stands in blue to the right. Is it a coincidence that today's Republican party is conservative, highly Christian, and accorded the red (fire) tie, while the Democrats are liberal, secular, and accorded the blue (water) tie? I certainly don't believe so; not after my occult studies, as in the works of Hermeticism, some of which I quoted for you. The elite use polarity to control us, to preempt, and thus manufacture, our choices. Let me repeat: to preempt, and thus manufacture, our choices. Because polarity is also the nature of the Universe, the elite may pick up on tendencies of resistance, and co-opt them, only to be able to put them down.

There are many who argue that the extremes of Marxism and Rothbardianism, if not completely manufactured, were sponsored by the central bankers in order to co-opt populist movements as part of a larger dialectic. They suggest that folks like Friedrich Hayek, Milton Freidman, Ludwig von Mises, and Murray Rothbard were probable direct cogs in the plot, having received funding from the elitist Volkner Fund. There are others saying that the Rothschilds were funders of Marxism and the Bolsheviks. Marxism and Rothbardianism are, respectively, the Democrats and Republicans to the extreme, created to confuse populists, and thwart true libertarian socialism. The elite don't only use Marxism and Rothbardianism as part of the dialectic; they also make use of race wars, gender wars, etc. Just about any polarity will do. Take the example of the hidden hand. You know how Napoleon famously has his hand in his shirt for no good reason? Well, there is a reason. It's a symbolic gesture, which can be confirmed in their own literature. One article describes it thusly:



The “hidden hand” can, in fact, be found in the rituals of the Royal Arch Degree of Freemasonry and the world leaders that use this sign are subtly saying to other initiates of

the order: “This is what I’m part of, this is what I believe in and this is what I’m working for.”²⁶

There are many examples of the hidden hand. Some people may be doing it because they saw initiates of secret societies do it, and may think it is a fashion statement, not knowing its meaning, while others are likely demonstrating their association to a hidden agenda.

So, let’s recap real quick: Metaphysics is largely the study of ontology (modes of being and becoming). This study promotes faith, which may help the individual accomplish goals and attain well-being. This well-being and goal-setting of individuals led, by way of spirituality, to the shared goal-setting of the first civilizations. Just as metaphysics helped establish the first societies, it also helped transmutate more recent ones, such as France and our own country. Further occult investigation shows a strategy of using polarity, passed on from the ancients and on to Hegel, and that the victors of these liberatory revolutions now use their strategies to repress the masses. Democrats, Republicans, Marxists, Rothbardians, are all extremists, and their positions are used by the elite to polarize, divide, and conquer.

STATELESS MYSTICISM

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED from the success of the Freemasons, from an anarchist perspective? Well, before we start, we have to rid ourselves of hard moral absolutism, the idea that things are absolutely good or bad. Instead, we must take a position of soft moral relativism; things may ultimately be good or bad, but they are relatively good or bad according to their position in time and space. In “The Journey of Realization: The Metaphysics of Dualist Pantheism” I go in depth into the philosophy, but, in the short, good and bad must be seen within sequences of necessary events. What is good today will be bad tomorrow. Standards change as possibilities open up. A horse was good transportation in 1700, but today it is obsolete in most parts of the world, due to technological advance.

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We need to see the Masonic revolutions through the lenses of soft moral relativism in order to gain anything from the Freemasons. Indeed, at the time, progression into capitalism, republicanism, and industrialism was a positive move away from feudalism, monarchism, and agrarianism. Sure, it was not a transition into mutualism, anarchism, and convivialism, but those are transcendental ideals that were not allowed for until the advent of modernism. Modern, industrialist, capitalist, republics were an ideal to the peasants of medieval, agrarian, feudalist, monarchies, but to us living as workers in the new republics, they are mere reality, with nothing ideal about them. The new ideal is anarchy, not mere republicanism! Alas, Proudhon's first positive usage of the word *anarchist*:

What is to be the form of government in the future? hear some of my younger readers reply: "Why, how can you ask such a question?"

You are a republican." "A republican! Yes, but that word specifies nothing. *Res publica*, that is, the public thing. Now, whoever is interested in public affairs — no matter under what form of government, may call himself a republican. Even kings are republicans." — "Well, you are a democrat." — "No." [...] "Then what are you?" "I am an anarchist."⁷

Indeed, the Freemasons and anarchists have more in common than they'd like to admit. For instance, take the masonic concept of liberty, as provided by Alex Davidson, the Master Mason mentioned previously:

Freemasons did more than simply convene and converse. In their private sociability, they established a form of self-government, complete with constitutions and laws, elections and representatives. They bestowed sovereignty on this government and

gave it their allegiance, yet it could in turn be altered or removed by the consent of a majority of brothers. The lodges became microscopic civil polities, new public spaces, in effect schools for constitutional government.

The virtues sought by the lodges were presumed to be applicable to governance, social order and harmony, and the public sphere. Their significance was their ability to teach men distinguished by their assumed merit how to integrate enlightened values with the habits of governance. The lodges endeavoured to civilise, to teach manners and decorum, to augment civil society. They taught men to speak in public, to keep records, to pay 'taxes', to be tolerant, to debate freely, to vote, to moderate their feasting, and to give lifelong devotion to the other members of their Order. Thus they became citizens, in the modern sense of the word, rather than mere 'subjects'.

The gist of masonic rhetoric was invariably civic. The miniature polities created were intended not only to possess internal government, but also to be social and intellectual in character. They were never intended to be political in the partisan sense of the word. One might say the lodges were deeply concerned about the political without ever wishing to engage in day-to-day politics. Masonic records are clear on the lack of specific political involvement on the part of almost any European lodge. The official masonic Constitutions published in London in 1723 prohibited 'any quarrels about religion, or nations, or state policy [...] we [...] are resolved against all Politicks, as what never yet conduc'd to the Welfare of the Lodge.' But to

understand this position, we need to know what London Freemasons meant by politics.

'Politics' in 1720s Britain meant something rather different from the rest of Europe. When discussing 'politics' the masonic Constitutions meant party politics, the conflict of organised groups precipitated by the evolution of a new political nation as the result of the Revolution Settlement of 1688-89. 'Politics' was the competition for power between Whig and Tory, Jacobite and Hanoverian, in a constitutionally protected parliament.

However, to avoid politics did not mean to deny the civic. As the Constitutions proclaimed, Freemasonry was practised 'when the civil powers, abhorring tyranny and slavery, gave due scope to the bright and free genius of their happy subjects [...] The enjoyment of social harmony by the lodge members relied upon peace and freedom as guaranteed by the civil authorities. Each lodge was intended as a microcosm of the ideal civil society.

[...]

The goal of government by consent within the context of subordination to 'legitimate' authority was vigorously pursued by the Grand Lodge of London and was demanded of all lodges affiliated with it. Thus, the lodges were political societies, not in a party or faction sense of the term but in a larger connotation. The form of the lodge became one of the many channels that transmitted a new civic and political culture, based upon constitutionalism, which opposed

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traditional privileges and established hierarchical authority.

This new culture, with Freemasonry as its vanguard, is known today as the Enlightenment, a key passage in European development.⁸

Sound familiar? In my opinion, this view of social revolution, wherein party politics are internally avoided, but politics are instead practiced directly in the organization, mirrors many anarchist strategies. Particularly, those of syndicalism come to mind. Organizations like the IWW, the Industrial Workers of the World, take a similar kind of approach. Anyone is allowed in the IWW, regardless of party affiliation, so long as they agree to the constitution. This means Marxists, anarchists, liberals, and even conservatives oftentimes end up sharing the same organization. Party politics would tear them apart, so it is necessary to keep them out of the conversation, and, for this reason, they are internally forbidden by the IWW's constitution. Instead, the IWW is interested in practicing democracy internally, in order to, as its "Preamble" states, "form the structure of the new society within the shell of the old." Now, certainly, the Freemasons were not anarchists, and, upon further reading of the article quoted above, it becomes clear that the two groups have much to quarrel about in the way of politics, but if considered in the context of history, the two have a very similar ontological approach to revolution: practice politics directly and inside, until they overwhelm the outside.

Now that we have a brief but, hopefully, clear understanding of soft moral relativism (if not, please see "The Journey of Realization: The Metaphysics of Dualist Pantheism"), we can move on to see what anarchists may take from the ontological strategies and successes of the Masons and global elite.

Well, to begin with, anarchists could shake off the atheism—a polarized viewpoint—in favor of pantheism, the synthesis of atheism and theism, which is naturally inclusive of positions no matter how polarized. The elite use division in order to weaken their opponents, but in order to maintain their internal strength, they practice synthesis and balance. We must take upon ourselves a similar strategy; instead of falling for the Democratic or

The Role of Metaphysics in Socio-Political Revolution

Republican parties, instead of falling for the extremes of Marxism and Rothbardianism, we can work toward a higher synthesis, a libertarian and egalitarian third-way, as represented in such ideologies as mutualism, Georgism, distributism, panarchism, and more.

My own interest in this subject arose only after having participated in a mystery school (of which I was a co-founder, though I was rather ignorant, compared to what I have learned from the school). This school is called *The People's Arcane School*, and it is a democratically functioning mystery school, taking influence from the Greco-Egyptian mystery societies. We have no instituted leadership. We work on consensus and we are quite organized for a small group; in fact, into three separate paths: science and mathematics, philosophy and history, and metaphysics and self-help. At the school, I have learned lessons of great importance to my own worldview, and mostly from my own friends. We have learned about quantum mechanics, the harmony of the spheres, sacred geometry, Aristotle's virtue ethics, formal logic, and much, much more. I learned about Rafael's painting, *The School of Athens*, at our school.

What I'm ultimately trying to get at with writing this is that anarchists should open themselves up to metaphysics, even if not to any particular variety. They should at least be open to the discussion, no dogma needed. Our school, for instance, has no dogma other than consensus, which keeps us respecting one another's values, and creates a soft pluralism, but one which is strangely united by agreement. We have atheists, Christians, New Agers, pantheists, and many others participate, and even teach, in our school. It is a place for free discussion and personal growth.

Naturally, many of our topics focus on issues of purpose, self-help, and mental well-being. The value this can have for an anarchist organization cannot be over-stated. In my own time organizing, with anarchists and other folks, the biggest hurdle I have come across is not in finding agreement with anarchist values, but that individuals feel helpless, and helpless individuals don't organize. They feel ontologically disempowered, and feel no urgency, or gumption, to do anything to incur change. Metaphysics combats this directly, by saying that everyone has the potential to

create change in their lives. So long as metaphysics isn't taken to be absolute metaphysical libertarianism—the hard belief in mind over matter, absolute freedom of will, idealism, without respect to determinism and the effects of matter on mind—this personal change can translate into social change.

I have mentioned, though admittedly briefly, that metaphysics was a large cause for the rise of civilization and for the Enlightenment revolutions, and transitions into industrial, capitalist, republics. There is, without a doubt, a certain power in faith, and anarchists would do best to accept, rather than reject, the fact that anarchism is a religion, a spiritual path, unfounded (on the large scale) by hard empirical evidence. This does not mean that it is impossible or any less valuable, but rather that it is rooted in the grounds of the future, the ideal, rather than the past, the real. It may be hard to admit, but let's take a look at the behavior of any proponent of a political ideology as radical as anarchism, which may include proselytizing, community-building, judgement, faith in results that have not yet occurred in history, and much more. These are not bad, but can actually be positive things, so long as they are seen for what they are. At this point, then, one must learn that they don't have hard answers for anarchism, as anarchism is a product of the will of all, but must instead appeal to the emotions, the human spirit of those they communicate with, and must heed their words and make sense of them. So long as the individual feels ontologically disempowered, either by the deterministic philosophy of atheism, or the authoritarian theology of Christianity, ideologies like anarchism, concepts such as freedom, which place the will of the individual at the center of concern, will be a foreign concept, a bad idea. Anarchism requires social faith, faith that society can function without authority, which requires a foundation of self-confidence. Anarchism requires the will to believe. Without this will, this thing, which has never existed on the scale we propose it should, never shall. It is under these circumstances that I propose anarchists directly involve themselves in the mystery tradition, and in order to do this we must form our own organizations, which reflect our anarchist values. It's worked once before; now, it's our turn.

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¹ William James

² Patrick Nolan and Gerhard Lenski,138.

³ Alex Davidson

⁴ Three Initiates, 220.

⁵ I was taught about the *School of Athens* firstly by a friend and colleague at The People's Arcane School, named Raquel Oropeza.

⁶ Anonymous³

⁷ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon⁵, 257.

⁸ Alex Davidson

Spiraling into Our Future: An Inquiry into the Dialectical Trajectory from the Real to the Ideal

SPIRALING THROUGH TIME

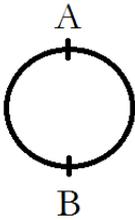
TIME IS SOMETHING which has eluded humanity for a great while, but is it possible to understand time? While we may have many limitations, and it may not be possible to perceive time itself as anything tangible, I do believe we can learn about time, if still we find ourselves unable to fully “grasp” it. In this essay, I will be using examples from the progression of solar time in order to present a dialectical ontology that reconciles reality and ideals. I will then take a look at the stages within the history of human societies, before applying the model and making predictions about where we are heading.

When two people are engaged in a discussion, one will state a thesis, some sort of idea, and the other will counter the point with their own, an antithesis. If they are honest with themselves and each other, laying their pride to the side, and being open to communication, this process will culminate in a final agreement, a synthesis, which incorporates the truths spoken by both parties. This is the process of dialectics, which has been passed down by philosophers since the time of the ancient Greek city-states, such as Zeno of Elea, and perhaps before, to eventually be highlighted by others in more recent history, such as a certain German Idealist, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and even given a materialistic spin later on by people such as Joseph Dietzgen (arguably a neutral monist more than a pure materialist), Friedrich Engels, and, perhaps to a lesser degree, Karl Marx. Dialectics are necessarily tied to our trajectory through time, as I intend to demonstrate.

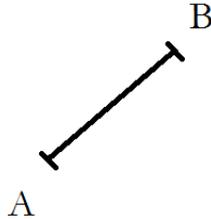
“Don the Scientist,” in his “Spiral Time or Ecological Time Theory, Its Implications for Behavior,” argues that time moves in a spiral. He suggests that ancient people believed in circular time, while modern people tend towards linear time. Don points out that each of these models has associated truths and difficulties. The problem with circular time is with the variations that occur during cycles, which make each rotation unique rather

than identical. The issue with linear time is that it ignores the fact that there are, indeed, cycles.¹ Spiral time is a more recent idea, which seems to be a synthesis (we like those!) of the truths of both.

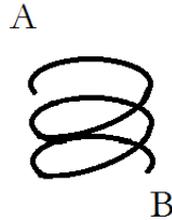
Circular Time



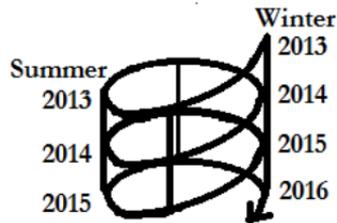
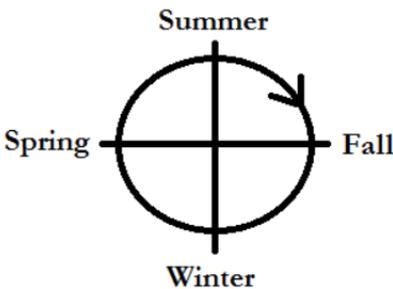
Linear Time



Spiral Time



Don suggests that in circular time one constantly goes through the same cycles. In linear time, one never goes through cycles. In spiral time, though, there is a linear and a circular element to time; as time moves along its linear path, it cycles from one side to the other, but it's never exactly the same. There is both a circular element, because the points A and B are repeated, and a linear element, because they aren't repeated on the same plane. Each A, though an A, is different from one another, and the same is true of B. A good way to think about this is to think about how we experience time itself.¹



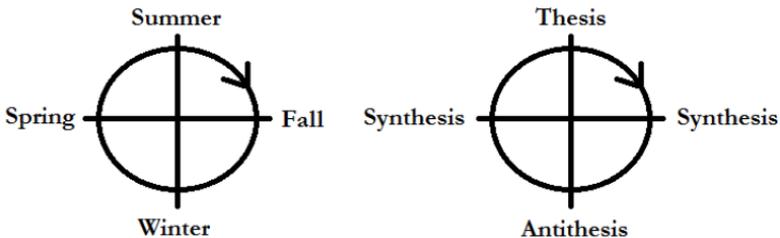
Throughout our experience of time we have the circularity of years, months, days, hours, minutes, seconds, etc. Each year has a Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring. Each month follows the cycles of the moon, from new, to first-quarter, to full, to third-quarter.

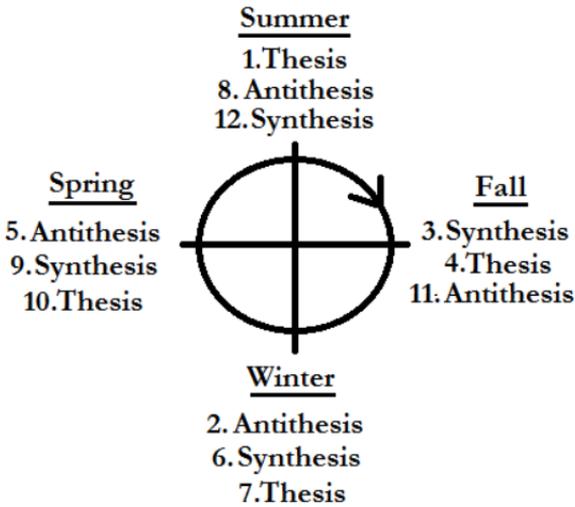
Spiraling into Our Future

Each day has a morning, mid-day, evening, and mid-night. Each hour, on the minute-hand of a common clock, has its beginning at 12, first quarter at 3, halfway point at 6, and third quarter at 9. If you've ever used an analog watch, you'll know that minutes and seconds can also be put on a round, repeating clock. Though time is cycling around us, it is not a pure cycle, there is a linear element.¹

As we repeat the experience of Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring, each of these is their own event. Each Summer is different, each Winter as well. The Summer this year will not be the same as the Summer following. Indeed, it will have many similarities, but it will not be exactly the same. Generally, it is Summer, specifically, it is the Summer of 2013. This seems true throughout our experience of time. Our trajectory through time is seemingly spiraled.¹

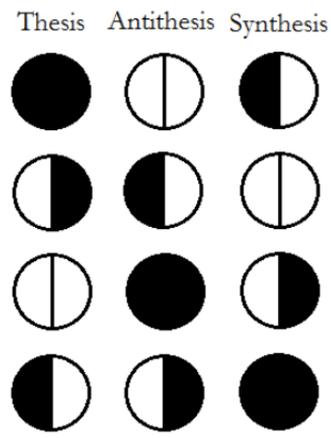
Time is related to dialectics by way of the spiral trajectory. If we are to start at Summer, it being our thesis, its antithesis is the Winter, which is not jumped into, but must first go through its synthesis, the Fall. Once the synthesis is reached, it becomes the next thesis, with Spring being its antithesis, and the synthesis, Winter, is reached. This process repeats, but not exactly. Each time around is different, and we experience each rotation of the seasons as a unique one.





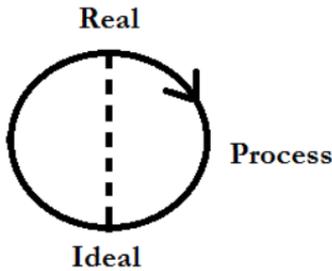
It may be easy to think of Spring and Fall as syntheses of Summer and Winter (hot+cold=tepid), but it's a little harder to think of Winter and Summer as being the syntheses of Fall and Spring. What is important here is the momentum behind the solstices and equinoxes. The Spring and Fall equinoxes are times of balance *between* extremes, but the Summer and Winter solstices are the balances *within* extremes. The Summer solstice is the longest day, and the Winter the shortest, of the year; the equinoxes are when day and night are balanced. A transition from any of these

points, however, is a loss of balance (even on the solstices). The solstices, like the equinoxes, happen on one day alone. One more day in either direction means a loss of this balance, and an end of the solstice. Now, with this in mind, we can see how Fall and Spring synthesize into Summer and Winter. It is dependent on which equinox is the thesis and which is the antithesis, what their momentum is, for there is also a



polarity between them. The Fall is the darker between the two, as Fall is the dying season, and Spring is the season of rebirth, light. Thus, when coming out of Fall—that is, when Fall is the thesis and Spring the antithesis—the tendency will remain toward darkness, and so the synthesis combines the dark halves of each, creating a dark whole, the Winter, the season, not of dying (that's Fall), but of death. Similarly, when coming out of Spring, the dominant role is the light, and the light of both seasons combine to form the complete light of Summer, life!

In terms of ontology, we could say the thesis is the real, the antithesis is the ideal, and the synthesis is the process. The real is what we have to work with, it is the material world around us.



The ideal is the world of ideas, it is the imagination which guides our goals. We cannot reach our ultimate dreams, which exist far beyond us, and this leads to the process. The real projects the ideal, and then moves toward it. One cannot move toward point B from point A, unless point B is already in existence. In

other words, the future is already there, even if it isn't *realized* yet.

Once the process has begun, the ideal becomes more possible, but at this point it has ceased to be the ideal (antithesis) at all, and, instead, becomes the process (synthesis) toward a higher ideal, as you notice in the movement from 1-12 in the image of the seasons.

It is not only heavenly bodies that move in a dialectic of this sort, but all things in motion.ⁱ The dialectic is the highest law of change, whereby the real is informed by the past and the ideal by

ⁱ Of the four forms of motion—oscillatory, linear, vibratory, and deformatory (internal)—, it is possible to explain the motion of each in terms of neutral dialectics. Due to these forms of motion, anything can be considered a clock, though some things are more reliable and accessible than others.

the future, creating a pragmatic present. This same model can be used for any transition, which naturally involves goals (ideas, ideals) and methods (materialization). One must remember, though, that, as I argue in “The Journey of Realization,” the past and future are relative, not absolute, leading to a difference in charge, or direction: the material and the spiritual.

A DIALECTICAL LOOK AT OUR FUTURE

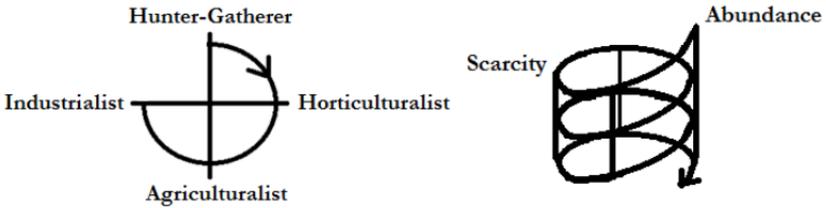
JUST AS the antithesis of Summer is the Winter, the Spring is the Fall, and they synthesize one another, so too do human societies move in such a fashion. Take, for instance, the development of subsistence technologies. Subsistence technologies arose in a sequence of hunting-gathering, to horticulture, agriculture, and industry. This sequence contains both a linear and cyclical aspect in its cycle, as I intend to show.

If we look at the nature of subsistence technologies, we tend to get two primary kinds of related consumption. That is, there is a scale or a spectrum of consumption habits which coincide with the forms of technology in use. These two poles, as described by James Woodburn, are *delayed* and *immediate returns*. A *delayed return society* is one which stores up goods, while an *immediate return society* uses what it has taken as soon as it is taken. Delayed returns are internal surpluses built up in reaction to external scarcities.² Immediate returns are not pathological, which suggests that our dichotomy is not a hard one, but we can still see that, while immediate return societies do not create an internal scarcity in response to external surplus, they at least have little need to create a surplus, because they are surrounded with seeming abundance.

Indeed, most anthropologists and sociologists argue that hunter-gatherers lived in ignorant bliss and that horticulture was a reaction to scarcity rather than need for improvement. Agriculture, however, took the cake for scarcity-driven societies; in the agrarian era, more surplus than ever was developed, and was held by the ruling class. Industry, though, changed things again, as industry has allowed more and more people to earn a piece of the pie. Wealth is finally starting to be distributed. The next step in the sequence will

have something in common with hunter-gatherers, just as summers have the heat in common with one another, but will also contain something unique, just as every summer has its own peculiarities.

Let's recap this real quick: Hunter-gatherers lived in a state of pure abundance (Summer), horticulturalists lived in a state of increasing external scarcity and internal surplus (Fall), agriculturalists lived in the most intense state of external scarcity and internal surplus (Winter), and industrialists are finally seeing an increase again in abundance (Spring). Our strong dichotomy, then, like Summer and Winter, are abundance and scarcity. Indeed, Summer brings abundance, and Winter scarcity.



We now have our generalization for the next step of humanity— abundance—, but what of our specification? As the generalization is informed by the future, the circle ahead, the specific is informed by the past, the linear path traversed. In terms of the Integralist, Ken Wilber, the future must “transcend and include.”³ It does this by transcending toward generalities of the circle, while including and staying true to the specific history of the line.

Hunter-gatherers did not jump right into agriculture. Instead, they went through a period of horticulture. Horticulture transcended hunting and gathering in many ways, by allowing permanent settlement and the growing of food, but it also included hunting and gathering, in so far as it was limited from the specifics of agriculture. Likewise, agriculture transcended horticulture by using alternative sources of power (animals), but included horticulture in so far as it was limited from the practice of industry. Industry, then, transcended agriculture by incorporating elements of a system of which we are yet to realize, and included agriculture to the degree that we still practice it and are limited from realizing

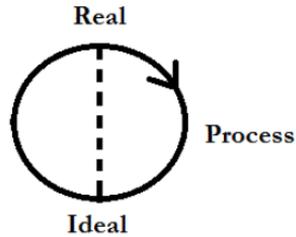
post-industrialism. What industrialism is, in general, is the upward momentum toward abundance. Industrialism is the Spring, the dawn. Post-industrialism, whatever its truest form, will be the golden Summer, the bright middle of the day. It will retain the living standards of industrialism, and will incorporate sustainability (abundance).

Each society is a domino effect. Very rarely, if ever, does one element of a society change without affecting the others. With each development of subsistence technology came a new class system, political order, economic condition, set of ideologies. In hunter-gatherer societies, for instance, the class system was non-existent, as was political hierarchy, economic exchanges were “gifts” (voluntary forms of loosely-based credit), and spiritual views tended toward animism, or, what Ken Wilber refers to as *archaic* belief-systems.⁴ Horticultural societies express the beginning of class systems, political hierarchies, usurious economics, and the spiritual ideologies tend toward polytheism. Wilber calls this stage the *magical* stage of culture.⁵ Agriculture was paired with extreme classism, hierarchy at its fullest, monumental taxation, and a tendency, usually, toward some form of monotheism. Ken Wilber refers to this stage as the *mythical* one.⁶ Industry, like we are coming out of, comes with decreasing class relationships, decreasing hierarchies, the spreading of surplus, and the secularist stage of ideologies, which Ken Wilber calls *vision-logic*.⁷

Hunter-Gatherer, Animism, “Gift,” egalitarian, Anarchy: Summer
Horticulturalist, Polytheism, Commodity Currency/Barter, Slaves, Oligarchy: Fall
Agriculturalist, Monotheism, Coins, Serfs, Monarchy: Winter
Industrialist, Secularism, Scrip, Workers, Democracy: Spring
Convivialist, Pantheism, Credit, Owner-Operators, Panarchy: Summer

The coming era, which is to exist at the pinnacle of the cycle, and which is to replace the hunter-gatherer, must share similarities to them, but must also be a progression from them. The next stage must transcend and include industrialism. If industrialism— say, in the location of nine o’clock, or at Spring— is the thesis, the antithesis is the future which replaces horticulture at three o’clock, and the synthesis is the replacement of hunter-gathering at twelve.

Once again, the real is the condition from the past and the ideal is the condition of the distant future. The conflict of real and ideal motivates us toward balance in the immediate future, which we have potential to realize. The synthesis of real and ideal I call *process*.



Let's consider the new society. I've labeled it Ivan Illich's term, *convivialist*, which has a root which means, essentially, leisurely or festive. Indeed, the new society will be quite novel, full of fun and games. We'll have the time to enjoy them. We won't regress into pre-industrial society, however, we will progress to a more post- or trans-industrialism, which has had, so far, exciting claims involving post-scarcity, technological singularities, sustainability, space-travel, possible immortality (thanks to germline and cancer research, among others), and more. The new society will retain a great deal of logic and secularism, but will have something in common with animism. Perhaps the new ideology will be a tendency toward pantheism, as pantheism tends to be associated with newer versions of animism at times, such as panpsychism or noetics. Post- or trans-modern societies will drift away from their harsher, secularist, views of science, to a large extent, thanks to fields such as theoretical physics and psychology, as well as a re-emerging interest in mysticism. Indeed, we are beginning to concern ourselves once more with the "within of things," to put it in the terms of the pantheist, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. That is, we are beginning to take spirituality, emotion, more seriously again. Fields like economics are opening up to behavioral studies of psychological importance; philosophies such as post-structuralism, object-relations, and more, emphasize new methods that are less rigid and settled, and which are more alive and organic. Classes are engaging in warfare; the pressure of the dialectic is on, hopefully to eliminate class-society. My proposals for the ways of the new society are found generally in row five, above, but more specifically throughout my other articles. Some may consider my views too idealistic to be accomplished by row five, but I feel I've taken

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special consideration to both sides of the equations I address, realistic and idealistic.

There's no telling the specifics, but the generalities seem pretty reliable. If we continue to synthesize our history, and if time moves according to the neutral dialectic, it is only a matter of time before our ideas of peace, love, and anarchy can come into fruition.

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¹ Don the Scientist

² James Woodburn

³ Ken Wilber, 27.

⁴ Ibid., 156.

⁵ Ibid., 157.

⁶ Ibid., 156.

⁷ Ibid., 173.

Gnosis, Psychosis, and the Society of the Demiurge

I said, "You've experienced a deeper understanding of reality," to which he replied, "No. Not a deeper understanding, a complete understanding."

GNOSIS AND SAṂSĀRA

IN MOST MYSTERY TRADITIONS there is a strong idealist element, whether it be a purely idealistic form of monism, or split with materialism in some form of dualism. To many of these perspectives, there is a clash between reality and ideality.

In the East, many Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists, Jains, and more use the term *saṁsāra* to refer to the cycle of life and death, and *māyā* to refer to the illusion of reality or self. In the Western traditions, idealists such as Plato taught that we experience only a portion of the truth behind reality, and that the unmistaken truth is beyond our perception, in the world of forms. This belief inspired the Christian tradition, as well as its esoteric cousin, Gnosticism.

The Gnostics tended to believe that the material world was a grand illusion which was created by a secondary deity called *the demiurge*. The demiurge was the fashioner of the material Universe, but was not the ultimate provider of substance. The demiurge played the role of accepting the creative force of God (the One, the Absolute, the Monad) and developing from it the physical world. In some versions this is an attempt to mimic the higher deity, but failing, while in others it may be an attempt to trap some of the spiritual in a world of deception. Gnosis was an awakening from the deceptive material illusion of the demiurge, an understanding of a hidden spiritual truth behind reality.

In many ways, the demiurge provided the Gnostics with a solution to the problem of good and evil that plagued other religions; if God is perfect, why does evil exist? The Gnostics, being a sort of dualistic pantheism (for the most part), or emanationism, took a rather different view of good and evil. Evil was the product of ignorance of the illusion, an illusion of

separation and materialism, given by the demiurge. This separation of perfection into individual pieces of good led to individual egos, and, since good and bad was a matter of individual priority, goods and bads. God, the Absolute, the Monad, was perfection, but the components of perfection themselves were incomplete, unaware of the larger perfection which they composed, and, thus, of their own perfection, and that of others. The acknowledgement of this perfection is called a state of *gnosis*.

PSYCHOSIS AS MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

UPON FURTHER INVESTIGATION into theurgical practices and the occult, one begins to come to the understanding that practices like magick, meditation, prayer, and the like are ways to trick the mind into belief in something other than reality, often claimed to be a higher reality, sometimes sourced in the world of forms. Practices like chanting and meditation, Sufi breathing exercises, and more, are meant to lead to these supposedly higher states of understanding. Many people claim to reach these states of gnosis upon use of hallucinogens. Indeed, entheogens have a long historical use for spiritual affairs, giving shamans and other spiritual advisers a gateway to “the other side.” Still, there are many that claim that the use of drugs is unnecessary. Many claim that meditation, contemplation, sensory deprivation, and other techniques may release the same euphoric feelings of awakening (to a new understanding of being), and even cause hallucinations. The goal is to trick the mind into positivity.

The goal of some of these practices would lead to, what today’s society would refer to as, *madness*; the ability to make decisions and feel ways that others stuck in the *māyā* (or another illusion) of *samsāra* see as ludicrous. Oftentimes, but not always, the goal is selflessness, lack of concern for material possessions, or for physical outcomes, and a unison with a higher reality of interconnectedness, love, and understanding. It also supports one’s own control of their emotions and mental well-being. If one is happy in one’s own head—even if others don’t understand it—is one not truly happy? This appears to be the goal of many of the esoteric practices. Instead of such an objective view, esoteric

philosophies tend toward a higher respect for the subjective, for personal experience, private intuitive enlightenment. It should be clear that esoteric and occult practices regard the world as, if not completely, at least greatly, an illusion, and hold regard for an understanding of a deeper reality, which can be experienced only from within.

Oftentimes, when a person goes through a breaking point in their life they will experience what modern medicine regards as psychoses. During fits of mania, for instance, people may experience hallucinations, delusions, irrational energy and ambition. They may claim to see things that others do not see, hear things that are unheard. They may claim to have a relationship with God, being a messenger or angel, or, in some instances, believing they are the one and only Jesus Christ. Fits of mania come with great euphoria, and in many cultures are considered a blessing, or a “breaking through” to the spiritual world. Schizophrenics oftentimes have feelings of possession or great irrational fears of spiritual beings with ill intentions. Bipolar disorder often comes with fits of mania, followed by fits of depression. Where mania is coupled with euphoria, feelings of grandeur, and ambition, depression is the exact opposite. Could bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and similar psychoses be the source of, or at least point to the source of, idealism, dualism, and the belief in the supernatural?

METAPHOR AND REALITY

COULD IT BE POSSIBLE that people like Plato, Buddha, Jesus (if he really existed at all), and more had picked up on a deeper level of reality? Could the main contributors to spirituality be schizophrenics, bipolars, drug-abusers, and others today seen as mentally ill? There are certainly some educated folks who support the view!¹ Plato himself, regarding *theia mania*, announces through his protagonist, Socrates, in *Phaedrus*, that “in reality, the greatest blessings come by way of madness, indeed of madness that is heaven-sent.”² Like all else in the Universe, the human consciousness reflects a duality, a polarity. Some have called it the *id* and *superego*, while in the past, in some cultures, it was

regarded as *possession* by demons and angels, good and evil behaviors.

Creativity levels can go up when one faces a “break from reality.” Einstein himself said that the hitting of his head led to his own eureka!-moment. Many artists have been drawn to mystical practices for their promises of creativity, of opening one’s eyes to the world of forms, of pure concept, in such a manner.

Could it be that some folks are having legitimate, but highly subjective, experiences, which they have a hard time explaining to others? Many people undergoing psychoses will experience selflessness, even being unable to tell self from others, and having other issues regarding object-relations. They can become filled with irrational love (or hate). The same kinds of experiences can occur from use of harder-hitting drugs. Even CNN has admitted to some of the therapeutic effects of using hallucinogenic mushrooms, and that they create feelings of interconnectedness.³ When someone is on hallucinogens, it’s very hard to understand their experiences from without, though. Perhaps all one can do for the seer is smile and nod, never being able to understand their perspective oneself. Sometimes, though, people sharing in group usage will experience the same altered reality, or trance.

If a person is having an experience that others don’t understand, perhaps the best one can do is share their feelings by way of metaphor. Afterall, many poststructuralist thinkers today have supported the notion that art provides a better message if it provides subjective interpretation, rather than outright claims about reality. If it provides a means of personal discovery, rather than programming, a message may have more meaning to its reader. This may be especially true when it comes to things for which there is no logical explanation, and thus which are unable to be programmed! Many of the things people experience and try to relay through metaphor may be unspoken truths, unspoken because they cannot be spoken. A less objective and rational, more subjective and emotive, way of presenting one’s ideas may be the only way for others to understand truths from within, which don’t reside outside, cannot be pointed to.

Though genetics may be a factor in psychoses, it certainly isn't regarded by modern medicine as the main source. Anyone can suffer from mental breakdowns, mania, depression, or schizophrenia, given the proper conditions. Genetics may make one more prone to them, but this is true of anything. The same is true for drugs. Anyone can experience a drug, but some people react differently, either in duration, intensity, or type of experience. Individuals should not be treated as problems in themselves, but perhaps their lifestyles, practices, or environments should be considered as problematic and treatment-worthy. Nonetheless, modern medicine oftentimes looks to pharmaceuticals for the quick solution, rather than taking a more holistic approach.

Radical empiricism, in the way of William James or Henri Bergson (for instance), would suggest that the only legitimate form of knowledge is experience itself. No matter the nature of the experience, if this is to be true, it is legitimate, even if not described coherently to others.

THE SOCIETY OF THE DEMIURGE

WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY that just does not make sense, where existential questions of meaning and purpose leave their holders bewildered. "What is my value? Am I really only worth \$10 an hour? Should I really just do as I am told, and let my boss take all the credit for my work? Is this all there is to life? Doing what I'm told, for other people's benefit?" This is absurdity.

The current economy is one where prices and costs do not match (see "The Mutualist Cost-principle"). This ends up meaning that values are distorted, externalized, and robbed from their original holders. In many ways, status should tell us a lot about a person and their values. Status and income should be a reflection of labor and hardships overcome, of virtuous pursuits. This is not so in this society. Instead, more often than not, status, money, and power is gained by threat of State, by taxation, and legal monopolies, by way of interest, profit, and rent. If money is the measure of value, the measure of taxes, interest, profit, and rent is the measure of stolen value, leaving some without any recognition

of their worth at all, and others with overinflated worth at their expense. This causes many problems, such as those described in “Mutualist Sex Economics.”

We live in The Society of the Demiurge. Nothing makes sense to us. Our lives lack recognition, while we witness the lives of others, overrecognized, overfed, oversexed. It’s no wonder that people in our society at times live in dream-worlds of subjectivity, unmatched to the objective reality around them. To accept the world as it is, its measures of value included, is to accept a notion of self-worthlessness, meaninglessness, purposelessness, and valuelessness for most of the people of the world. This is depressing. To accept one’s intuition about how the world should, or can, be, means assigning these drastic thoughts to the world itself: “It is the world, not I, that is without meaning, purpose, and value.” One begins, or risks beginning, to wander into the land of solipsism and mania.

Primitive people, of the hunter-gatherer variety, are typically considered to have very little occurrence of mental illness. Mental illness, instead, is considered a product of alienation, which has been connected to authoritarian modes of production. Larry Gambone notes, in “The Primal Wound: Origins of Authoritarianism and Mental Illness,” that

Since our Paleolithic ancestors most likely lived in ways similar to the residual “primitives,” they too must have been free of these afflictions. Mental illness was not an innate human condition. Of course, there are organic causes for mental disturbance, such as brain damage or chemical imbalances, but these account for only a minority of cases. In the main, mental illness had to have social causes. It was how society was arranged that lay at the root of the problem.

The arrangement in the “civilized” world, and virtually a definition of the word civilization, was hierarchy and power, in other words, authoritarianism. Among the “civilized,” certain people, almost always a

minority of male adults, had the right to dominate, torment and exploit others. These conditions did not exist among truly “primitive” people. Authoritarian relationships were lacking among these mentally healthy, but technologically backward peoples.

[...]

Partnership cultures, lacking rigid hierarchy and authoritarianism, are mentally healthy. Dominator culture inequality and violence gave rise to the neuroses and psychoses generally associated with civilization. Dominator culture splits humans from each other and humanity from nature, giving rise to alienation. Thus we are wounded.

Gambone notes further that this isn't how it always was,
but,

Old European spirituality and philosophy evolved directly from the beliefs of the Paleolithic hunters who painted those marvelous cave paintings. The central belief seems to have been that everything is alive and therefore ought to be respected. Paleolithic people saw themselves as part of a larger whole or totality. All creatures, all things, were part of the web of life and every act, no matter how insignificant, had meaning. Life and death were not polar opposites but part of a continuum, since nothing, or at least a part, never dies. The sacred was not demarcated, for existence itself was deemed sacred.

It wasn't enough to understand this intellectually, people had to truly feel it, to experience it directly. Some people have an

innate ability to contact the numinous. These men and women were the shamans, who served as guides to the initiates. Everyone could contact this unity through rituals where the ingestion of psychedelic plants was combined with dancing, chanting, drumming and fasting. People did not fear death since they directly experienced continuity.

With partnership cultures no separate evil cosmic force exists. There is creation and there is dissolution. There is dark and light, negative and positive. However, this opposition is not real. Both aspects are needed for such “opposition” to exist. Both sides are ultimately part of one whole existence. There is no sense of alienation or duality. Nature/divine, man/woman are not split from each other. It’s not difficult to understand how such the beliefs and practices would sustain mental health. For partnership society, spirituality is not reduced to a rigid doctrine, belief or theology, but is a way of life, integrated into daily existence. There is no repression. If people fast or go without sex, it is for a ritual purpose and not because enjoying food or sex is supposedly sinful.⁴

Mental illness is largely caused by authoritarian relationships that contradict the natural, instinctive, values with which we were born. According to evolutionary psychology, our mental capacities are best suited to environments which we were in as Cro-Mags, as hunter-gatherers. Hunter-gatherers live a lifestyle generally without coercive hierarchy, and full of sharing and cooperation. That is, hunter-gatherers evolved to have relationships with extended family, other people who valued them for their unique contributions, and loved them, cherished them. Economies in these groups were supported by loose credit exchanges rather than by rigid dealings of value. There was little, if any, disparity in wealth. The world made sense.

KNOWLEDGE AS THERAPY

THERE MUST BE A WAY that ideals and reality can match up a little more; a way for both the object and subject to make sense, and not contradict. Instead of completely rejecting the physical world of materialism, or the mental world of idealism, there must be a way to maintain a higher synthesis. We don't have to reject the world because it doesn't make sense to us, or reject our senses to approve of the world. Subjectivist and objectivist understandings of reality can be found equally valid and invalid. What's needed is a more complete understanding. Gnosis goes beyond these divisions.

When subjective and objective understandings don't match, frustration may occur, leading further to anger and aggression. Once frustration occurs, it is stored in the body, and must be released, oftentimes as aggression. Worchel and Cooper note that the social psychologist, Dollard

and his colleagues believed that if aggression does not follow frustration, the frustrated person retains a residue frustration and a readiness to aggress. Each frustration that is not followed by an aggressive response adds to the residue. Finally, the residue will build up to a point at which any further addition sets off a very violent aggressive action. A person who is constantly frustrated at work may go home and blow up at a minor offense committed by his or her child.⁵

These residues may eventually build into psychoses if not properly released. Aggression is not the only source of release, however. Practices such as meditation, sex, and exercise have shown to lead to calmer states of mind, and the ease of concerns and frustration. Frustration can also be thwarted before it occurs, or simply relieved, by the simple act of understanding (there's that tricky gnosis again). It becomes easier if the understanding isn't one of ill-intent or inconsideration. According to Nicholas Pastore's research in social psychology, frustration was caused by arbitrary

excuses. If a person felt as though the cause of their frustration was with good reason, they would be less, but not entirely, likely to be frustrated at all. If they thought a poor excuse was given, they would be frustrated.⁶ Ours is a poor excuse for a civilized society. Worchel and Cooper report, in their book, *Understanding Social Psychology*, that Pastore

felt that in addition to blocking an ongoing response [sic], a frustration had to have an unexpected arbitrary component before it could qualify as an aggressive instigator. Pastore had subjects report how aggressively they would respond to such situations as these: "Your date phones at the last minute and breaks the appointment without an adequate explanation," or "Your date phones at the last minute and breaks the appointment because she (or he) had become ill."

[...]

Pastore found that significantly greater aggression resulted from arbitrary thwarting than from nonarbitrary thwarting, and he suggested that the dimension of arbitrariness be incorporated into the definition of frustration.⁷

We live in a society which is constantly aggressing on us, frustrating us. We all have tons of frustration built up. For some, this leads to complete mental breakdowns, and even long-lasting episodes of psychoses or neurotic behaviors. As explained above, we feel devalued by The Society of the Demiurge, but we can't make sense of it. We are utterly confused, put into existential crises. What if we could understand the causes of these crises? Would we still be so psychotic/neurotic?

What would happen if we realized that human value is intrinsic, and not encased in its monetary measure? That the source

of others' recognition in politics and academia, on the silver screen and behind the scenes, is the command of our labor, the extraction of our value? Those who revel in mass economic success often do so at the expense of our own measure of success.ⁱ By laying claim to subsidies from taxes, and investments from wealthy individuals making a stolen income by means of interest, rent, and profit, they execute the outcomes which, without our being, they would never be able to accomplish, for the true source of their surplus is our burden of enforced scarcity, the theft of our means. Our labor is celebrated in their honor.

Profit and plunder are synonymous. Just as the recipient of a thief's gift is too a thief by extension (if they don't return the property to its rightful holder), the recipients of interest, profit, and rent are government by extension, for without privilege granted by the state, these returns would be reduced to mere wages, due to effort, rather than monopolistic theft.

We are expected to sit by and idly watch as our value is taken from us. We are told from the day we are born that this is good and right, and that in the future we too may survive from the toils of others, so long as we accept our programming. But for some, this is too much. This is too much nonsense, too much confusion. Without the means to reconcile the subjective and objective experience of reality, what is right and what is done, some fall into depression, others into mania, and still more into the oscillation between the two, known as *bipolar disorder*. How many of these disorders are not disorders at all, but the outcome of rational, healthy, genetically-fit individuals put into situations of utter madness, forced to choose between the legitimacy of their intuitive and subjective experiences, where the world is an illusion, or those of logical and objective suggestions of others, where one's own thoughts and intentions are delusional? If one sees themselves as

ⁱ I am not intending here to sound the alarm of unnecessary or petty resentment. I believe people should retain all forms of earned income, but I do think that our definition of *earned* must be taken rather seriously if our goal is to be based in justice.

worthless, accepting the world and rejecting the self, they fall into depression, while an extreme mode of self-acceptance, feelings of unrecognized grandeur, of a world that must be changed and lacks sense, are symptoms of mania. Still, there are many others who face dementia, schizophrenia, and more.

The fact of the matter is that the objective and subjective views of reality don't currently correspond, but they can and should. One can understand their own intrinsic value, while also understanding the value of the world around them, but in order to do this they must understand why and how they don't currently match and how they properly complement one another. I believe geo-mutualist philosophy answers this question quite well.

Though we will not, and should not, accept the mismatch of value and measure, we can at least be more at ease with ourselves and our own self-worth if we understand that, though we are not recognized, those who are recognized are often recognized at our expense. This doesn't sound comforting at first, because it means we are in a dire situation. However, being in a dire situation and understanding it adds to a lot more potential for solution than does being in a dire situation which one cannot understand, which drives one mad attempting to. Understanding the dire situation can restore feelings of self-worth, while remaining balanced, and not slipping into objectively irrational self-worth, as demonstrated in manic behavior. It also allows one to understand the cause of their frustration, and thus, where to direct it in order to solve it. "People don't recognize my value, because..." is a lot more therapeutic than "People don't recognize my value, for no good reason." That is— in the vein of Nicholas Pastore—, when we understand that our lack of recognized value is not arbitrary, but due to very real problems outside of us, we can better handle the stress due to the problem.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DIE?

PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE PSYCHOSES, be they drug induced or what have you, are oftentimes understood to be hallucinating. They oftentimes describe religious, or just highly subjective, imagery, and, at times, strong feelings of love or

duty. If you've ever taken magic mushrooms or another hallucinogen, you may be familiar with the strong feelings of interconnectedness, perfection of the world, love, and even more. These feelings can also come with mania. Depression, on the other hand, is the opposite; one feels disconnected, imperfect, sad or hateful, etc. These feelings may also accompany the use of hallucinogens; a "bad trip."

These kinds of radical feelings very well may tell us about the origins of religion. It's probable that "good" and "evil" are instincts programmed genetically into our brain, which allow us to better navigate our world, and make decisions. A psychologist may opt, instead of calling expressions of these values *demons* or *angels*, to refer to them as *id* and *superego*. No matter what it's called, the polarity in human value-systems is obvious, and yet, "id" and "superego" are just as immaterial as "demons" and "angels." They cannot be physically pointed out or accurately measured, and therefore do not physically exist, but exist as tendencies alone. These tendencies are expressed in the archetypes of mythology.

An atheist, having a wholly-material view of the world, a world without meaning or purpose, may be exhibiting deeper signs of depression, even if not clinical. Similarly, a theist, with a wholly-spiritual view of the world, may be exhibiting deeper signs of mania. Likewise, the corresponding answers to "What happens when you die?" may correlate to these feelings; to the realist, that's it, the body just rots and consciousness ends, and, to the idealist, everything just gets better! So, what does happen when you die?

I've been asked this question multiple times before, and perhaps the best answer I can provide is this one: As far as I see it, we've already died many times before. That is, we must consider that our bodies are composed of other living things, like carrots, tomatoes, wheat, rice, and perhaps even cheese and eggs, or cows and chickens, if that's the kind of thing you're into. All of these things were alive at one point separate from us, but when we eat them, they are alive as part of us (at least, part of them is). So, if they are us, we have died many times over. Our own consciousness exists as a higher unity of consciousness.

We are not merely our physical bodies. Just as nutrients come in and are made into cells, cellular structures break down and

are ultimately exhausted by the body. In fact, our body cycles through an entire set of cells every seven years, meaning that every seven years we are composed of completely different material than we were composed of before. This being so, we are not just our cells, we are the relationship between them. But where did this relationship come from? None of us remember the process of becoming conscious of our own separate realities. All we know is that it happened, and it happened out of seemingly nowhere. There is absolutely no reason to think it won't happen again.

We are part of a process culminating toward a superorganism larger than ourselves, much in the same way our cells compose our own consciousness. This larger consciousness will not be composed simply by the random combination of human bodies, but, like cells, by a higher relationship which binds them. This relationship is love. We are evolving toward higher levels of sociability, with love as the binding force. When people say "God is Love," this is a possible reason why. Some psychoses patients, stuck in a land of idealism, may be picking up on forces of the future; perhaps people like Plato, Buddha, and Jesus had similar experiences, picking up on an ideal future, a world of love and higher truth.

THE UNIVERSE AS COMEDY

TO THE GREEKS, the genre of comedy was one which often entailed some sort of overcoming, victory on behalf of the weak over the strong. In Aristotle's *Poetics* he wrote that comedy naturally included some kind of fault or blunder which does not end in crises or disaster. Could it be that our very own Universe, saṃsāra itself, functions similarly? Afterall, it is the idealist who picks up on the future, and it is the idealist who is also most ridiculed. In the story of the ark, Noah played such an idealist, building a large ship in a society which had not seen rain. In the story, he foresaw the flood, but was chastised, was seen as mad. Idealists are often seen as mad, and idealistic theurgical and theogenic practices strive for temporary madness, seeing these times as points of awakening and understanding.

We have now taken a peak at the perspective of the esoteric traditions, understanding them as believing in a reality beyond reality. We have looked at psychotic behavior, and its relationship to these traditions, pondering the possibility that psychosis can tell us about the extremes of the human psyche and origins of spiritual metaphor. We have considered the fact that mental illness is a reaction to one's surroundings, and one which is inevitable if society does not change or one does not change their own perspective about the nature of the madness. We have looked into the possibility of knowledge therapy, and what happens when we die.

Psychotic breaks may be natural occurrences in a society where value is externalized, and may even be growing experiences, or points of awakening for many people, in the same way asentheogen usage. The reason for this is that psychotic breaks are an adjustment to one's surroundings, and a reevaluation of one's value in those surroundings. This reevaluation can lead to feelings of worthlessness, as well as inflated feelings of self-worth. Psychosis in itself is not desirable, but, like a positive experience on mushrooms, it may open the eyes to a fuller range of emotions, some of which we are holding inside and cannot release. When we do, it can be overpowering. Most times people don't recover, and this is unfortunate, but this unfortunance is one of ends, not necessarily of means. If the individual can get past the experience, it can be a foundation from which to grow, and express one's self more fully.

Many of the people the state holds in its medical prisons are indeed mentally ill, but one has to ask oneself if a sane person is one who goes along with a world that is crazy, or acts out against its conveniences. Many people, when facing fits of mania, gain strong desires to fix the world, and feel empowered to do so. Can this be a natural, instinctual, reaction to a world so crazy? Is it some kind of built-in, genetic, defense-mechanism of the species? If so, who can be blamed for these reactions? Could it be possible that a revolution won't occur in this world until it experiences a fit of mania? Is that what it will take the masses to rise up? Feelings of grandeur? Delusions? I certainly hope not, but I also find myself hard-pressed to blame people for their subconscious stepping in

and directing them to act in such a way. And you know? Perhaps that is just what it will take. And you know what else? It would be quite the comedy, after all, when the madness in humanity sets itself on a straight course. Perhaps, in many ways, this is the alchemical dream.

A true awakening, or gnosis, would be a complete and complimentary understanding of the subjective and objective facets of life, and not just a polarized view in one direction or the other. In order for these to make any sense at all, one very well may have to experience both sides.

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Information and the Dissolution of Authority

I WAS RECENTLY READING a study— published by *The Royal Society B*, on behalf of John R.G. Dyer, Anders Johansson, Dirk Helbing, Iain D. Couzin, and Jens Krause— regarding human consensus. These scientists took groups of volunteers and gave them rules: they were to stay with the group, not to communicate, and not to be any further apart than arm's length from one another. There were letters on the floor and those conducting the study secretly told select individuals of the group, a small minority, to find their way to a specific location. The results showed that those who were given a location led the rest of the group to the stated location without breaking away from it and without any communication other than asserting themselves toward the goal. When individuals were given separate locations, the group split up evenly relative to the number of leaders.¹

What this article did for me was demonstrate that knowledge is, in fact, power, and if we want to dissolve the state the way we must do it is by spreading information. When the individuals who were selected to work toward a particular destination were told to do so, they were given a form of information that the rest of the group lacked: the destination itself, a goal. Because they had this information, they asserted themselves and the group followed.¹

Humans have a tendency to follow, whether in groups or as individuals. It's been said that we are inherently pack animals. This is rational for us because we have a society based on the division of labor. The division of labor allows us to specialize in areas of knowledge so that we can become valuable to others. We tend to follow those people who assert themselves and have confidence in what they are doing with their knowledge.

In Worchel and Cooper's *Understanding Social Psychology*, they discuss loci of control in regard to confidence.² The following references were learned from their text. People assert themselves when they come across success in their lives. Experiments, by H.A. Dengerink and J.D. Myers, have demonstrated this. Relatively similar individuals were unknowingly given separate challenges,

some of which succeeded at the challenge and the others failed. After the tests they were put in a situation where an individual attacked them with increasing intensity. Those who succeeded on the previous tests tended to react to increasing aggression with increasing counter-aggression and those who failed tended not to increase their counter-aggression. Those who passed gained confidence from success and confidence increases ones internal locus of control.³

According to J.B. Rotter, the *internal locus of control* exists when an individual believes they have the power to create change in their life. The *external locus of control* is when an individual feels that it is out of their control.⁴ Dengerink's work suggests this largely comes from failure.⁵

Now, it is perhaps arguable that some are genetically predisposed, more than others, to success, and, for this reason, I am not arguing for perfection or the complete equality of society that can only exist from the homogenous perspective of uniformity of geno- and phenotypes. I am arguing for justice and freedom for individuals based upon their inherent qualities, with which they were born, and I call this a state of *socio-economic equilibrium*, where everyone is making the best choice they can, given their present situation.

We are in need of a new solution because we have not made the best decisions. The largest reason for this is the interruption in the free flow of information. We are taught from the time we are born to have an external locus of control and to leave things to the experts. The problem is that this kind of rationality negates people from becoming experts themselves. Comparative advantage certainly has its benefits, but by restricting (by way of state regulation) the competition of individuals to gain and apply knowledge, one restricts them from success. When a person is restricted from success, but sees a world in which others are succeeding greatly, they gain an external locus of control. This is what our class, the abiders, who don't own our means of living and thus have no say in their use, is suffering from. The deciders have confidence because they have been given privilege through the monopolies of land, money, and protection. They are given subsidies for their projects, loans for their businesses, inheritance

they can't take care of by themselves, patent protection for ideas they didn't, and could never, come up with without others' ideas in the past, protection for their illegitimate property, and all of the good things in life that are attributed to success. When they are filmed, all of their flaws are covered in make-up and vocal mistakes cut out of the film or tape. They have all the money in the world to allow them success, and so they have confidence, and we largely believe it is for good reason; that they are just genetically more suited for success, or they worked harder to get there. Many, however, are starting to get frustrated.

John Dollard and others have suggested that aggression is largely caused by frustration. If someone frustrates another, that person is likely to act in a variety of ways, but the frustration must be released somehow. People store their frustration. They let it out on the person causing frustration if possible, but in the case they fear the results they let it out on someone else, and usually someone they associate to the frustrator somehow. John Dollard and his colleagues have shown that this happens most likely when there is a fear of reprisal or punishment.⁶ One can't get upset at their boss, creditor, or landlord when something happens. Those people hold authority over our lives. We want to, though, and the second best option is someone we associate to them somehow; but that would mean another person with authority in our lives who would be able to cause more frustration if we acted against them. So instead we must settle with someone else entirely and this creates a cycle of aggression in our own class, because we release it on each other, the abiders of the system.

Another cause of aggression is having an advantage over others. If someone has more money, resources, or abilities, they are more likely to aggress on another person. According to Jared Diamond (and many others), Eurasian society had a geographical advantage that allowed it to aggress on other nations and this is the root of imperialism in the world. He points to things like soil conditions and water supply in the Fertile Crescent, animals used by humans, immunity to disease from the animals, and leisure time provided by easier agriculture that allowed technology to rapidly increase. This difference in resources resulted in intercultural domination in favor of those in the area who held a geographic

monopoly.⁷ Once spread, however, there became almost no such thing as intercultural anything and the focus had to be transitioned to an intracultural domination, and one which rested on stopping the free flow of information. The Catholic Church, for instance, maintained Latin in their religious texts and did not share the language to be learned by commoners in order to withhold the information to control them. Our government today keeps us from much information because it knows that if people had the information to make decisions in their lives, and to gain an internal locus of control, it would give them confidence enough to pass the aggression to the ones who deserve it: those who caused the frustration.

If we stopped giving legitimacy to restrictions from success— patents, rigid zoning, subsidies, taxes, interest, rent, and profit—, authority itself would, over time, dissolve by the free competition of the market and the availability of individuals to have knowledge and success, and we would see no need in usury or control in any of its forms. Democratic institutions of voluntary association could supersede the old ones; consensual dues could replace involuntary taxation; interest, rent, and profit could be supplanted by prices dictated by the true cost of attainment instead of by monopolistic privileges; and voluntary mutual insurance could take over many functions of social welfare now mistakenly understood to be provided by government, but actually provided by ourselves through taxation. In order to solve social illness we must spread information, in hopes of increasing the internal loci of society's control.

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Government and its “Solution”

AS SOON AS WE LOOK for “solutions”— being the end of conflict—, rather than real solutions— being the end of the *cause* of conflict—, we get into the same problems that we have today. If people are engaged in conflict there is a reason, and this *reason* must be resolved.

We need to acknowledge that conflict itself is a natural part of living, and, like the pain we feel when we burn ourselves, tells us that the cells (people) of the organism (society) that are acting out are not being looked after. As pain is to the individual, social distress is to the social unit. We can say we want the pain (social distress) to be over, but it does no good to put a bandage (government) on a finger (citizenry) that is still in a fire (conflict).

This is not to say that social intervention is never necessary, but social intervention, if just, should not be confused with government; nor should it try to preempt conflict with force. Standing armies become stagnant institutions that, as soon as the generations who created them are gone, forget their own purpose, and so do their subjects.

People naturally want to resolve their disputes. Governments, by getting in the way of cost-exchanges, get in the way of voluntary resolution through contracts, but enforce involuntary “social contracts.” Contracts are the way people resolve conflicts and reduce their own costs, but they’re meaningless, and even oppressive (as seen by rejection of social contracts the world over), to people who were not involved in their creation, should we even continue to call such involuntary actions *contractual*, and confuse the meaning in the first place.

Contracts, being vernacular in nature, will always be informed by the culture in which they take place. Cultures change with innovation—new ways to do things—, and culturally informed contracts would reflect the resolution of past conflicts, without imposing a monocultural and uniform system. Thus, culturally informed contracts mimic the natural laws of ecology and economics, where difference (mutations, entrepreneurs) is selected in or out in accord with its necessity, always riding an equilibrium.

Government and its "Solution"

Peace starts in the mind. To impose a contract from the top down does not create peace—the lack of which caused the conflict—in the minds of the offenders (who are also offended). Only the act of creating a contract, which may be a learned response from cultural exposure and others doing the same, can make the individual want to enforce it or be in accord with it; any other involvement is an act of coercion, which must be resisted by the losing side.

Tort offenses are conflicts unresolved, and that is just simply a fact of nature. Look what government has done for our economic torts: Government has busted unions (both worker and tenant), and has protected the landlord class from the peasants, who have declared “Land to the people!” Yet, the conflict over land exists for a good reason, the conflict over labor is for good reason, and its resolution, given by government, shall not suffice.

Government itself is the single largest cause of conflicts, for what are governments but the true lords of the land, collecting taxes from all classes, making its people poor and destitute? Governments arose where it was rich and the rent was high—the Fertile Crescent—and were the result of exclusive claims to the lands which God gave us all to use, where they set up permanent stake, raped the soil, and enslaved the labor of those outside of them. This is government and its “solution.”

Anarchy, de Facto and de Jure

Those animals which are incapable of making binding agreements with one another not to inflict nor suffer harm are without either justice or injustice; and likewise for those peoples who either could not or would not form binding agreements not to inflict nor suffer harm.

– Epicurus, Principle Doctrine XXXII

ANARCHY

ANARCHY STARTS in the primitive context. What keeps anarchy anarchy is that there is a lack of a unilateral monopoly on force. That means no one individual believes they can impose costs on others without having costs imposed back. That is, no individual can be the sole aggressor.

In primitive anarchy— let's call the most extreme form the *anarchy of tacit consent*, or *tort* (where there are no contracts)— it is not anarchy simply because there is no violence, but because no one can hold a monopoly on it. When anthropologists have looked at the lifestyles of primitive, stateless, hunter-gatherers, they have found that violence is minimized in such societies because of the distribution of power. Slaves didn't occur until horticulture could be practiced. Technological advantages— taken from geographical and ecological advantages that allowed innovation— allowed people the means to enslave one another.

If a band had time to make quality spears and shields because they grew their food by the river and had settlements, they could go to the plains and pick on the nomadic people who had to move around to the next food spot, take the things they did have, take their young women and children back as slaves, and kill the rest. Their society grew exponentially in power this way. Anarchy— the balance of liberties— was thwarted at this point and we went into statism— a monopoly on power—, first demonstrated in human societies as enslavement. Enslavement generally did not

start within one's own group (race, nationality, etc.), but was applied externally to other groups. Humans, being social animals within their own units, do not generally have instincts to kill or fight. Hunter-gatherers demonstrate this quite well.

Sometimes when societies clash— and especially when they see competition for resources— there will be wars between them. However, conflicts, if they don't result in the destruction of one or another group, and find themselves balanced, will oftentimes lead to agreements, and even unions. These could be as simple as the peace agreement, "We will not kill one another and will respect each other's boundaries," or as complex as forming national federations of communities, such as the Iroquois Confederacy, having to agree to a much larger degree on such things as a social contract and ways to make decisions together.

CONSENT, FROM TACIT TO EXPRESSED

EXPRESSED CONSENT (contract) emerges from pressures of tacit consent (association). Rights evolve to take the place of liberties.

Horticultural societies practiced the first systems of contract law, created in assemblies of the people, usually associated to and constituted of different families or tribes. The creation of contracts between family units allowed them to a) share resources more closely and cooperatively and b) extend political and economic cooperation by creating social norms past mere tribal customs and into larger social solidarity.

Many of these communities are largely called *city-states* by anthropologists, but it's important to note that they were not truly states until they exercised a monopoly on force. Unless, and/or until, the society had slaves, these were largely self-governed societies that practiced free association and agreed to live by various systems of law created by democratic decision-making and common consent. However, many of these societies used their internal success to dominate societies that had not yet realized the potential of the Fertile Crescent, and similar high-rent hot-spots. This established the area as a sort of regional oligopoly, and the communities became states, not so much because of internal

conflict as because of the conflict that was enabled between societies living on different grades of land. Those communities which could collect the most slaves to work on their plantations became wealthier, and established armies.

We have come from a point of anarchic nomadic bands of hunter-gatherers working in the realm of tacit consent, where social governance was upheld by custom and culture— out of regard for one's own social costs (because conflict has led to failure)—, rather than contract. That is the original anarchy, where individuals balance each other's power. This was distorted and lost by statism, where individuals became dominated by groups. Tacit, primitive, anarchy is the balance of individuals. This was lost at the formation of the state, but this is due rather to geography than human behavior. Expressed anarchy— that is, civilized anarchy—, then, must be created from contract. Expressed anarchy, or panarchy, aims for the balance of societies.

CONFLICTS OF NEIGHBORS

THE QUESTION of how conflict in anarchy is dealt with is a matter of how civilized the anarchy is. Is this an anarchy governed by tacit balance of power, whereby simple tit-for-tat keeps things even, or is there a deeper understanding that searches for public approval in the outcome of disputes? Anarchy could be a social state where fighting maintains a balance or where contracts do. It really depends on the situation.

In taking any action, an individual must be aware of their costs, lest they perish to them. The outcome between any two individuals will eventually create an equilibrium state.

You can continue to live in a state of primitive anarchy if you want, imposing costs on each other as individuals, or you can come to an agreement about the way that best resolves the needs between both parties. The contract can be highly proprietarian and decentralized, or highly social and centralized, as the individuals decide together. Once moved to a civilized state of anarchy, one may be part of a higher, but voluntary, contract, that has procedures regarding the resolution of disputes such as these, and may even state an impartial third-party to act as mediator.

Unfortunately, there is no one objective answer for answering to conflict in an anarchist society, or in any society, for that matter. Conflict must be seen as a necessary part of learning and decision-making. Where contemporary societies enforce laws from the top down, having its victor pre-decided, anarchist societies would allow necessary conflict to exist as long as it takes to be resolved mutually.ⁱ This would strengthen societies as their members create contracts to avoid such conflicts in the future. In anarchist societies, individuals would develop and experience a higher sense of self-responsibility, as they would be choosing among numerous options constantly, and feeling the costs directly, since they would all be internalized by market forces. Such a society would develop a culture where people are informed of the necessity of contract and third-party dispute resolution for the sake of reducing conflict.

PANARCHY

AS ONE MOVED INTO a new neighborhood, unprotected by the state, they would likely look into some other form of security for their property. Upon contacting such an agency (likely cooperative and democratic), they would learn about those in the neighborhood who are part of the agency, as well as other agencies in the area who are providing different services of law. For instance, one agency in a neighborhood may protect hard, absolute, property rights, protecting the individual's right to do anything they please on their property. Another agency may support only the possession of consumption or private use-based goods, seeing all other property as communal property of the agency, to be allocated by an agreed-upon standard of need. The libertarian-minded would be inclined to be part of the first society, while the communistic may opt for the second. Panarchy is the fact

ⁱ Take, for example, the anarchist-mutualist, communalist, and syndicalist hesitation to abolish the state before something better is put into its place.

they can do this, and mix-match, mutually, without restriction, according to the balance of each individuals' moral compass.

It may be possible that some will be members of the communistic society, and will share with other members of such society, as well as being members of the proprietarian society, restricting their transactions to sales between members of that society. In this manner there would still be transactions across economic systems, as a dual-member could purchase from a proprietarian society and share such goods with the communistic one, or could ask their communistic society to allow an exchange with the proprietarians, bringing communist goods into the market. This, of course, first relies on respect for one-another's systems of property. Otherwise, we're back to conflict, and hopefully we've learned enough from that lesson.

If we look at individuals, few, if any, are consistent in their approach to sharing. Hardly anyone shares all the time, and just as few never share. It's more about the relationships people have with each other. So, sure, some may only take part in market transactions, and some may only want to exchange gifts, but most people take part in varying amounts of both. The same is true of societies. Anyone who takes a hard-property stance, and believes sharing is to be abhorred, will be restricted to transactions with those who feel similarly. The same is true of those who abhor money, and want only to give gifts. Most people will want to give gifts within relationships that are enriching, while using payments for less ongoing or close relations, such as between strangers. It will likely turn out that those industries that work efficiently on a larger scale will be voluntarily socialized by people freely associating to more communistic industries (perhaps medical). Since the costs of socialization are lower in such industries, socialistic models (large networks of common ownership) will likely dominate. However, those industries that are still best performed on a small scale will most likely be left to strong market competition, keeping prices in balance. It's all a matter of what people want.

So, basically, when moving into a neighborhood, one needs to ask... "Are my neighbors' values compatible?" If not, contract may be difficult, and tort conflict may ensue. If so, one

may have found a good spot, where healthy exchanges can occur. Either way, the most important thing to learn from conflict is that communication and contract is a way to sort it out before it happens. Government preemption is no solution.

In an anarchist society, the incentive to know what one is getting into will be much higher, because costs are internalized, and people will take into mind an area's culture or prior standards before tacitly consenting to them (moving in) because this will limit the expressed consent (contracts) that can be developed in such a setting. This will definitely lead to communities of similarity, but I think they will stop short of city-states because polycentric law (overlapping jurisdictions) can still apply, meaning that within a single municipality there may be several providers of law and enforcement, with some subscribers possibly belonging to multiple.ⁱⁱ A confederation of such communities, however, could very well constitute a panarchy, or anarchy *de jure*, with a simple, but explicit agreement to a social contract of non-aggression on person and, agreed upon, property.

ⁱⁱ Think of a building with two providers of security. Each has its own policies, but the customer subscribes to both.

Why Anarchy is Not Possible Today (But is Tomorrow)

I REALIZE that anarchy is not possible today. Anarchists do not have a vanguard or a party to make things “better” *right now*. Anarchists oppose political hierarchy in all of its forms, so in order for an anarchist society to exist the participants themselves must be anarchists, in ideology and methodology, or the system will fail and hierarchy will renew itself. Anarchism, then, is an evolutionary process. It only happens when it is wanted, for those who want it enough to work for it. For this reason, it is today impossible.

So, if I understand this, why am I still so adamantly an anarchist, and why am I working towards something that is, today, futile?

Well, it's not that the majority of people today don't hold the faculty for self-management, as if it were a genetic block. Instead, it is a difficulty with learned behavior, beliefs. People don't know about the alternatives to capitalism and the state, nor are they entirely aware of what is happening around them to begin with. Current conditions and beliefs keep anarchy from establishing itself.

People are tacitly taught not to believe in their own potential. We are brought, at birth, into a society where we have little to no influence in the sphere of our own lives. From the day we become cognizant of our selves we are taught that someone else has the right answer and not to believe in our own rationality for a sense of the truth. It first begins with parents and family, then on to teachers in classrooms and religious leaders in church, police on the streets, one's boss and one's landlord, one's banker, the media, the scientists, and, most importantly, the state.

For this reason, what anarchists are battling is the external locus of control (will to be controlled) that has been fostered in our society: learned helplessness. Motivation has been conditioned to come from outside forces, such as authority, and the will to dictate one's own desires has become stifled by fear of consequence. The majority of people are content to sit by and watch, listen, and read others' accomplishments, feeling they have no access to that sphere

of influence themselves. Though this may be true at times, to varying extents, many of us miss out on our own potential out of unnecessary fear and consequence. We too could be those people discussing their successes, if we wanted to be, but we choose not to. We choose not to use what we have, not to reach out for it. Instead, we remain alone, silent, and unable to solve our problems, when, if we could connect with others with similar thoughts, we could actually organize to make our lives better.

We are taught to glorify other individuals— authority—in the home, school, church, and in society at large. We lose sight of the fact that these heroes and heroines are no more divine than ourselves, and that the only difference is that they have somehow developed an internal locus of control. Most of the famous people we are taught about in school held some form of economic privilege, but there are also those who didn't. Those who did were not facing the same hurdles as the abiding classes, but were destined to become part of the elite at birth. Those who did not have privilege somehow faced conditions, relative to their own genetics, that allowed them to develop internal motivation. Thus, the methodology of the anarchists should become a way to foster, in all of the egos of the abiding class, an internal locus of control, and the way to do this is to manipulate conditions to allow for the maximum fertility of one's own ideas. How do we go about doing this? How do we become influential without becoming part of the hierarchy? It's in the way that we treat each other and relate to society.

Projects that are important for the development of anarchism and non-hierarchical relationships include democratic education, unionism, cooperatives, decentralized technology, tax-evasion, alternative currency, draft-dodging, mutual aid, and more. All of these are important aspects of anarchism, but they don't mean a damn thing if their development becomes part of the state, as oftentimes occurs.ⁱ

When authority sees the rise of self-management it finds the quickest means possible by which to co-opt the idea and make

ⁱ See the relationship of syndicalism to Italian fascism.

it work toward its own (the state's) goals instead. Thus, the rise of the chartered artisan guilds of medieval Europe who— as explained to me first by an old Wobbly, Gene Akins—, after succumbing to government protection of their patents, became a part of the established authority. The guilds became an influence to the business unions of the US, who stifled the rise of the more revolutionary and solidarity-based unionism of the early industrial type, such as the IWW. The business unions stifled success by submitting to the wills of their bosses and by competing with members of their own class for better contracts, instead of cooperating with them as fellow workers to end employer control altogether (to be replaced by a new practice of contractual mutual aid). Worker self-management and cooperation is ideal, but cooperatives, too, are starting to be used by the state now. When projects— such as the printing of new money (such as LETS, or “Hours” of many kinds), cooperatives, unionism, etc.— develop, but they give in to state-protection of their interests from competition, they become part of the deciding class, part of the bigger machine known to some as *Leviathan* or *Moloch*.

Anarchists must foster an open-source sense of knowledge. An important part of the development of anarchism is the free flow of information. For this reason, anarchist authors oftentimes release their work into the public domain, asking only to be given credit for the work's development. Such a license allows individuals to pass the material around and for its production to be decentralized. This greatly enhances the education of society towards anarchist values of mutual respect, both through its written text and through the direct-action by which the text itself is released (under the preferred conditions of its anarchist, or even just friendly, author).

Demonstration through direct-action is the strongest methodology of anarchist education. By creating alternative means for living and reducing costs through solidarity, we demonstrate the new society to those around us, hopefully compelling them to join us. Philosophizing can be helpful, but only so long as it is followed by practical application.

Cooperatives need to foster the development of other cooperatives and take a stand against market regulation. Unions

need to open their membership to decision-making power and promote a model of worker-self management while they practice it in their own organization. Anarchist educators need to listen to pupils' opinions with respect and foster the development of knowledge in each person so that he or she too may become a teacher. Those who issue scrip should foster similar schemes across the world. Those who read should write, and those who write should read.

When we begin to see "lay people" taking on their own projects, and seceding from the corporate market sphere and government control in their lives, it will be an influence on all of us. If we see workers managing themselves and sharing the profits we will want that for ourselves too, and so we will seek to become worker-owners as well, either through acceptance into an existing cooperative or by our own entrepreneurship. The same should be true of any successful anarchist model. We should be seeing other groups printing their own currencies, and when we realize the benefit, follow suit. Even better: Lead the way. If there's a need, and both exist, two separate but similar projects can federate.

If we are inspired by the knowledge of others we should respect the teachers but not hold them above ourselves, and instead find in them the inspiration to extend their work past their very own vision. If this happens more often, replacing much of authority with disobedient, but highly efficient, self-management, we will be stoking the agitation of spectators, reducing their role as such. An entire culture will catch on, and, when it does, this will be the first stage of the revolution—the awareness of the masses—which will eventually put an end to the spectator/participant separation in political economy today.

In order to stoke the egos of others, we must first stoke our own and believe in our own abilities to set a positive model. *We* need to be the lay people who make things work, as an example for others. We must realize that those we feel are successful, or have privilege, are still just people. Think about their circumstances. They are not of superior genetic stock, they have been given settings that allowed them to develop an internal locus of control or confidence, but there is no physical difference. Most often, economic privileges are the culprit for unfair advantage, but there

Why Anarchy is Not Possible Today

are those who have gone “from rags to riches” as well. Unfortunately most of them made it by chance; people who had money liked them and lent or gave it to them for a great deal. Though developing their own ego, the others who succeeded without such privilege of chance had not the slightest desire to share their internal change with the world by promoting the success of others. So yes, stoke your own ego, try to change the world, read, and apply your knowledge to your own success, but know that it means nothing for the future, outside of yourself, if you do not respect others as equals and promote their success as well. Promote your students as your very own teacher, learn from them and they will see your respect and will learn from you even more for seeing their knowledge as such. Treat your customers as business associates, for if the economy wasn’t so large, filled with usury, and centralized, you would find yourself on opposite sides of the counter for them as well. You would find yourself the customer of your own.

This is the very society I desire; where all customers are workers and not parasites, where all workers are not slaves but also able customers, where all educators are learning from one another; for such is the most realizable coming from our situation, as it is not stopped by our inability to rationalize and enact it, but by ignorance of the alternative or of others who feel the same.

Anarchy is not possible today because people are ignorant of what it really means to be free. It is possible tomorrow only if we *all* break that cycle.

Welfare, Minus the State

INTRODUCTION

UPON LEARNING about anarchism for the first time, many questions pop into the head of the initiate; questions about law, money, and general civility. That is, questions about the welfare of society spring up. Who will build the roads? The hospitals? Who will deal with criminals? Will there be law to define *criminal activity* in the first place?

In this essay, I hope to dispel the myth that government, a state, is necessary to induce cooperation and mutual aid. I will demonstrate the evolutionary origins of cooperation and examples of cooperative organizing throughout history, before turning the discussion toward the non-necessity of government intervention in our lives.

CONFLICT OVER WELFARE

WELFARE CARRIES differing meanings for various people, but upon hearing the word, it generally brings to mind its application in today's society, as a government program, rather than carrying its intrinsic meaning, which exists much deeper than attempts to apply it politically: the general well-being of a person or society. The overall meaning of welfare has been distorted. It has been corrupted by the state. In most people's eyes, welfare is a question about taxes, representing ways money can be spent wisely, or wasted, depending on the holder of the perspective and their opinion about the program in question.

Welfare, the well-being of individual and community—something which should be celebrated by all according to the laws of happiness—has created divide in our society. Some on the right want social welfare to be abandoned completely, and desire a society of “everyone for themselves.” On the left, the sentiment is largely reversed, and many would abandon the sovereign individual's liberty to look after their own welfare, desiring instead a society of “everyone for each other.” This kind of division is unnatural, as social interests are the creations of individuals.

The divide springs forth from arguments of where tax money should be spent, not from the individuals naturally being in conflict. There is no reason people who like to share can't coexist beside people who don't. It happens all of the time. We all have friends who like to share, and others who don't, those who invite themselves to our pantries because they expect the same from us, and those who are rather uptight about their things, and expect similar in return. This is often a result of the nature of possessions and use-value to the owner. Some people, for instance, read books purely for fun, and are happy to pass them along when they are through. A person like me, however, can be stingy about the rare books they have sought after, and want to keep them around for future citations in works like this one. The degree to which we can be friends with both kinds of people, and hold both traits ourselves, is the degree to which we are dynamic individuals. No one is completely dynamic, or not at all. At times it may be necessary to draw the line, and tell a friend they have invited themselves to too much, or that they can invite themselves to something in the first place. *Conflict* occurs, however, when individuals who like to share and those who don't, or like to do so in different ways, both have their resources stolen from them—taxes—and are left then to decide what is to be done with the money together. Everyone knows a household works best upon shared interests, and becomes ridden with conflict when left to be managed between parties that don't share ideas or concerns. Imagine being forced to pool your paycheck with your coworkers; naturally, conflict about its spending would ensue. Imagining the freedom of abstention does not imply non-participation in group spending, as such absoluteness is the denial of freedom, but instead implies participation only in that group spending which is beneficial to the individual spender.

Any society over which welfare—well-being—becomes a conflict is a sick society indeed, and has much to learn. Ours is certainly among the ranks, quarantined in the minds of the rest of the world, and tossing in our beds at home, not thinking to promote balance in our health or change in the way we are doing things today, though we have felt such ailment for quite a time. We have seen people on the streets, begging for the jingle they hear as

we pass by. We feel the urge to help further, but need is so vast that our actions alone are incapable of helping in the long term, and the passing of our own efforts only brings us closer ourselves to the same pits of hell. Besides, don't we pay our taxes, and doesn't the government use this money for good things, like the well-being of the people? Welfare?

THE EVOLUTIONARY ORIGINS OF GROUP WELFARE

GROUP WELFARE is actually very instinctual to humans. Many anthropologists suggest that the simpler societies are oftentimes very concerned with the welfare of one-another. Marcel Mauss, for instance, went into great detail about gift-giving and credit exchanges in his book, aptly titled *The Gift*. The anarchistic writer, Peter Kropotkin, writes in his classic book on the subject, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*,

Primitive folk [...] so much identify their lives with that of the tribe, that each of their acts, however insignificant, is considered as a tribal affair. Their whole behaviour is regulated by an infinite series of unwritten rules of propriety which are the fruit of their common experience as to what is good or bad — that is, beneficial or harmful for their own tribe. Of course, the reasonings upon which their rules of propriety are based sometimes are absurd in the extreme. Many of them originate in superstition; and altogether, in whatever the savage does, he sees but the immediate consequences of his acts; he cannot foresee their indirect and ulterior consequences — thus simply exaggerating a defect with which Bentham reproached civilized legislators. But, absurd or not, the savage obeys the prescriptions of the common law, however inconvenient they may be. He obeys them even more blindly than the civilized man obeys the prescriptions of the

written law. His common law is his religion; it is his very habit of living. The idea of the clan is always present to his mind, and self-restriction and self-sacrifice in the interest of the clan are of daily occurrence. If the savage has infringed one of the smaller tribal rules, he is prosecuted by the mockeries of the women. If the infringement is grave, he is tortured day and night by the fear of having called a calamity upon his tribe. If he has wounded by accident any one of his own clan, and thus has committed the greatest of all crimes, he grows quite miserable: he runs away in the woods, and is ready to commit suicide, unless the tribe absolves him by inflicting upon him a physical pain and sheds some of his own blood. Within the tribe everything is shared in common; every morsel of food is divided among all present; and if the savage is alone in the woods, he does not begin eating before he has loudly shouted thrice an invitation to any one who may hear his voice to share his meal.¹

The drive to cooperate may be innately found in humans. As Michael Tomasello, who studies behavior and cognition in apes and human children, says,

in small-group interactions we see fundamental differences between human children and apes. From very early in ontogeny, human children are altruistic in ways that chimpanzees and other great apes are not. Although there is evidence that chimpanzees sometimes help others attain their goals behaviorally, they are not particularly generous with food (as compared with children and adult humans), and they do not offer information to one another through communication that in any way resembles the

human variety. In terms of collaboration, again, from very early in ontogeny, human children collaborate with others in ways unique to their species. They form with others joint goals to which both parties are normatively committed, they establish with others domains of joint attention and common conceptual ground, and they create with others symbolic, institution realities that assign deontic powers to otherwise inert entities. Children are motivated to engage in these kinds of collaborative activities for their own sake, not just for their contribution to individual goals.²

Tomasello is of the belief, and I am quite persuaded by his research (which coincides with studies on syntropy), that altruism is an intrinsic characteristic of humanity, which is culturally unlearned to a great degree, and reinforced in others. It is reinforced where cooperation and sharing is beneficial, and becomes lost where it becomes costly, and is not reciprocated.

Humans have developed communication, as Robin Dunbar argues, largely as a means to regulate the costs and benefits of cooperation. This is exemplified by gossip, which Dunbar argues—in *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Human Language*—is a form of social grooming. Gossip provides ‘good’ social members—those with good social credit—with beneficial information about ‘bad’ social members, or free-riders—those who have bad social credit. In this way, cooperation is reinforced with those who are prone to reciprocate, and those who are not prone to reciprocate learn to do so, or lose the benefits of being part of a social unit. They face the consequences of non-cooperation. This creates an incentive to cooperate, without using human force or aggression. Dunbar says that language

allows us to exchange information about other people, so short-circuiting the laborious process of finding out how they behave. For monkeys and apes, all this has to

be done by direct observation. I may never know you are unreliable until I see you in action with an ally, and that opportunity is likely to occur only rarely. But a mutual acquaintance may be able to report on his or her experience of you, and so warn me against you—especially if they share a common interest with me. Friends and relations will not want to see their allies being exploited by other individuals, since a cost borne by an ally is ultimately a cost borne by them too. If I die helping out a scoundrel, my friends and relations lose an ally, as well as everything they have invested in me over the years. Language thus seems ideally suited in various ways to being a cheap and ultra-efficient form of grooming.³

Biologists generally follow a gene-centered view of evolution, whereby genes are selected according to their ability to continue in the long term. Richard Dawkins' perspective of the selfish gene is a great example of this view. Genetic-selfishness, or genetic self-preference, does not always entail narcissism, but has actually been used to explain the high orders of cooperation among social organisms. The eusociality of the hymenoptera (ants, bees, termites, etc.), for instance, can be explained through this view by means of a process called *kin-selection*. I will not go into depth on kin-selection here, but I highly suggest you learn about this interesting aspect of evolution. Long story short, those organisms with similar genetics are more likely to cooperate, because selfishness does not lie on the level of the organism, but on the level of the genes; evolution does not attempt to preserve individuals, but genes, and, when culture exists, memes. Clearly, if genetic selfishness can lead to superorganisms, such as highly ordered ant societies, altruism on the level of the organism is clearly not outside of the picture. Reciprocal altruism, then, does not always reflect reciprocity on the outside; sometimes ants die for one another. Some acts, such as this one, can't be reciprocated, but intentions can, which are reflections of genetic programming rather

than circumstance. Dawkins says, in a *New York Times* interview, “It’s not the selfish individual, and certainly not the selfish species.” He then continues, “My book could have just as easily been called ‘The Altruistic Individual.’”⁴

Clearly, altruism is an expression of our genetic selfishness, but Dawkins is commonly pigeonholed as having a narcissistic view of reality, though he has challenged this view, as above, on multiple occasions. Herbert Spencer, the great sociologist and libertarian thinker, had been subject to similar accusations to Dawkins, but long before. After all, he is one of the fathers of “social Darwinism.” He has been pigeonholed time and time again as a brilliant, but morally atrocious thinker. As Peter Richards points out, however,

The most frequently quoted passage of Spencer’s work, by Hofstadter and others wishing to smear Spencer’s reputation, is

“If they are sufficiently complete to live, they do live, and it is well they should live. If they are not sufficiently complete to live, they die, and it is best they should die.”

This does sound harsh, but what the Spencer-knockers fail to quote is the first sentence of the very next paragraph, which transforms its meaning:

“Of course, in so far as the severity of this process is mitigated by the spontaneous sympathy of men for each other, it is proper that it should be mitigated.”⁵

Mutual aid, empathy, sympathy, is clearly an evolutionary development of our own genetic selfishness, and has been selected in through a long process of evolution. Selfishness on a genetic level does not entail a lack of altruism on the level of the organism, but, in fact, implies the opposite teleological tendency; reciprocal altruism, in the long term, will be selected in. The long process of evolution has led to various systems of reciprocal altruism, including systems of law, credit, and exchange.

WELFARE IN THE DISTANT PAST

LAW ITSELF has its origins in reciprocal generation and enforcement, rather than domination. Before hierarchical systems of governance, people assembled together and discussed their group priorities, making final decisions together. Early societies did not commonly live under oppressive regimes. As historian, Michael Cheilik, says,

According to many scholars, at first there was very little class distinction among the citizens. To be sure, there was a variety of economic functions among the inhabitants, but there is little indication of aristocracy or monarchy before 2800 B.C. It seems to some scholars that all citizens met in an assembly to select a leader. Slavery began at a very early period, as it occurred to conquerors that killing one's adversaries was wasteful. Why not take them alive and use their labor? But the number of slaves was quite small.⁶

He goes on, saying "Kingship probably originated as a temporary expedient at times of emergency, with the king elected by the assembly."⁷ This is indeed how kings originated, at least in Anglo-Saxon culture. According to Bruce L. Benson,

the development of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom emphasizes that the reason for the development of the institution of kingship was not a need for establishment of law or maintenance of internal order. Rather, government evolved due to external conflict (warfare).⁸

The monopolization of power and the rise of technology have a direct correlation. As Gerhard Lenski and Patrick Nolan

point out, “Social inequality is generally rather limited in most simple horticultural societies of the modern era.”

[...]

The more advanced the technology and economy of one of these groups, the greater social inequality tends to be. Societies that practice irrigation, own domesticated animals, or practice metallurgy for ornamental and ceremonial purposes are usually less egalitarian than groups without these characteristics. We see this clearly when we compare villagers of eastern Brazil and the Amazon River Basin with their more advanced neighbors to the north and west who, in pre-Spanish days, practiced irrigation and metallurgy. Hereditary class differences were absent in the former, but common in the latter, where a hereditary class of chiefs and nobles was set apart from commoners.⁹

The effects of subsistence technologies on power are a constant theme in *Human Societies*, the book I am quoting from. Lenski and Nolan demonstrate that shifting from hunter-gatherer, to horticultural, to agrarian, and to early industrial societies all came with an increase in centralized power and domination. Industrialism, however, seems to throw the tendency a curve-ball. Later on, when discussing industrial societies, they go on to say that,

In agrarian societies, the modest economic surplus was appropriated by a small minority of the population, and if the rich got richer, the poor generally got poorer. But because per capita incomes in Britain and the United States are more than twelve times what they were in 1930 and 1870, respectively, it has been possible for the incomes of elites and

nonelites alike to increase. How industrialization has affected the relative shares of income going to elites and nonelites is an issue we will return to [...], but for now it should be noted that the growth in the economic surplus has greatly improved the standard of living for the vast majority of people in industrial societies.¹⁰

Gerhard Lenski is well-known for his ecological-evolutionary theories, which are based on the effects of environment on culture. He argues that subsistence technology has one of the greatest impacts on culture, but does not discount the effects of ideology.

Instead of social bonding being regulated by rules created and enforced by power and authority, early societies generated their own rules and ideologies, and enforced them reciprocally. Indeed, Bruce Benson suggests that, among the Kapauku of New Guinea,

“Recognition of law was based on kinship and contractual reciprocities motivated by the benefits of individual rights and private property.”¹¹

Law, defined here as rules which regulate social behavior, is not a product of the state, but developed rather contractually from the necessities of community-life. The state co-opts the beneficial behaviors of social organisms only in order to legitimize its dominance. Dominance is not necessary for beneficial social behavior. Dominance, in fact, hampers such behavior, by removing resources from producers, creating artificial scarcity and scarcity-mentality, and removing surplus and, thus, means of altruism. The state, in order to mystify this fact, co-opts and monopolizes social behavior, making it practically illegal for common people to help one another, thereby creating reliance on their oppressor. Contrary to common belief, it is not the state that allows laws to exist, but the presence of bad laws, or absence of good laws, which has allowed the state to exist.

When law is agreed upon and enforced by the people, systems of law tend to reflect common sense practices, rather than dealing in criminal processions. In custom, common, or civil law, the concern is not retribution or punishment, but rather justice and fairness. Benson says,

Reciprocities are the basic source both of the recognition of duty to obey law and law enforcement in a customary law system.¹²

[...]

Because the source of recognition of customary law is reciprocity, private property rights and the rights of individuals are likely to constitute the most important primary rules of conduct in such legal systems.¹³

Instead of imprisoning, physically harming, or killing offenders, civil, custom, and common law systems focus on suits, and ways to compensate the victim, at expense of the offender. If you burn someone's house down, according to common law practices, you owe that person a house of like quality. If you kill a family member, you owe the family for their loss. At times, common law would allow for violence, but usually violence was held as a last result, when a member of the community disagreed to abide by the rulings of the court. If you burn someone's house down, and refuse to pay, you become an outlaw. Let's remember, though, that, at least in early societies, one was a free subscriber to one's community and its laws.

Early people would commonly pledge allegiance to one another, and promise reciprocal enforcement of contracts and law. Bruce Benson, citing Harold J. Berman, says,

Law can be imposed from above by some coercive authority, such as a king, a legislature, or a supreme court, or law can

develop “from the ground” as customs and practice evolve.¹⁴

He says further,

Law imposed from the top—authoritarian law—typically requires the support of a powerful minority; law developed from the bottom up—customary law—requires widespread acceptance.¹⁵

A good example of older forms of customary law is provided by the Law Merchant:

Because the Law Merchant developed outside the constraints of political boundaries and escaped the influence of political rulers for longer than many other Western legal systems, it provides the best example of what a system of customary law can achieve.¹⁶

[...]

The reciprocity necessary for the cognition of commercial law arose due to the mutual gains generated by exchange.

The Law Merchant evolved into a universal system through a process of natural selection.¹⁷

He says,

When it is recognized that individuals had to *voluntarily* enter into a contract, it becomes clear why the Law Merchant had to be objective and impartial. Reciprocity in the sense of mutual benefits and costs is the very essence of trade.¹⁸

Many societies would select individuals to be responsible for remembering the law, and reciting it to the group, as in lawspeakers, or to be responsible for facilitating the needs of the group, which was largely family-based. Their original purpose was not to decide for the group, though they could make suggestions, but to carry out the group's decisions. It's a shame that kingship has come to mean what it does: statist monarchism. As Polybius states in his views about kings and the anacyclosis of society,

It is by no means every monarchy which we can call straight off a kingship, but only that which is voluntarily accepted by the subjects and where they are governed rather by an appeal to their reason than by fear and force.¹⁹

In many Viking societies, polycentric law was common practice, and law was dispensed by way of political churches, today called *heathen hofs*. Though the groups were hierarchical, and the hofs were often owned by a single Gothi (chief/priest), they were freely subscribed to, and were not forced. Oftentimes, neighbors would be subscribers to different hofs, and held reciprocal agreements of protection with a distant, rather than more local, hof. Because the hofs were freely subscribed to, leadership was generally non-coercive, and leaders sought to reconcile differences in the assembly rather than impose a ruling on the group. Oftentimes, fees were owed for maintenance and public procedures to be held, but these were not forced like taxes are, but instead were freely paid, as in modern systems of dues, in return for subscription to the group's reciprocal systems of justice. Usually, upon joining, an oath to the group, or the group's god, was made, and was placed on an object that the Gothi would wear, empowering him to act in the group's interest, and affirming the group's consent to his position. As stated in one of the Viking Sagas, one Gothi

had a temple built, and it was a sizeable building, with a door on the side-wall near the gable. The high-seat pillars were

placed inside the door, and nails, that were called holy nails, were driven into them. Beyond that point, the temple was a sanctuary. At the inner end there was a structure similar to the choir in churches nowadays and there was a raised platform in the middle of the floor like an altar, where a ring weighing twenty ounces and fashioned without a join was placed, and all oaths had to be sworn on this ring. It also had to be worn by the temple priest at all public gatherings. A sacrificial bowl was placed on the platform and in it a sacrificial twig—like a priest's aspergillum—which was used to sprinkle blood from the bowl. This blood, which was called sacrificial blood, was the blood of live animals offered to the Gods. The Gods were placed around the platform in the choir-like structure within the temple. All farmers had to pay a toll to the temple [...] The temple Godi was responsible for the upkeep of the temple and ensuring it was maintained properly, as well as for holding sacrificial feasts in it.²⁰

Another account says that a Gothi

had a large temple built in his hayfield, a hundred feet long and sixty wide. Everybody had to pay a temple fee. Thor was the God most honoured there. It was rounded on the inside, like a vault, and there were windows and wall-hangings everywhere. The image of Thor stood in the center, with other Gods on both sides. In front of them was an altar made with great skill and covered with iron on the top. On this there was to be a fire which would never go out—they called it sacred fire. On the altar was to lie a great armband, made of silver. The temple Godi

was to wear it on his arm at all gatherings, and everyone was to swear oaths on it whenever a suit was brought. A great copper bowl was to stand on the altar, and into it was to go all the blood which came from animals or men given to Thor.²¹

I'm not trying to trick the reader, violence was rather prominent in harsh Norse culture, but, within their own societies, rule of law was normally voluntarily accepted. Violence could exist as an agreed-upon duel, or even as voluntary human sacrifice, being religious in nature, during certain festivals, or as retainer sacrifices, when a Gothi, or person of similar importance, died, and their devotees were asked who would join them. According to an account by Arab traveler, Ibn Fadlan, a female volunteer was led

to an object [Vikings] had constructed which looked like a door-frame. They lifted her and lowered her several times. Then they handed her a hen, whose head they had cut off. They gave her strong drink and admonished her to drink it quickly. After this, the girl seemed dazed. At this moment the men began to beat upon their shields, in order to drown out the noise of her cries, which might deter other girls from seeking death with their masters in the future. They laid her down and seized her hands and feet. The old woman known as the Angel of Death knotted a rope around her neck and handed the ends to two men to pull. Then with a broad dagger she stabbed her between the ribs while the men strangled her. Thus she died.²²

This sounds quite harsh to the modern reader, and though there was certainly some class privilege influencing the decisions of devoted servant-volunteers, one must also remember that ethics are an evolving process; the fact that the modern reader is so bothered by human sacrifice is both a testament to this, as well as evidence

that voluntary human sacrifice is less likely in industrial societies, which are generally more informed of science and less concerned with superstition. Everywhere at the time of the Vikings, and in horticultural and agricultural societies today, violence of a higher degree was, and is, considered more acceptable. That's just a general fact of socio-anthropology. As Lenski and Nolan point out, though, in regard to technological growth and oppression,

It should be clear [...] that there is no simple one-to-one correspondence between technological advance and progress in terms of freedom, justice, and happiness.²³

Remember, Nolan and Lenski demonstrate throughout their book that there is a rapid rise in domination as society shifts from hunter-gatherer, horticulturalist, agriculturalist, and early industrialist. Still, they continue, showing the wrench that later industrialism kicks in the gears:

Had human history come to an end several hundred years ago, one would have been forced to answer affirmatively [whether or not technological advance has lured societies into evolutionary paths where the costs often outweigh the benefits]. During the last hundred years, however, technological advance has begun to make a strong positive contribution to the attainment of humanity's higher goals. Whether or not this will continue in the future is another question. We can say this, however: Technology has at last brought into the realm of the possible a social order with greater freedom, justice, and happiness than any society has yet known.²⁴

Aside from systems of law, and enforcement of restitution upon involuntary human offense, early societies are not without other examples of group welfare, which deal with problems in regard to offenses by nature and entropy, including various forms

of insurance. Where rights and original titles to property were the concern of the public, being human-based conflicts, conflicts with nature, such as lost crops, or lost merchant shipments due to weather or equipment problems rather than malintent, were considered more independently contractual. Farmers who lose their crops due to late frost have no one to blame but the weather, and customers who make purchases under the understanding that they are paying for the *attempt* to distribute, rather than the distribution itself, cannot blame the merchant who has merchandise stolen by highwaymen. Thus, insurance developed, whereby farmers would pool their surpluses, to be shared in time of need, and merchants sorted out various systems of insurance and credit to deal with accidents and exchanges.

WELFARE IN THE NEAR PAST

GETTING A LITTLE more modern, during the 19th and early 20th century, mutual aid societies were especially popular among the working poor, as the rich, who made a living by extracting the surpluses of the poor, had little incentive to cooperate with others in such a manner. Immigrants, in particular, sharing similar cultural, and, oftentimes but not exclusively, class relations, looked toward mutual aid for survival. In South America and in some of the southern 'States, especially Texas, economic mutualism was common practice. As pointed out by Roberto R. Calderón,

mutualista organizations, or mutual aid societies, [were] the most common organizational form that appeared at the turn of the century in Mexican communities of the Southwest.²⁵

Fraternal societies, or mutual aid groups, served many purposes. Some were general organizations, which facilitated various, differing programs, while others had very specific purposes. Building societies, for instance, were created for the purpose of reciprocal acquisition of housing. People would donate their time or wealth in return for help on constructing or

purchasing a new home. Other groups included benefit societies that would offer programs to deal with health concerns, burial services and life insurance. Still more would insure crops, shipments, employment, and more. Some were exclusive, pertaining to a specific cultural group, like many Mexican mutualista groups, or sex, such as mutual aid groups formed for the purpose of maternity; while others were inclusive, and offered membership across sexual and cultural lines. Mutual aid groups were a direct reflection of the needs of the populations that started them. Emilio Zamora points out that

Mutual aid societies met the material needs of their members with emergency loans and other forms of financial assistance, job-seeking services, and death and illness insurance. They also offered their members leadership experience in civic affairs, sponsored other institutions like newspapers and private schools, organized popular community events for entertainment, socializing, and public discourse. Mutualista organizations thus provided their members and communities a sense of belonging and refuge from an often alien and inhospitable environment. The community, in turn, accorded their members and especially the officers the highly respected status of responsible, civic-minded individuals. Mutualistas also served as a major point of organizational unity that spawned local and regional political struggle.²⁶

He continues, a bit later:

Members adopted a number of specific objectives to promote mutualism within and outside the organization. All the organizations established an insurance fund which made disability payments to ill

members for up to thirty days and paid funeral costs in case of death. They also contributed to a widow's fund that provided assistance to the family of the deceased member. Other sources of mutual and community assistance included informal job-seeking services for their members, charity funds to help needy families in the community, and savings funds which extended emergency loans to members. In some cases, the organization established libraries, newspapers and private schools for children and adults in the community. In all cases, [the mutualistas] sponsored celebrations during Mexico's national holidays and the organization's anniversaries.

The material benefits that the insurance coverage, emergency loans, and job placement assistance brought to the members were obvious. Most of them were poor and often without a stable source of employment. The schools, libraries, and newspapers were important contributions to the educational advancement of the membership of the community. These activities also contributed to the moral regeneration of the members and the community they served. The insurance and savings funds reinforced a measure of trust among the members who contributed their meager resources with the expectation that their money would be handled honestly and that they would receive their due benefits. The regular and timely payment of the required monthly fees and contributions also fostered frugality and a sense of responsibility.²⁷

Aside from offering direct benefits to the members as individuals, mutual aid societies also had a lot to offer culture. Most such groups put great emphasis on the growth of the individual,

character building, hygiene, etc. Because individuals were united in community with others through contract, this extended a certain amount of positive liberty to members, who would concern themselves not only with their own lifestyle practices, but, since they were now also responsible—by way of dues, tithe, and other voluntary pooling of resources—for the prosperity of others, also with the lifestyle choices of members of their societies. After all, if you are sharing insurance with someone, it means you pay to solve their problems. This greatly incentivizes looking after the community's well-being, and trying to stop problems before they start. Zamora says,

The strict internal rules that mutual aid societies adopted to define the responsibilities and proper 'moral comportment' of their members contributed the most to the practice of the ethic of mutuality. First of all, persons who applied for admissions had to be of sound moral character. The organization confirmed this by requiring recommendations from at least one member who acted as a sponsor and a committee that reviewed his local reputation as a responsible family person and law-abiding citizen. The membership was required to vote unanimously in favor of positive recommendations by the sponsor and the committee. Otherwise, the applicant was rejected.

Rules also prohibited behavior that, according to La Sociedad y Juárez from Alice, was 'unbecoming to honest men.' Vagrancy, giving oneself to vices, irresponsible family behavior, slander, and defamation against the organization and their brethren were cause for depriving members of their rights, and in some cases for suspending them from the organization.²⁸

A few pages later, he says,

The internal discipline of the mutualistas and their attendant reputation as responsible and civic-minded institutions gave importance and ideal meaning to the ethic of mutuality as a source of unity, identity, and civic pride. This ethic, however, generally remained tied to mutual aid societies until intellectuals defined and translated key cultural values into specific political objectives or strategies.²⁹

Distant from Texas, a French writer, Rene-Georges Aubrun, writes of similar perspectives in his own country:

Inspired by the precept, 'prevention is better than cure', and benefitting by the teachings of modern medicine in matters to prophylactics, Mutual Aid no longer desires to wait until the evil becomes evident before applying the remedy.

[...]

All have understood that the individual interest and the collective interest, the mutualist interest and the national interest, were merged into one. Whence two new preoccupations: to educate the people, in order that they may discern the reasons of social ills, and to combat the evil information by exactly appropriate measures.

On the first point we must let the orators and lecturers speak, as well as the innumerable propagandists which enthusiasm has caused to rise up to fight for the good cause.

[...]

All of our organizations have inscribed on their programme: War against alcoholism, war against tuberculosis, war against all social conditions which engender alcoholism and tuberculosis. And war against the scourge which contains all the causes and all the germs, initial cell of the collective ill—the unhealthy home, the hovel. This theme, largely developed at mutualist meetings, has given rise to revolts of conscience which have been translated almost everywhere into the constitution of new societies, equipped for undertaking the operations which Mutual Aid organizations were not legally authorized to undertake.³⁰

In many ways, liberal and behavioral economic views which criticize libertarians as promoting a view of human nature as “homo-economicus,” relying on rapid calculation of consequences, are correct. People are incapable of perfect knowledge. Where liberal arguments fall short is where they assume that libertarian economics preclude association of the type mentioned above, where information is widely dispersed, as incentivized by reciprocal economic arrangements. The liberal argument is not that humans don’t calculate, but, rightly, that they do not always calculate on the spot. They have time, however, to think about longer-term affairs, from which the liberal argument for socialization, above, commences. There is nothing about free economics that precludes this liberal position, and, in fact, a free and democratic economy would better allow for, and incentivize, socialization and its related benefits. Nonetheless, and perhaps this is Spencerist of me, we must also recognize that humans are not the pinnacle of the evolutionary process, and that, though people don’t always calculate correctly on the spot, this fact does not mean that it is evolutionarily advantageous that they don’t, or that they should not be naturally selected, as individuals or groups, according to their ability to approximate such values.

Just as individuals may associate for the purpose of accomplishing larger scales of mutual aid, groups of individuals

may also associate for a common goal, and, indeed, they have done so throughout history. Many mutualist societies would form confederations with one another, sometimes sharing services between members. Members were often encouraged, upon moving from their location, to join mutual aid societies within the same network. Mutual aid societies would often send letters of approval with their old members, to encourage their admission into new societies without probationary periods. Zamora says,

Mutualistas also maintained friendly relations with sister organizations. Members in good standing of sister organizations who visited or moved into the area were always welcomed and sometimes seated in a position of honor with the executive committee. Mutualista organizations encouraged members who moved to other areas to join sister organizations. They usually gave departing members letters of recommendation and other documents to facilitate their admission.³¹

In many ways, this served as its own system of law enforcement. If an individual had bad credit with their society, either for unpaid debts or infringement on the values of the group (which had been voluntarily pledged to be upheld, and were decided upon democratically), they would not receive such letters of support. In this way, laws enforced themselves, by way of ethical and economic systems of credit. Rene-Georges Aubrun says,

We have here, in fact, another aspect of mutualist evolution which we have not yet examined. From being strictly local at the beginning, the association becomes little by little regional, provincial, extra-provincial, and at last collective in a national sense.³²

THE THRIVING OF WELFARE WITHOUT THE STATE

SOCIAL WELFARE as it exists today, supplied by the state, in the form of medical care, public utilities, justice dispersion, etc. is not a product of the state, but was rather co-opted by it. Roderick T. Long points out in “How Government Solved the Health Care Crisis: Medical Insurance that Worked— Until Government ‘Fixed’ It,” that

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one of the primary sources of health care and health insurance for the working poor in Britain, Australia, and the United States was the fraternal society. Fraternal societies (called “friendly societies” in Britain and Australia) were voluntary mutual-aid associations. Their descendants survive among us today in the form of the Shriners, Elks, Masons, and similar organizations, but these no longer play the central role in American life they formerly did. As recently as 1920, over one-quarter of all adult Americans were members of fraternal societies. (The figure was still higher in Britain and Australia.) Fraternal societies were particularly popular among blacks and immigrants.

[...]

The principle behind the fraternal societies was simple. A group of working-class people would form an association (or join a local branch, or “lodge,” of an existing association) and pay monthly fees into the association’s treasury; individual members would then be able to draw on the pooled resources in time of need. The fraternal societies thus operated as a form of self-help insurance company.

He continues, saying

Most remarkable was the low cost at which these medical services were provided. At the turn of the century, the average cost of “lodge practice” to an individual member was between one and two dollars a year. A day’s wage would pay for a year’s worth of medical care. By contrast, the average cost of medical service on the regular market was between one and two dollars per visit. Yet licensed physicians, particularly those who did not come from “big name” medical schools, competed vigorously for lodge contracts, perhaps because of the security they offered; and this competition continued to keep costs low.³³

So if these institutions were so prominent and helpful, why don’t we see them around today? Roderick T. Long continues to enlighten us:

The response of the medical establishment, both in America and in Britain, was one of outrage; the institution of lodge practice was denounced in harsh language and apocalyptic tones. Such low fees, many doctors charged, were bankrupting the medical profession. Moreover, many saw it as a blow to the dignity of the profession that trained physicians should be eagerly bidding for the chance to serve as the hirelings of lower-class tradesmen. It was particularly detestable that such uneducated and socially inferior people should be permitted to set fees for the physicians’ services, or to sit in judgment on professionals to determine whether their services had been satisfactory.

The government, they demanded, must do something.

And so it did. In Britain, the state put an end to the “evil” of lodge practice by bringing health care under political control. Physicians’ fees would now be determined by panels of trained professionals (i.e., the physicians themselves) rather than by ignorant patients. State-financed medical care edged out lodge practice; those who were being forced to pay taxes for “free” health care whether they wanted it or not had little incentive to pay extra for health care through the fraternal societies, rather than using the government care they had already paid for.

In America, it took longer for the nation’s health care system to be socialized, so the medical establishment had to achieve its ends more indirectly; but the essential result was the same. Medical societies like the AMA imposed sanctions on doctors who dared to sign lodge practice contracts. This might have been less effective if such medical societies had not had access to government power; but in fact, thanks to governmental grants of privilege, they controlled the medical licensure procedure, thus ensuring that those in their disfavor would be denied the right to practice medicine.

Such licensure laws also offered the medical establishment a less overt way of combating lodge practice. It was during this period that the AMA made the requirements for medical licensure far more strict than they had previously been. Their reason, they claimed, was to raise the quality of medical care. But the result was that the number of physicians fell, competition dwindled, and

medical fees rose; the vast pool of physicians bidding for lodge practice contracts had been abolished. As with any market good, artificial restrictions on supply created higher prices — a particular hardship for the working-class members of fraternal societies.

The final death blow to lodge practice was struck by the fraternal societies themselves. The National Fraternal Congress — attempting, like the AMA, to reap the benefits of cartelization — lobbied for laws decreeing a legal minimum on the rates fraternal societies could charge. Unfortunately for the lobbyists, the lobbying effort was successful; the unintended consequence was that the minimum rates laws made the services of fraternal societies no longer competitive. Thus the National Fraternal Congress' lobbying efforts, rather than creating a formidable mutual-aid cartel, simply destroyed the fraternal societies' market niche — and with it the opportunity for low-cost health care for the working poor.³⁴

Roderick Long is not alone in his analysis. The contemporary mutualist, Kevin Carson, writes a good deal about the interference in the medical market and its effects on consumers. Joe Peacott, of the Boston Anarchist Drinking (BAD) Brigade, shares a similar view to the others:

The primary result of state regulatory control of the practice of health care [...] has not been protection of the health of health care consumers, but rather the protection of the market monopoly of state-approved health care professionals, drug manufacturers, and other providers of health care services. The government-enforced monopoly results not only in very expensive

services and medicines and the attendant outrages profits earned by providers and drug manufacturers, but also in a greatly reduced range of services and medicines available to health care consumers. Many critics think that the solution to the problems people encounter with the health care system is for government to better regulate it and socialize its costs through some sort of national health care system. I disagree.³⁵

Without the state, society would thrive, and welfare—well-being of persons and groups—, would flourish. As it stands now, innovation is greatly hampered by dense regulation, licensing, and more. Some practices are plain outlawed, even when the crime is victimless or self-inflicted. Take the idea reflected in William Bains's article on "The Biomedical Mutual Organization," which would be illegal in today's practice here in the 'States:

Self-experimentation is an efficient, productive and proven way to generate new treatments for mild and serious disease. But it is limited by materials available to the individual and the amount of testing one person can do. I advocate the formation of Biomedical Mutual Organizations, self funded groups of individuals that provide mutual support for exploring new ideas in medical treatment. Such groups could achieve three things. Firstly, they could pool analytical services to validate the quality of materials and analytical services used in self-testing and self-medication, including verification of the identity and purity of medicine ingredients sourced from non-traditional sources. Secondly, they could pool resources to conduct group experiments in new treatments, interpret the results, and generate new hypotheses which could in turn be tested.

Thirdly they could conduct more formal clinical trials on the group as a whole of new, indeed radical, therapies, in effect becoming a self-funded biotechnology company. While many practical objections remain to all of these, especially the last, and the last option may actually be illegal in some countries, some of the ethical objections that prevent such arrangements outside the context of a Mutual Organizations are overcome by the alignment of interests of those involved.³⁶

Though there are no victims in self- and mutual-experimentation, we are told such practices must be outlawed as “too dangerous.” Still, such practices are exactly how medical procedures developed in the first place.

As it is today, many of the tasks which have been allocated to (read “stolen by”) government are not being carried out very efficiently, not just healthcare. Ever heard the phrase, “Good enough for government work”? This carries a cultural connotation for a reason; governments are not accountable to market forces, and, as such, don’t have to provide goods and services at the quantity or quality demanded. On the Hawaiian island of Kauai, for instance, local residents became fed up with government neglect of roads, and pooled together millions of dollars, completing necessary repairs of roads in a time period of eight days. CNN reports,

Their livelihood was being threatened, and they were tired of waiting for government help, so business owners and residents on Hawaii’s Kauai island pulled together and completed a \$4 million repair job to a state park — for free.³⁷

The volunteer group did not even take possession of the roads they serviced, which still belong to the government. Imagine if the residents owned the roads in the first place; they probably would have never gotten so bad. Indeed, Clarence Lee Swartz, in

his book, *What is Mutualism?*, notes the capacity for common people, organized into free (not forced) associations, to build and maintain roads, and dispense insurance and justice:

While it may be quite patent to most people, there are some who cannot visualize how streets and high-ways will be built by any other agency than that of government.

Most persons can only imagine profit organizations on the one hand, or compulsory organizations, such as governments, on the other, as agencies for carrying on the business of society. Once they get the idea that non-profit organizations can take over those functions without gouging the public and also without enslaving the people, it is easy to show them how more involved problems can be taken care of. For this purpose, we may point to the various automobile clubs in this country, and take as an example the Automobile Club of Southern California.

This non-profit organization was started in 1900 by a few motorists with the object of mutual protection, the promotion of good highways, and the collection and dissemination of reliable road information. According to a recent pamphlet, more than 120,000 road signs have been erected and are being maintained by this club. It furnishes insurance to members without a profit; it employs experienced detectives to foil car theft and recover stolen automobiles; and the highway patrol service is different from the patrol of the county speed cop; it is a boon to the motorist instead of a bane. It is courtesy extended to motorists in distress, whether members or non-members, and includes

mechanical first aid, towing to the nearest garage, changing of tires, furnishing of gasoline or oil at cost, giving free information, removing of glass from the highways, disentangling traffic jams, posting temporary signs, in short, aiding instead of harassing the motorist.

Why are all these activities recounted? Because they show, in the first place, a non-profit organization at work at the present time; secondly, because they prove that such organizations may be public spirited and extend benefits to others who do not pay for them; and, thirdly, because here is an organization that might serve as a nucleus for a road league of the future.³⁸

Swartz is right to look for an alternative to “compulsory” and “profit” organizations. This is a dichotomy that society is yearning to break. Capitalism and socialism both scream of difficulties and dogma. As Lenski and Nolan point out,

Viewed from a sociological perspective, the mixed economies that have evolved in industrial societies during the last hundred years reflect an effort by the members of these societies to achieve two goals that seem, to some degree at least, mutually contradictory. On the one hand, they want the economic growth and higher standard of living that market systems seem better able to provide. On the other hand, they also want the economic security and attention to the needs of society that command economies seem better equipped to provide.³⁹

Neither capitalistic nor communistic to a vicious extreme, the virtue within “The Dialectical Thought of Mutualism” offers just this.

CONCLUSION

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR that reciprocity and mutual aid are developments of evolution, that humanity's nature in no way contradicts this fact, and neither does it depend on the state for its existence. Humans express altruism and reciprocity as part of their genetic selfishness, which has led to the construction of various systems of law, credit, and insurance, which have been found largely beneficial by society as a whole. Contrary to common notions, welfare predates, and actually becomes hampered by, the state, and society would do well to abolish the state if it truly desires welfare, well-being, whether it is for the individual or the collectivity, as the two are ultimately, and naturally, inseparable.

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The Dialectical Thought of Mutualism

*This was composed for a speech given to the UNT Students for Liberty
on October 27, 2011 in Denton, Texas.*

MUTUALISM AND LIBERTARIANISM

MUTUALIST ANARCHISM is a philosophy that advocates voluntary, democratic, and cooperative ownership within a free market; that is, a socialistic society without compulsive authority.

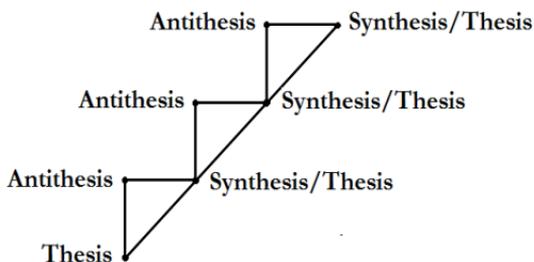
“What is the difference between libertarianism and mutualism?” you may already wonder. These categories share a similar relationship to the classifications *dog* and *beagle*. Not all dogs are beagles, but all beagles are most certainly dogs. Just the same, not all libertarians are necessarily mutualist in their economic outlook, but all mutualists are libertarian. That is, mutualists oppose domination through taxation and monopoly, are opposed to government restrictions on business, and would rather see the market select the services offered to the public on a basis of reciprocity. What keeps libertarians from all being mutualists, however, is that mutualists, as well as being advocates of free markets, are also socialists. We maintain a unique synthesis of these two normally opposing systems. Our socialism, however, does not impede upon our libertarianism, nor do our freedoms keep us from remaining egalitarian.

HISTORY

TO UNDERSTAND THE BEGINNING of mutualism we must first turn to the early 19th century German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, whose dialectical philosophies greatly influenced the French mutualism of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, as well as the thinking of his lesser-known contemporary, fellow Frenchman, Pierre Leroux. Charles Fourier,

another Frenchman credited with being the originator of the term *feminism* and a builder of communes, and the Welshman, Robert Owen, one of the founders of the cooperative movement and utopian socialism, also had a role to play in the cooperative and communal philosophies that mutualists would come to ally with.

Hegel, most likely following Zeno of Elea, understood the motion of history as being powered by opposing forces, known as *dialectical forces*. Dialectics describe the interaction between a thesis (a general direction of thought or movement) and its antithesis (the opposite). These two forces oppose one another, but will ultimately culminate in a synthesis (the combination of both), which then begins the cycle anew, with the synthesis acting as the next thesis. Hegel's thought bore great understanding to the political and economic conditions of both Proudhon and Leroux. Indeed, Proudhon once said, seemingly tired of being accused of Fourierism,



I have certainly read Fourier, and have spoken of him more than once in my works; but, upon the whole, I do not think that I owe anything to him. My real masters, those who have caused fertile ideas to spring up in my mind, are three in number: first, the Bible; next, Adam Smith; and last, Hegel.¹

Pierre Leroux released his work, entitled *Individualism and Socialism*, in 1834, supposedly giving both terms their names, and arguing that both extremes were right and wrong to certain degrees, and that elements of both are necessary. Proudhon was inspired to write *What is Property?* in 1840 in which he declared property was simultaneously robbery and liberty. In the pages of *What is Property?* he declared that the only legitimate title of

stewardship was based upon occupancy-and-use. It is in this notion, this contradiction between property and socialism, that mutualism sets its foundation. As the Hegelian dialectic would dictate, the thesis— property— was being challenged by its antithesis— communism— and was destined to find a middle ground in a synthesis— mutualism. Proudhon says,

Communism—the first expression of the social nature—is the first term of social development,—the THESIS; property, the reverse of communism, is the second term,— the ANTI-THESIS. When we have discovered the third term, the SYNTHESIS, we shall have the required solution. Now, this synthesis necessarily results from the correction of the thesis by the antithesis. Therefore it is necessary, by a final examination of their characteristics, to eliminate those features which are hostile to sociability. The union of the two remainders will give us the true form of human association.

[...]

This third form of society, the synthesis of communism and property, we will call LIBERTY.²

Most mutualists trace their roots back to Proudhon, although he, like Leroux, was undoubtedly influenced by a general theme in the philosophy of his era. His philosophy is a direct reflection of what he witnessed and discussed in his time among artisans, merchants, philosophers, and the mutual aid societies they established to solve their common problems. *Mutualism*, the voluntary and contractual sharing of resources for common needs, was already in practice, but it was not formally given a name until the early 1800's. The origin of the name is debatable, and may come from Charles Fourier, various mutual aid societies of the time

(such as one Proudhon was part of in Lyons), or perhaps it was used first by the Ricardian Socialists, such as John Gray, who felt that the free market was the road to socialism. Ultimately, it is unimportant where the term developed, so long as it maintains a specific definition and unites people today.

In the United States, the first known American anarchist, and certainly the first to publish an anarchist periodical, was thinking very similarly to those in France. Josiah Warren had experimented in the communes of the socialist, Robert Owen, and after seeing the failure of socialism had decided that private property was necessary to a flourishing community, but was set on establishing a fair and equal society where the cost of production was the limit of prices. He created a store, known as the *Cincinnati Time Store*, in 1827 that charged a price based on a time system. It was a success. He also printed currency based on time, but later came to the understanding that time alone could not measure the value in labor, but that repugnance was also necessary. His money, known as *Labor Notes* or *Hours*, also played a role in some of the communities he started, including Utopia and Modern Times. Josiah Warren's principle of cost-the-limit-of-price is one that would be shared in the intimate relationship of individualist and mutualist schools of anarchism, which would be long-lasting and, at times, without any hard distinction at all.

Shortly after the time Josiah Warren had been experimenting with starting anarchist communities, and Proudhon had proposed a Bank of the People, William Batchelder Greene, an ex-military officer and Unitarian minister, was working on his own system of banking, which he would release in his work, *Mutual Banking*. Mutual banking, whether it was in the form of Greene's Bank or Proudhon's Bank of the People, had one purpose: to put an end to the monopoly on money, thereby eliminating the artificial scarcity imposed by the dollar. The anarchists saw in the state banking system a center of control, whereby a class of people could regulate an entire economy. The result of this, as well as the monopoly on land, was that laborers had to sell their labor for wages instead of profit, had to rent their homes instead of own them, had to pay taxes, and also had to pay interest to the banking class that many mutualists today endearingly call "banksters."

Max Stirner, who would later inspire Friedrich Nietzsche according to some claims, released his work, *The Ego and Its Own*, in 1844. He stated that property was but a ghost of an idea, and that items belonged only to those who could maintain control of them. Though he challenged and even rejected many of Proudhon's assumptions, Stirner's post-Hegelian approach, known today as *egoism*, has been adopted by most mutualists to come after him. Benjamin Tucker, probably the largest popularizer of individualist anarchism ever, was a huge proponent of Stirner's, and published his first English translation, as well as Proudhon's *What is Property?*.

In 1851, Herbert Spencer, one of the fathers of sociology, echoed the sentiments of the anarchists in his book, *Social Statics*, wherein he argued that the state would inevitably wither away as market mechanisms replace the services it offers, and that one should have a right to ignore the state. He also stated that everyone should have an opportunity to use land, and that the proper measure of liberty was equal liberty, when the liberty of one individual cannot impose itself upon another. Although Herbert Spencer's philosophy, especially later in life, would find himself hostile to positive liberties, his equal liberty shows a certain dialectic wherein negative liberties are kept in check by those of others. Even if Mr. Spencer would have hated to admit it, this displays a certain portion of positive liberty, for if negative liberties were the only rule, control through domination would remain a legitimate moral imposition through the right of property. Herbert Spencer unintentionally finds the middle ground between these liberties in equal liberty. Being a pragmatic and evolving belief system, the mutualists were quick to adopt Mr. Spencer's solution, and the law of equal liberty remains a staple in mutualist thought today. Dyer Lum, another 19th century mutualist, would go on to write an essay, entitled "The Basis of Morals," which he deemed as his proudest achievement, where he argued that utilitarianism, hedonism, and other forms of ethics were invalid, while equal liberty was a product of evolution.

It is balance that divides mutualism from the ethics of both American capitalism and state-socialism. To the mutualist, capitalism is represented only by the assertion of negative liberties, while socialism is represented by the assertion of positive liberties.

For those who are unfamiliar with these terms, allow me to define them. *Negative liberties* are those rights not to act, or not to be affected by others. For instance, I would be exercising my negative liberties were I to say “no” when a police officer asks to enter my house without a warrant. *Positive liberties*, on the other hand, are those rights to act and to affect others. If I need to cross a public bridge to survive, and someone is blocking my way, I am exercising my positive liberties if I push them to the side. Again, the capitalist would argue in favor of negative liberties, not to be affected by society; and the socialist argues for the ability to affect society, positive liberties. The capitalist protects themselves with individual property rights, while the socialist wants property to be owned only by society as a unit to protect the whole. Their methods of systemic decision-making differ also; the capitalist prefers the market, while the socialist prefers democracy. Neither of these are necessarily opposed, and that is what the mutualist is arguing.

We’ve now discussed the historical context of mutualism, let us now discuss what mutualists propose as solutions to our current system of corporate capitalism, as well as the coming welfare state that socialism offers us.

PHILOSOPHY

MUTUALISTS GENERALLY SEE social and political problems resting on issues of economics, and the chief two culprits of economic problems are the monopoly on land and the monopoly on money. When these two monopolies are set into place, it becomes impossible for workers to retain the value of their labor in the market.

A classical capitalist would say that land rightly belongs to those who homestead it, indefinitely. A socialist would say that land should always remain in the hands of the collectivity. A mutualist, however, would establish their title to land based on occupancy-and-use: Not using it? You’re losing it. The concern mutualists have with the perpetual ownership of land, not defined by occupancy-and-use, is that arable land can become scarce as such a system grows. When land has become monopolized, charges on its use, such as taxes and rent, can begin to appear.

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Oftentimes, the homestead principle is attributed to John Locke, who said that mixing one's labor with the land gave one the right to possess it. Capitalists, when referring to Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, usually leave out certain crucial parts, like some fundamentally religious folks do with *The Bible*. One part in specific is the Lockean Proviso, some of which I will quote to you now:

Nor was this appropriation of any parcel of land, by improving it, any prejudice to any other man, since there was still enough and as good left, and more than the yet unprovided could use. So that, in effect, there was never the less left for others because of his enclosure for himself. For he that leaves as much as another can make use of, does as good as take nothing at all. Nobody could think himself injured by the drinking of another man, though he took a good draught, who had a whole river of the same water left him to quench his thirst. And the case of land and water, where there is enough of both, is perfectly the same.³

John Locke suggested, in the distribution of the commons, that one should not take more land than would be left for others to use after doing so. In supporting the perpetual ownership and inheritability of unused land, capitalist ideology fails to keep monopolies from arising and subjecting the people who use them to pay taxes and rent.

I don't think I have to say much in the way of what would occur if, instead of private holders of land, the state was in its place as chief executive. We who respect liberty are generally under the impression that socialism would bring the worst domination and subjugation of human liberty that we can know. State socialism would stop productivity by ending incentive. It would put an end to privacy and autonomy in decisions. There would be no chance to better oneself as an individual. This would be no alternative to

the capitalist system we partially have today, but would instead be a regression to domination, as we have had in the past.

Instead of making the choice between individual ownership and collective ownership of land, as the capitalist and the socialist does, the mutualist supports private possession of land while it is in use, but upon the end of its use it must be returned to the commons. One may ask, “How does one define *occupancy-and-use* under real conditions?” One may ask even further, “If I leave my house and my land on vacation, does that mean it is free for squatters to homestead?” to which a mutualist may reply, “It depends. Did you establish security to ensure that the place remained your own? If you did not, you have forfeited your land out of carelessness, much as you would be doing with a \$5 bill if you were to leave it on a public table and expect it to be there for you the next day.”

The perpetual ownership of land relies on one class taxing another, and using those taxes to pay certain individuals from that class to repress the others. Tax-money from all classes of property-owners are pooled to pay the police. The rich benefit greatly from this. This is similar to our income taxes being used to pay for military protection. When the people rise up to demand their liberty, who do governments send in to “restore order”? Tanks; as seen by Chinese Tiananmen Square in 1989 when a large number of peaceful student and worker protestors were gunned down.

Along with the demand for occupancy-and-use titles to land tenure, mutualists suggest that the monopoly on credit must be removed. Mutualists believe that interest and profit are the results of government regulation on the printing of money. As long as only select individuals are allowed to print and distribute money—the means of exchange—they have the ability to demand payment for its use. That is to say, if I control money, and you can't print it, I can charge you interest for the use of my money. As Benjamin Tucker reminds us in the pages of his periodical, *Liberty*,

Usury rests on two great monopolies — the monopoly of land and the monopoly of credit. Were it not for these, it would disappear. Ground-rent exists only because the State stands by to collect it and to

protect land-titles rooted in force or fraud. Otherwise the land would be free to all, and no one could control more than he used. Interest and house-rent exist only because the State grants to a certain class of individuals and corporations the exclusive privilege of using its credit and theirs as a basis for the issuance of circulating currency. Otherwise credit would be free to all, and money, brought under the law of competition, would be issued at cost. Interest and rent gone, competition would leave little or no chance for profit in exchange except in business protected by tariff or patent laws. And there again the State has but to step aside to cause the last vestige of usury to disappear.⁴

Mutualists do not cling to any particular material, such as precious metals, for use as a means of exchange. To the mutualist carpenter, it makes more sense to use his or her store of furniture as a basis of their own money, than to pay interest in order to use a scarce resource such as gold; to the grocer, their stock of goods should suffice.

A society without a monopoly on land and credit would look very different from the one we have today. This would be a society where cost is the limit of price. What I, and other mutualists, mean by this is that no one could charge more than the real effort it took to manufacture goods and services. Only monopolies can dictate their prices and charge a price that is above cost. Without them, interest, profit, rent, and taxes would wither away.

Imagine being able to get loans without interest. Just about anyone who wanted would be able to buy their own home, start a business, or buy a share in a democratic cooperative. Scarcely anyone would accept full-time employment taking orders from a boss, but would rather opt for self-employment; employment by others, when it did exist, would be more along the lines of the employment between a customer and a producer, or between

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contractors; nothing long-term. No one would pay rent to a landlord. Any permanent residency would be tenant-controlled.

Examples of mutualist institutions include independent contracting, self-employment, producer co-ops, consumer co-ops, home ownership, housing co-ops, and mutual aid societies providing medical and insurance services to its membership at cost. Some of these groups choose to form federal relationships with one another.

Socialism cannot solve the problem, as any state, even that of the proletariat, depends on force to institute its will upon its subjects. Until force and aggression is eliminated in human relationships there will always be rent and there will always be taxes to ensure that force can continue to be used against its victims. Socialism can serve only to aggravate the problem. Only mutuality can solve it.

REFERENCES

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- ¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon⁵ (quoted by J.A. Langlois), 22.
² Pierre-Joseph Proudhon⁵, 247.
³ John Locke, 21.
⁴ Benjamin Tucker, 88.

The Mutualist Cost-Principle

This was composed for a speech given to the UNT Students for Liberty on October 4, 2012 in Denton, Texas.

INTRODUCTION

THE COST-PRINCIPLE, in various forms, is the main tenant of the original forms of anarchism in both the Americas and in Europe. The cost-principle states that everyone should live at their own cost, and not at the expense of others; that prices should not rise above, or fall below, the cost of production, but should remain in equilibrium at the cost of production.

Josiah Warren, the father of the cost-principle, is an often unspoken name in libertarian circles, though his role in the development of the strain of thought known as *individualist anarchism*, and anarchism as a whole, is often seen by historians as a founding figure. Although Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Josiah's contemporary in France, is often more discussed than Josiah Warren himself is, both had major impacts on the development of the economic theories of anarchism in their own countries, particularly American individualist anarchism, which was sired largely by Josiah Warren, and French mutualist anarchism, as mainly fathered by Proudhon.

Though each of these two men had different visions of society—one based in the frontiers of America, and the other in the factories and farms across France—they had both come to the same crucial conclusions amidst the problems of their times. Their realizations were almost simultaneous, as one would expect from the conditions of the commonly-rooted problems of recently-introduced industrial capitalism.

Both Proudhon and Warren, though lovers of liberty, were influenced by early, pre-Marxist, socialism; Proudhon especially by Charles Fourier, and Warren by Robert Owen. Owen was a Welshman who experimented in America, and Fourier a Frenchman. Interestingly enough, these two socialists, Owen and

Fourier, were also contemporaries, with similarities also arising from the circumstances of their times.

Proudhon and Warren, followers of these socialists' teachings, would learn the limits of socialism, however, and would look down upon compulsion in association and in the sharing of possessions. Though they would remain participants in the struggle of labor to own its product, they would do so without the need for a regimentation, or order, to mold society to. Anarchism, then, unlike the common politic of the times, was a socio-economic philosophy based on the desires of the people. Instead of trying to force people into models of economic and political structure that they did not choose, it invited people to make their own models of society through contract.

Like all libertarians, mutualists generally adhere to some form of non-aggression, though some don't use the term, because they feel it is used too heavily by vulgar libertarians, who use free market terminology to protect their unfairly gained property. Though mutualists differ from other libertarians in our view of rightful claim to rights, mutualists do oppose such acts of aggression as theft, vandalism, assault, and fraud on person and rightfully-owned property. What distinguishes mutualism from other forms of libertarianism is that we are also socialists, though *laissez-faire* ones. Mutualists are socialists, not because we oppose money and markets, but because, in accordance with the cost-principle, we oppose profit, rent, interest, and taxes, which are viewed as gains from monopoly and lack of competition.

Proudhon, for instance, felt that socialism, the sharing of resources, if left voluntary, was beneficial enough to humanity that it would be inclined to set itself up by individuals combining their own interests under the free market. He felt that freedom was the grounds upon which equality and cooperation was based. Never did Proudhon, in promoting his vision of libertarian socialism, promote the coercive destruction of capitalism. He instead says,

I protest that when I criticized [...] the complex of institutions of which property is the foundation stone, I never meant to forbid or suppress, by sovereign decree, ground rent and interest on capital. I think that

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all these manifestations of human activity should remain free and voluntary for all: I ask for them no modifications, restrictions or suppressions, other than those which result naturally and of necessity from the universalization of the principle of reciprocity which I propose.¹

To Proudhon and Warren, the aim of the labor movement should not be based on any kind of pre-arranged system to be forced on society, such as living in communes and sharing everything, but on the laborer gaining the full product of his or her labor value and doing with it as they please, so far as it does not restrict others from the same ability. To both Proudhon and Warren, this did not require compulsive action by the hand of a benevolent government; quite oppositely, it required the ability of the worker to have complete control and ownership over their own rights, labor, land, and capital. If society was naturally inclined to reciprocity, though, why wasn't it already a reality? What was getting in the way of its establishment? This is a question that the anarchists, in particular, would get to the heart of.

THE SOMEBODY

WHEN BENJAMIN TUCKER, an individualist anarchist, self-described socialist, and proponent of mutual credit and the cost-principle, was challenged to describe “the Somebody” who steals from the working poor, this lengthy quote is what he had to say:

What are the ways by which men gain possession of property? Not many. Let us name them: work, gift, discovery, gaming, the various forms of illegal robbery by force or fraud, usury. Can men obtain wealth by any other than one or more of these methods? Clearly, no. Whoever the Somebody may be, then, he must accumulate his riches in one of

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these ways. We will find him by the process of elimination.

Is the Somebody the laborer? No; at least not as laborer; otherwise the question were absurd. Its premises exclude him. He gains a bare subsistence by his work; no more. We are searching for his surplus product. He has it not.

Is the Somebody the beggar, the invalid, the cripple, the discoverer, the gambler, the highway robber, the burglar, the defaulter, the pickpocket, or the common swindler? None of these, to any extent worth mentioning. The aggregate of wealth absorbed by these classes of our population compared with the vast mass produced is a mere drop in the ocean, unworthy of consideration in studying a fundamental problem of political economy. These people get some wealth, it is true; enough, probably for their own purposes: but labor can spare them the whole of it, and never know the difference.

Then we have found him. Only the usurer remaining, he must be the Somebody whom we are looking for; he, and none other. But who is the usurer, and whence comes his power? There are three forms of usury; interest on money, rent of land and houses, and profit in exchange. Whoever is in receipt of any of these is a usurer. And who is not? Scarcely any one. The banker is a usurer; the manufacturer is a usurer; the merchant is a usurer; the landlord is a usurer; and the workingman who puts his savings, if he has any, out at interest, or takes rent for his house or lot, if he owns one, or exchanges his labor for more than an equivalent, — he too is a usurer. The sin of usury is one under which all

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are concluded, and for which all are responsible. But all do not benefit by it. The vast majority suffer. Only the chief usurers accumulate: in agricultural and thickly-settled countries, the landlords; in industrial and commercial countries, the bankers. Those are the Somebodies who swallow up the surplus wealth.

And where do the Somebodies get their power? From monopoly. Here, as usual, the State is the chief of sinners. Usury rests on two great monopolies; the monopoly of land and the monopoly of credit. Were it not for these, it would disappear. Ground-rent exists only because the State stands by to collect it and to protect land-titles rooted in force or fraud. Otherwise the land would be free to all, and no one could control more than he used. Interest and house-rent exist only because the State grants to a certain class of individuals and corporations the exclusive privilege of using its credit and theirs as a basis for the issuance of circulating currency. Otherwise credit would be free to all, and money, brought under the law of competition, would be issued at cost. Interest and rent gone, competition would leave little or no chance for profit in exchange except in business protected by tariff or patent laws. And there again the State has but to step aside to cause the last vestige of usury to disappear.²

Benjamin Tucker had been influenced by previous anarchists who followed the cost-principle, a cornerstone of mutualism, given to the mutualist and individualist schools of anarchism first by Josiah Warren, but soon after by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (under different terms). This principle of equitable commerce, stated also as *cost-the-limit-of-price*, says that each individual should live at their own costs and, thus, prices should

not rise above or go below the cost of manufacture. Prices that are at cost include wages, salaries, benefits, etc. Prices over cost include profit, rent, interest, and taxes. These are prices that would not be paid in a free market, but are enforced by gunpoint or by state-protected privilege. The clearest of these forms of oppression is taxes, as taxes are taken forcefully against one's will. The others are a bit harder to understand, so let's start at the bottom of this mess.

COST AND PRIVILEGE

AS A YOUNG WORKER, one must labor to survive. In order to labor, one must find employment. One can be self-employed, but without land and capital one will not have the productive capacity to compete with other providers in most markets. Most workers, then, find employment at firms that they did not help start. Upon doing so, workers will receive wages, salaries, and/or benefits. If they save, and refrain from pleasures, they may one day be able to be self-employed and/or own their own homes. Upon employment, however, the boss, who may also labor and gain wages or salary in this manner, also gets another form of income. This income is called *profit*. As made clearer by Francis Dashwood Tandy in *Voluntary Socialism*,

By profit is usually meant, the difference between the price which a merchant pays for goods, and the price at which he sells them. But this is not a sufficiently accurate definition for economic purposes. Such profit is composed largely of rent, interest, taxes, wages and the necessary expenses of business. Economically speaking, profit is that which is left between the cost and the price, after the factors above mentioned have been deducted.³

Profit, then, is a return on privilege, and not on labor. Cost is based on labor. It is true that many returns on capital are just, but these just returns do not incur profits, they instead increase wages and productivity for all. These two forms of capital—those

which increase wages, and which incur profits— can be separated into categories of competitive and monopolistic capital. Monopolized capital incurs profit, while competitive capital increases the productive capacity of the economy as a whole. Profit can occur for different reasons. It can be tied to privileges given by the state, such as licensing, subsidies, patent protection, zoning laws, union regulation, etc. as well as privileges given by other monopolies, such as bankers and landlords. The return on capital, above the cost of labor, is known as *profit* or *economic interest*. The return on labor is wages, and is based on cost.

The monopolist employer, still, pays the toll of much larger monopolies. Unless he or she is her own provider, every employer also has a landlord. Similar to the unproductive income of profit, the landlord makes an idle flow of cash from owning land and collecting rent. Most capitalists have to face this fee as well as workers.

Even the landlord must pay fees to even more privileged monopolies. Most land is either inherited, whereupon taxes are still paid, or it is purchased. Some land is purchased by legitimate means of saving one's wages or salary, and this form of ownership should be commended and respected to some degree. Aside from this legitimate form, though, land may also be purchased from saving the illegitimate profits of capital or the rent of more land. Most landlords, however, own their land by means of loan and credit, and pass the charges of its use down in their rent.

The unjust banker, or usurer, gains a particular form of price above cost known as *monetary interest*. The central banks merely monetize the labor of others, and make a return. The smaller banks loan the money of others to make their interest. So far as the monopolist is banker, the return on money is unjust, and the intensity of this injustice can be measured by the interest that is acquired. This interest is paid merely for having the state-protected privilege of issuing money, as money, as IOU, belongs properly to those whose labor it is monetizing, and there is no money rightly-owed to any banker for the opportunity costs of lending; it's not their labor being monetized or lent. There are wages owed to the banker, but interest, by its nature, is unjust. Opportunity costs deserve wages, but there are no opportunity costs to the banker in

monetizing people's labor for them, aside from the opportunity cost of not working somewhere else. In such a scenario, the banker is also subject to the supply and demand of the labor market, and no banker is "too big to fail."

In a mutualist society, mutual credit would be available without interest. Mutual credit would allow almost everyone to be their own employer and landlord (if not individually, then cooperatively), because as long as everyone pays their loan back (which is possible in interest-free money systems, but not in interest-bearing monies) they can all receive a loan and receive a bill for absolutely no opportunity costs. This is why mutual credit is called *free money*. Mutual banks of issue would out-compete interest-bearing banks. State banking must go.

We have still not come to the pinnacle of this pyramid scheme. Atop this leviathan rests the monopoly on law and violence, known as *the state*, which forbids all, other than its own choosing, from creating money, issuing property titles, or creating laws. The banks are controlled by the government, and, like us, must pay tribute known as *taxes*. Taxes are a price paid over cost, but what is being bought by taxes is a particularly special service, and the foundation of all human actions under a system of law: rights. The state holds the monopoly on rights and, with this power, extracts profits from the populace.

Thus it is, that the anarchists, through a long chain of reasoning, have come to oppose such unearned incomes as those of capitalists, who benefit from a monopoly on capital through profit; landlords, who benefit from a monopoly on land through rent; usurers, who benefit from the monopoly on credit through interest; and the state, who benefits from a monopoly on rights through taxes. Profit, rent, interest, and taxes are prices above cost.

COST AND PRICE

PRICE IS THE AMOUNT, in currency, exchanged for a good or service. It is a service or item's exchangeable value. According to Josiah Warren, prices should reflect the effort of creating a similar good or service. This effort is cost. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon states that, under implementation of the cost-

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principle, “[e]very product will be paid for with a product that costs the same sum of labor and expense.” He says also that, in his day,

When you buy a pair of shoes, you buy the day of a shoemaker. When a cobbler buys shoes, he buys back his own day. Thus if his day is worth fifty sous on the market, and he gains only forty at the workshop, how do you want him to pay his own goods?⁴

All work is not valuable, however. As quoted by Alan Ritter, Proudhon clarifies:

The superior worker, who understands and executes faster than another, and who turns out more products of better quality, will receive a larger reward, because he surpasses the common measure. With all the more reason, so will the worker who combines management skill and leadership talent with manual ability. He will be able to earn the equivalent of one and a half, two, three or even more standard daily wages.⁵

The cost-principle is highly tied to the concept of individual sovereignty or self-ownership. According to mutualists, all prices that stray from cost are due to a lack of self-ownership, which is due to some form of monopoly, or property infringement. This reasoning comes from the fact that all parties in a free transaction take into account the costs of buying and selling. What is cost, though? According to Josiah Warren, cost is “the endurance of whatever is disagreeable.”

[...]

Fatigue of mind or body is cost. Responsibility which causes anxiety is cost. To have our time or our attention taken up against our preferences—to make a sacrifice of any kind—a feeling of mortification—

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painful suspense—fear—suffering or
enduring anything against our inclinations, is
here considered cost.⁶

All of these hindrances are what economists generally refer to as the *costs* of labor, including having “our time taken up against our preferences,” which is an opportunity cost of labor. It’s important to note that the cost of labor does not just include the labor of manufacturing the materials, but also the labor to extract the resources and produce them into their component parts. When a seller makes a transaction, they include their labor and materials and the cost of rent, taxes, and interest in their price. As long as no one down the line of production had to incur artificial prices from rent, taxes, and interest, all prices of material are also at voluntary cost. If added taxes, rent, profit, and interest are experienced, though, these will be factored into the sale price.

As Clarence Lee Swartz makes very clear,

The workers for wages are apt to say:
‘We borrow no money, and therefore pay no
interest. How, then, does this squabble
concern us?’

In Reality, it is exactly the class that
has no dealing with the banks, and derives no
advantage from them, that ultimately pays all
the interest money that is collected. When a
manufacturer borrows money to carry on his
business, he counts the interest he pays as part
of his expenses, and therefore adds the
amount of interest to the price of his goods.⁷

Everyone pays interest, profit, rent, and taxes in the prices they pay as consumers. These prices are not based on labor, but on privilege, and yet all suffer their consequences. Swartz blames interest for all profits. He says that,

all profits are based upon and caused
by interest; and it matters not whether few or
many capitalists own the capital they are using

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or are indebted to the banker or money lender for it.⁸

Cost is anything that someone does not want to do. It is not idle gain. It is disutility. It is a loss of opportunity to better oneself or one's conditions. Payment is given to offset these costs when someone has incurred them because they have performed a service or provided a good. That is the reason for payment, not simply for idleness. Payment is given in exchange for cost-value.

VALUE

MUTUALISTS DON'T FIND a contradiction in adhering to both the labor and marginal utility theories of value. Francis Dashwood Tandy, in 1896, argues that,

It should be noted that the labor value does not necessarily mean the actual amount of labor embodied in the identical article, but the amount of labor necessary to produce an article of exactly similar and equal utility [under fair conditions].⁹

He acknowledges marginal utility value:

As the margin, or desires which are left unsatisfied, increases, the price decreases. Thus it is the 'margin of utility' which determines the price.¹⁰

The contemporary mutualist, Kevin Carson, in the first part and throughout his work, *Studies in Mutualist Political Economy*, has done much work on synthesizing marginal utility and labor theories of value. In regard to time-preference models, he suggests,

It will suffice for the moment to say that, although time preference no doubt holds true universally even when property is evenly distributed, the present after-effects of

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primitive accumulation render time-preference much steeper than it would otherwise be. Time preference is not a constant. It is skewed much more to the present for a laborer without independent access to the means of production, or to subsistence or security.¹¹

Many criticisms of mutualism look over mutualist treatment of opportunity costs, because mutualists make use of the labor theory of value; but a proper labor theory of value includes the opportunities of labor. Indeed, Kevin Carson says,

As for opportunity cost as the basis of the cost principle, it is worth bearing in mind that “the subjective utility of individuals” is not determined in a vacuum; “the highest price [a] factor could earn elsewhere” is entirely relative, and is conditional on many things, not least among them the existence of monopoly returns enforced by the state.¹²

In the mutualist synthesis of value, the price, or exchange-value, is based on the intersubjective marginal utility, but according to the supply and demand of both the buyer and seller’s *labor*. Each party may have a particular use-value for a good or service the other has, but, unless both parties feel there is benefit in an exchange, it will not occur. Unless someone wants to make an exchange, there is no exchangeable labor value. There may be use-value in the labor, however.

Labor does not occur voluntarily unless it ensures a return, allowing the worker to consume more for themselves, or it reduces their costs in some way. Similarly, value is not exchangeable until it provides some sort of benefit, some reduction of labor, or of nourishment, to consumers. Consumers want to buy more for lower prices, and producers want to sell more for higher ones; both in order to reduce costs for themselves. A producer will not sell items at a price that is below cost under free conditions, nor will a consumer buy for a price over cost. Cost, on the side of the producer, means the toll of labor, and for a consumer, it means the

disutility of producing for oneself, or buying a product. Excluding influence by the state, utility is determined by labor.

Consumers want to reduce their labor through purchase, and laborers want to reduce their labor by gaining the right (payment) to become consumers. The thing that gets in the way of this organic relationship between consumptive value and productive value is the state, when it externalizes costs onto others, often by way of exclusion of resources. Surely, differences in labor value are accentuated by privileges granted by the state; a worker who maintains their own land tenure may retain more of their labor than a sharecropper. This being so, a homesteader may spend more casually, while a serf needs to be frugal. The products of their labor may be the same, like results to like efforts, but one maintains the title to their labor while the other does not, one feeds their own, while the other feeds a class of parasites, resulting in a subjectivity of their labor's value— a split between casual and frugal spending—, despite the objectivity of its outcomes. If labor value is determined, as Tandy asserts, by the consumer's ability to make a duplicate under fair conditions, a price above cost, measured in abstract terms of marginal utility, is derived from unfair conditions of monopoly, particularly in regard to money and credit. Labor value cannot be properly apportioned under dire conditions. Prices that stray from cost are the culprit for the working poor.

According to the philosophy of mutualism, and in accordance with the cost-principle, prices should be limited to their costs, not by the state or authority, but by the lack of it; the state is the largest monopoly, and externalizes the most costs. The cost-principle, instead, relies on the sovereignty of the individual, and the internalization of costs. The complete ownership of individuals over their selves leaves people to make their own choices regarding the utility of labor, both in terms of consumption and production. Mutualism depends on a completely free price system, where value is decided by supply and demand alone, through the choices of free buyers and sellers.

CONCLUSION

A PRICE, AMOUNT PAID, will be at cost when all of the labor that went into producing a good or service is completely voluntary. I say this because both parties consider the value of their labor in a transaction. Neither will trade something they worked hard to acquire for something they wouldn't work as hard for. If a person is not considering the cost of the loss of their labor in a transaction, either in product or in currency, it is due to monopolistic privilege, which suggests that a price has been paid over cost to the individual in another market, and that prices are not being completely internalized somewhere. In other words, they are trading unearned income, and that is why they don't concern themselves with its cost. Privilege allows costs to be externalized onto others, without contribution of labor. This allows the privileged to make decisions without regard to the cost of labor, creating purely materialistic systems of value. This is not freedom.

Taxes and the government would find themselves necessarily absent in a free society. Government, after all, is compulsive subjugation and involuntary absorption into a group, and taxes and subsidization are its application in the economy. Instead, people in a free society would pay voluntary prices at cost for the service of providing law and order, would associate voluntarily to cooperate in providing these services, or they would provide them for themselves. Law and order is not absent in anarchy, just freely ascribed to as equals.

In absence of the state and taxes, restrictions on banking would be lifted, interest levels would approach zero, and any price attached to a loan would be little more than compensation for opportunity costs of the transaction, and payment for services from the bank. Even these charges, however, would be scarcely found, as competition to provide credit would be fierce. The banks themselves, being under economic competition, would likely take a more mutual and cooperative model of democratic assembly for decision-making, with customers and employees of the bank having considerable say in the banks' policies. Having no interest to deal with, everyone would have fair access to credit loans to buy land, capital, or to go to school.

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Mutual Credit: Its Function and Purpose

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THE NECESSITY OF MONEY

MONEY IS BOTH the most important and most destructive means of human interaction. With the use of money we have constructed vast cities for people to thrive in, as well as the bombs with which our lives are made to seem so trivial. It's impossible to have an advanced economy, teeming with its many wealths for enjoyment, without money. But money is such a crushing force in our lives, for when the landlord calls for their rent, the state for its taxes, money is what is actually being demanded. In the end, money is so useful people are willing to kill in order to get it. But what is money? What is its purpose, and why does it cause so many problems? How do we fix it? These are the questions I am aiming to answer.

THE HISTORY OF MONEY

TO START, I'd like for you to imagine life without money for a moment. I mean, really imagine it. How would you go about getting the things you need?

One cannot simply do everything by themselves while having a standard of living as high as we enjoy today. Milton Friedman points out that you can't even make your own pencil,¹ let alone all of the comforts of a modern home, such as mattresses, refrigerators, computers, razor blades, etc. All of these things exist only by the fact that human beings have cooperated, by using a means of exchange, called *money*, to manufacture them.

Early people, such as hunter-gatherers, being free from government, had exchange systems based on various forms of gift and credit. It was once thought that early economies existed by way of barter, but barter is too clumsy, and relies on the double-

coincidence of wants; that is, on each party wanting something the other party has at the same time, and to an equal degree, feeling it to be of equal value, use, or, as best used in terms of economy, utility. Instead, hunter-gatherers would give each other things, and loosely keep track of credits and debits. Barter, when it existed, was usually symbolic within groups, or occurred between them.

Hunter-gathering people lived in small bands, usually smaller than 100 people, related as family or clan. ¹Though there was no physical means of exchange (that is, currency, money) at this time, as shown by the work of Robin Dunbar, primitive people would regulate their credit exchanges by way of gossip. If someone didn't contribute to the group, they were ridiculed, and the group would not contribute to them either.² In this way, the free-rider problem was resolved without the need for money.

The benefits of primitive credit led to the production of more wealth and, thus, more population, and better storage of knowledge, as well as technologies that allowed food to be grown. Credit exchanges, now between strangers, needed a form of regulation, and so people organized into politico-religious organizations would create organized systems of credit, which were often kept track of by way of some form of tally. They would also use commonly-valued and long-lasting commodities, such as shells, well-crafted tools, precious metals, etc. for their exchanges.

Eventually governments developed, and demanded involuntary tribute by way of taxes. Tribute had often been taken in the form of *corvée*, which is slave-labor, or an involuntary tithe of a percentage of all grains, cattle, and other goods produced. Taxation by way of tithe became troublesome for rulers, as serfs would often try to pay tribute in their least-valuable goods, their

¹ It's interesting to note here that it's easier for hunter-gatherers to make loose exchanges, as they are more generous to one another in general, being related by blood, and having more genetic stake in preserving each other's well-being, while also engaging in more regular and direct interpersonal, or face-to-face, contact.

spoilage; and so coinage began. First ingots were used, but then the king had his head stamped on the coins in order that they would have his seal of approval—that is, approval of the proper weight of the metals—, so that a regular measure of value could be imposed on the rate of taxes. In order to acquire the metal coins to begin with, the serfs would have to accept them as payment for labor from the lords, but did so only in order to pay them right back as tribute, which is little more than payment to be left alone.

In due course, populations spread, and the need for exchanges grew immensely. This led to paper money, as metal is hard to carry around. Unlike commodity money—that is, money like gold bullion, wheat, shells, tools, and more, which hold intrinsic value by themselves (being able to be used)—, paper (or now digital) money has no intrinsic value at all, but only redemptive value. Paper money is a form of credit money. Credit money can take the form of tallying, paper scrip, or cheques. Credit money only holds value so far as it can be redeemed for something with intrinsic value. Money that has no redeemability has no value at all. Let's take a closer look at the redemptive value of money.

BASIS AND STANDARD

THE THING MONEY IS REDEEMED FOR is called the *basis* of its value. The basis is very important, as it ensures the dependability of the currency. Thomas H. Greco, Jr. tells us,

The most important factor in the creation of an exchange medium is the *basis of issue*. Historically, money has been issued on the basis of various financial instruments such as bonds, promissory notes, mortgage deeds of trust, and other claims to real value. Ideally the creation and issuance into circulation of a unit of currency or credit should be coincident with the actual transfer of value (goods and services) from a seller to a buyer.[*] That transfer should also give rise to a "commitment" on the part of the original

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issuer (the buyer) to redeem the currency, in the market, by providing equivalent value in exchange for the currency, that is, the issuer should be obligated to accept his currency at par or face value from anyone wishing to buy his other goods or services. The form of the redemption need not necessarily be limited to a particular commodity, but may be in the form of any desired goods or services that the original issuer offers for sale. This is the way LETS and other mutual credit systems operate. The "credits" that the seller receives are, in effect, money, created by the buyer who is "committed" to redeem credits later by providing goods or services to someone in the system.³ [* bold removed]

The basis of money is not to be confused with its *standard*, which is the thing value is measured against. For instance, the basis of money was gold and silver for a long time, because money could be taken to the bank and redeemed in these precious metals. However, gold and silver were also used as the standard of value, because all other prices were measured against them. It is completely possible, though not reliable, to share a common standard, while having a different basis, so any item used as a standard of value need not limit the supply of money. But to enforce a standard separate from its basis can cause problems as the supply of the standard fluctuates relative to other items.

To better understand what I mean by "standard of value," "what value is measured against," and "fluctuating relative to other items," think about it in terms of human height or weight. In order to create a system of measure that is not arbitrary, we must define where the lines are drawn, and, in order to do so, many have chosen to pick a specimen, and call it the *standard*. After a specimen is chosen, values are measured against it. In the case of height, we can choose an individual, and measure the height of others against them, calling them either *short* or *tall*, depending on how they compare. Likewise, individuals may be compared one against another for relative measures of weight, such as heavy or light.

Such values are made only in reference to others. These others are the standard. For a long time, gold and silver were the price standards, against which everything else in the economy was measured. A “fixed” standard, of this sort, turned out to be ultimately troublesome.

The least arbitrary of standards, and the method by which most economies have moved past the problems of fixed standards, is to use the average, which, at times, is not represented by a physical thing, but an abstract idea. For instance, in the case of weight, if three teenagers weigh 93, 102, and 120 lbs. we can choose the middle one, John, at 102 lbs., as a standard, but the best appeal to intersubjectivity is to use the average, which is 105, a non-existent person. If we name this imaginary friend *Sally*, we can say that anyone can be measured as short and tall compared to Sally. The average changes as new people are brought in. Using a standard such as this— an imaginary friend, who magically changes in size, rather than one that is fixed, such as John— is called a *floating standard*, or *floating exchange rate*, specifically because, like a buoy on the water, as new participants are added, the value, or level, changes. The effects of a floating standard on money are not to reduce the value of money, but, quite oppositely, to keep money at a constant match with the value of its basis. The dollar used to be fixed to gold, but it has since become a floating currency.

A healthy float can be understood as being “fixed” at equilibrium, resulting in market clearance. This means that (so long as there are no state privileges, like subsidies, zoning, etc.) everything in the economy reaches its equilibrium price, which is at cost. When money is allowed to float freely, is loaned fairly, and does not face deflation or inflation, its clearing price is zero. When money is at its clearance price, it carries no exchange-value of its own, but only use-value, which is equal to the exchange-value of its basis. This results in perfect economic circulation.

Clearance prices and floating currencies are discussed further at the end this essay, as well as in “Credit, Collateral, and Spot-Pricing” and in “The Proper Rate of Money.” For now, we must move on to exchange- and use-value.

EXCHANGE- AND USE-VALUE

THE DISTINCTION between use- and exchange-value is important to understand when it comes to the price of money. The mutualist, Francis Dashwood Tandy, helps clarify a bit:

It is not unusual to consider that value is derived from the power of wealth to gratify desires. This is only partially true. Certainly, a value does attach to everything on account of its utility, but this is a very different kind of value from that which attaches to commodities which are kept for sale. The latter are valuable, not because they are of use to their owner, but because he can exchange them for something else. This value is known as price, or exchange-value; that is, the value which attaches to goods from their characteristic of exchangeability, as contradistinguished from the value which attaches to them from the use to which they may be put. This latter is known as utility, or use-value. It will be readily seen that many things may possess great use-value, while possessing no exchange-value whatsoever. Air is absolutely essential to our existence, and consequently has a very great use-value, but as no one would ever buy or sell it, it has no exchange-value.⁴

To understand exchange- and use-value further, let's talk about product. Say you have grown 50 carrots. After the 30th carrot, your marginal utility, or use-value, for more, diminishes considerably. Someone comes along and offers you a pineapple (hypothetical-you loves both carrots and pineapples) for three carrots. Because you don't need so many carrots, they carry little use-value to you, and, because you don't currently have a

pineapple, it holds a high use-value. At this point, the carrots, which have little use-value, and will eventually spoil, can be exchanged for something with high use-value that will be quickly consumed, the pineapple. The exchange-value of the carrots then exceed their use-value. When exchange-value exceeds use-value, exchange occurs.

This brings us to an important fact about money: Money is not capital or a commodity, and has no intrinsic value, but only value of representation. Thus, money itself, being a means of exchange and representation, and not a means of utility and intrinsic value, should not have a price, but should have a use-value equal to, or reflecting, the exchange-value of the goods it represents (not its own intrinsic value, which is nil), its basis. This point is very crucial. Again, the use-value, or principal, of money is its buying power, and is equal to the exchange-value of the items it represents as credit. If five dollars, backed by canned goods, can buy a loaf of bread, that is its use-value. It is limited by the exchange-value of the canned goods.

The value of money should always be equal to its basis. If we print money, and say one dollar can currently be redeemed in two giant gumballs, the dollar's use-value is equal to the exchange-value of the giant gumballs. This is because if we don't want to exchange our giant gumballs, printing dollars is pointless; they have no use. The only intrinsic value (use-value) of money is as a means of exchange (that is, the exchange-value of other things). If money (not the things it represents) has an exchange-value itself (a price, \$5 for \$6), this is a price above the actual value it represents.

The exchange-value, or price, of money, over that of its use-value, is called *monetary interest*. If five dollars can be sold for six equally valued dollars, the exchange-value of five dollars is six dollars, with five dollars in principal and one dollar in interest being made. If I can sell tickets to nothing, having no intrinsic or redemptive value, these tickets bear an artificial exchange-value, and I am making interest. If they held purely representative value, the tickets would be useless, and would not exist. If you will equally accept four giant gumballs or \$1.50 (when two giant gumballs are still worth \$1) for a box of snappers, my money obviously carries an exchange-value that is higher than its use-value, because it is

valued at three giant gumballs, but it can be exchanged as four. This is the nature of interest on money. As you can see, interest is quite a paradoxical concept.

Clearly, interest on money is only created by force, as an act of robbery, since a means of exchange has no intrinsic value, but only redemptive value in the basis with which it is represented. The system of force in place that allows such a system of interest to occur today is called *the tax system*. If we don't pay our taxes, often added into the price of our rent (if we don't own the buildings or land that we use), with US dollars, we will be forcibly kicked out of our homes, our possessions will be taken against our will, and we will be left out in the cold. If we resist, we will face consequences much more severe than the ones we ourselves may impose on the other party (the state).

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

THE PRICE OF MONEY, like all others things, is subject to the law of supply and demand (in this case, monopolistic supply). In order to understand the current nature and flow of money, we must first understand how markets function. The law of supply and demand can be reduced simply to this: Consumers want more product for less money, and producers want more money for less product. Simple: Everyone wants more for less. The only time they don't seem to want more for less is when they are extending concern to others, but this is arguably an extension of selfhood.ⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱ We commonly refer to our *selves* as the physical boundaries of our bodies, but this is not sufficient for terms of political economy, which extends selfhood to rightfully gained property, nor is it sufficient for terms of spiritual development, which extends selfhood to the needs of others (even if these others are usually limited to close friends, lovers, and family). *Self*, then, should perhaps be better understood as being related to our *range of*

When there are no barriers-to-entry into a market—that is, when anyone can start selling things without licenses, permits, and other extra expenses—, competition is able to form. In a perfectly competitive market the prices, or exchange-values, of goods and services remain in equilibrium at the cost of production. This means that there is no surplus or increase, like interest, created. In such a market, firms must accept the same prices for their goods as everyone else, considering they are of the same quality and quantity. They are called *price-takers*, because if they raise their prices, they will lose business. When such equilibrium prices are reached, supply and demand meet, and there is neither scarcity or surplus created.

The opposite of a competitive market is a monopolistic market, which exists due to barriers to entry in the market. Unlike a competitive market, in a monopolistic market, the prices, or exchange-values, of goods and services are not restricted to the cost of production, and price-gouging can occur. Monopolies are *price-makers*, because they determine the price. This means that a surplus, like interest, can be created. Such an increase is a return for something other than labor. In other words, such a return is theft.

INFLATION AND DEFLATION

ANOTHER RELATED PROBLEM associated with the value of money is that of price inflation and deflation. *Inflation* occurs when money becomes less valuable, more available,

concern. In political economy, to care about one's own interests is to care about one's own range of concern, which oftentimes includes the well-being of others, who may in turn provide sentimental value, a support network, or some other utility, which is good also for our own well-being. That range, however, is limited, as people do not often give freely to strangers.

and prices rise. If we can pay for a pineapple with \$2, and tell the other party that those two dollars can be redeemed in two carrots from us later, but, when the time comes, refuse to exchange two carrots for less than \$3, we have made \$1 in a price change called *inflation* (and we'd have to be willing to put a third dollar in the economy for that to be met, or claim slave-labor by force). If, instead, we declare that \$2 can buy three carrots, we have lost a carrot, in a price change called *deflation*. Deflation is when money becomes more valuable, and less available, and prices drop. In order to put an end to inflation, banks must not print unbacked fiat currencies (not to be confused with currencies backed by services rather than goods). Such an act reduces the value of money by making it more available in comparison to its basis.

When money is used as a store of value, hoarding ensues, and its value as storage exceeds its value of redemption; the money becomes deflated. If, for instance, one prints money which is backed by baked goods, and the money is traded to someone who keeps it, the baked goods will expire and the money will be devalued. If money is backed more generally, and things in the economy expire (due to hoarding) faster than the rate of redemption, this will also lead to deflation and scarcity of currency. In order to curb deflation, and to encourage the healthy circulation of money, and to keep it at its clearance price, demurrage, a holding-fee, or value-loss, must be imposed on money, equal to the entropy of its basis. For this reason, Silvio Gesell remarks, in *The Natural Economic Order*, that,

Only money that goes out of date like a newspaper, rots like potatoes, rusts like iron, evaporates like ether, is capable of standing the test as an instrument for the exchange of potatoes, newspapers, iron and ether. For such money is not preferred to goods either by the purchaser or the seller. We then part with our goods for money only because we need the money as a means of exchange, not because we expect an advantage from possession of the money.

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So we must make money worse as a commodity if we wish to make it better as a medium of exchange.⁵

So long as banks can do as they please, and are unchecked by competition and democratic ownership by its members, the application of demurrage and proper rate of issuing currency is unlikely. Thomas Greco, Jr. says,

Money, as it emerges from the banks that create it, is not distributed fairly, because the allocation decisions are not made democratically but rather by elite groups of corporate bankers who are not held properly accountable. They act in their own interests, pursuing goals that are typical of any corporate business—profit and growth.⁶

The owning class of the banks only serve to benefit from the inflation of currency, as they can release fiat money printed from thin air, owing nothing in return, passing a secret tax on to those who hold its basis. They don't benefit so much from deflation, except that deflation which is caused by interest and hoarding on behalf of their class.

THE THEFT OF OUR LABOR

WHAT IS THE DOLLAR, but a representation of our labor? After all, if you recall, its very basis is our own freedom from coercion; if we don't use it to pay our rent and taxes, we will be removed from our homes. Dollars are ultimately redeemed, by way of taxes, in our own freedom from harm. They are also redeemed in the goods and products in the economy, which were created by our labor, and those of others, who must pay their taxes as well.

You see, the Federal Bank releases money based on the GDP, the Gross Domestic Product— of which most are a contributor—, but tacks on the amount of interest that can be

taken without causing a revolt.ⁱⁱⁱ Money represents our labor, as contributors into the GDP. It is a title of ownership, very much like a house or a car title. As the holder of a title is entitled to their car or home, the holder of money is entitled to labor or product. But we are not the original holders of the titles to our labor, we are slaves in a very serious sense of the term. If I were to write a title to your car, lacking your permission, and use this title to trade with others, this is similar to how the Federal Bank issues money into the economy, which is backed by our labor. It releases titles of ownership to our labor, money, but these titles are not given to us, the rightful holders, directly. Instead, they are loaned at interest to our landlords and employers, and we only receive our own titles of ownership, with which we may make our exchanges, after performing labor for them (and at the end of the year, we must have enough to pay for our “protection,” by way of taxes). Similarly, if I wrote a title to your car, which was enforced by the state, you’d have to perform services in order to buy back your car.

This is the nature of slavery today, the reason we are commanded about. If not for this, we’d cooperate, and reap the benefits together. Instead, a small class takes all of the rewards for themselves, which they had no hand in producing. The only reason hierarchical firms exist right now is because employers are given the privilege of holding slave-bills, the US dollar.

To make matters only worse, taxes and interest are not paid by employers and landlords, but are instead added into their expenses, and thus put into the prices that consumers pay. Clarence Lee Swartz suggests,

ⁱⁱⁱ If too many people are evicted from their homes and businesses, the power and legitimacy of the government will be more and more questioned, but if only a small minority have their homes taken, the passive majority will look the other way, rather than acknowledge their human duty to preserve and uphold ethical means of relation. Taxes work in a similar manner.

When a manufacturer borrows money to carry on his business, he counts the interest he pays as part of his expenses, and therefore adds the amount of interest to the price of his goods.⁷

When a customer, such as you or I, walks into a business and buys a t-shirt, or a sub sandwich, they are not only paying the wages of the workers, the cost of the ingredients, and the utilities; they are also paying for a portion of the rent of the building, a portion of the taxes, and a portion of the interest (the returns to the landlord, the state, and the banker). On top of that, because employers are given special privileges, and are all monopolists to that degree, they may charge prices above these costs, called *profit*. This is the money that the boss gets, simply for their privilege, and not for their labor, and it is paid by the consumer, as profit is also added into the price. At the end of the day, the wage worker pays all of the taxes, interest, rent, and profit in the economy, because any of the consequences of these faced by the ruling class are quickly passed down the line. The ruling class pays for little to nothing with their own labor, and just about everything with ours.

FREE BANKING

THE ONLY REASON money maintains any exchange-value (not to be confused with use-value) at all isn't because it takes great skill to create, but because its basis has been monopolized by the state. If the state were to step aside, and free banking were permitted to exist, the issuance of money would be brought under the laws of competition, and of supply and demand. This would bring the rate of issuing money down to its cost, which is near zero. Kevin Carson, contemporary mutualist author, suggests that,

In a genuinely free banking market, any voluntary grouping of individuals could form a cooperative bank and issue mutual bank notes against any form of collateral they

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chose, with acceptance of these notes as tender being a condition of membership.⁸

Without monopoly and the massive amounts of interest that comes with it, hierarchical banking institutions would be subject to competition and would be likely to lose patronage to banks that offer democratic ownership, transparency, and accountability to its members. It's only because the hierarchical banks hold state-given privilege—the exclusive license to distribute Federal money—that they have patronage in the first place. People have to pay their bills. In a scenario of free banking, mutual banks could outcompete, simply by not ripping their customer base off (with interest, inflation, etc.)! Mutual banks of issue, democratically-owned by their policy-holders, would issue credit at its true cost, without CEOs to raise the prices on the people, only in order to fly around the world and live an extravagant lifestyle without any work. The passing of the bill must come to an end.

The end of an exchange-price on money, commonly called *interest*, would encourage the end of all usurious prices, including rent from land and profit from labor and capital. Money is the foundation of the economy, and when it is out of equilibrium, so too is everything else. Without a disequilibrium in money, it does its job of facilitating transactions more fully, and exchanges occur more frequently, adding to the vitality of the economy.

At zero-percent interest rates, everyone can take out a loan for money and succeed. They can put their interest-free loan toward mental capital, such as a college degree, or they can invest in physical capital and open their own shop or buy a share in a democratic cooperative. Kevin Carson says that,

Near-zero interest rates would increase the independence of labor in all sorts of interesting ways.⁹

He says that,

Abundant cheap credit would drastically alter the balance of power between capital and labor, and returns on labor would

replace returns on capital as the dominant form of economic activity.¹⁰

[...]

As compensation for labor approached value-added, returns on capital were driven down by market competition, and the value of corporate stock consequently plummeted, the worker would become a de facto co-owner of his workplace, even if the company remained nominally stockholder-owned.¹¹

CONCLUSION

WHAT CAN BE DONE about the problems we now face, due to the monetary system we now have? What can we do to change things? The answer is very simple, and quite obvious. As Alfred Westrup said,

The evil is entirely corrected by making all products [...] the basis of paper [today, digital] money, and providing for its redemption in any of them.¹²

We must create our own system of money, our own systems of law, and outcompete. If people can smuggle drugs and alcohol, why not currency, so long as they are informed of its necessity? Or law for that matter? Systems of complimentary currencies which are considered legal by the state do very little to solve problems, because they are oftentimes based directly on the value of the dollar, or because they are taxed, which removes the entire purpose from having an alternative. Therefore, an agorist approach is in order.

If we were to create our own monetary systems, we would immediately benefit by reducing our own costs. By creating a means of exchange without interest, and using it for transactions,

we can undercut the prices currently offered on the market, which include interest, rent, profit, and associated business fees due to bureaucracy. If we can sell at the same rate without adding these expenses, we can offer cheaper products, without taking a cut in wages. Who doesn't like better prices? Not only that, but we can be more in control of the ingredients and parts used in our products, bringing up standards.

Such an economy cannot pay all of our bills from the start, but as the economy grows and develops from simple, low-capital investment markets into specialized, high-capital investment markets, more and more dollars will become freed up to pay those bills, and will eventually become obsolete and undesirable altogether. An economy which doesn't generate such bills to start with easily competes to take the place of the one that does.

How is it done? How can we start? To start such a bank, people merely need to get together and agree on a system of rates of issue. It would be sloppy, and hard to keep track of, to have a currency for each producer, and unstable to use a single basis, so it's in the benefit of both producers and consumers, both wanting to encourage the ease of transaction, to agree to use a common form of credit. Instead of using a fixed currency, as when it was fixed to an hour of hard labor, for instance, a currency that is used as a basis of multiple industries is better allowed to float, and act as a more abstract unit of measure, simply representing a percentage of the entire value in the economy, rather than the exact value of the hour's hard labor (or any other single basis). As money is increased, goods and services must increase, and vice versa!^{iv} The system should be uniform, and money should be loaned to individuals fairly and evenly, without interest. Simply create a system of accounting, and issue credits (with a graduating cap) and debits. As soon as credit is spent, debts are accrued, which must be repaid.

The debtor retains great freedom in exercising their means of repayment. They retain their choice of industry and "self"-

^{iv} If you'd like to read further about the process, see "Credit, Collateral, and Spot-Pricing" or "The Proper Rate of Money."

employment (a term which will no longer have any meaning, as the distinction of self-employment and employment by others will be lost altogether, along with that of boss and worker, when mutual credit is established). Any differences in skill and ability will be sorted out in the market as it approaches equilibrium.

Some may take longer to pay back their debts, and others may pay them rather quickly, but all will only be responsible for their own costs. This is natural. Inequality of skill and ability is natural, and mutual credit does not try to solve this with the bandage of communism, but it does remove economic inequalities of opportunity, which very frequently keep people from taking care of themselves. Remove these inequalities, and society flourishes, poverty diminishes, and, though complete equality of outcome may not be possible, the gap between rich and poor greatly closes in on itself.

The purpose of mutual credit is to allow the individual to maintain absolute rights to their own labor and to have a fair, safe, and stable economy in which to trade it. The function by which this is done is by giving everyone access to an interest-free loan, which is backed by their own collateral or good will, and which adjusts according to fluctuations of its basis (the collateral or good will). This, along with the deregulation of the economy (both on the side of capital and labor), would fulfill the purpose by entitling everyone to their own labor, allowing them access to self-employment and enriching, free, lives.

REFERENCES

¹ Milton Friedman

² Robin Dunbar

³ Thomas H. Greco, Jr., 128.

⁴ Francis Dashwood Tandy, 79.

⁵ Silvio Gesell, 296.

⁶ Thomas H. Greco, Jr, 9.

⁷ Clarence Lee Swartz, 65.

⁸ Kevin A. Carson, 186.

⁹ Ibid., 187.

¹⁰ Ibid., 186.

¹¹ Ibid., 187.

¹² Alfred B. Westrup²

Credit, Collateral, and Spot-Pricing

If you are unfamiliar with mutual credit, please see my article, "Mutual Credit: Its Function and Purpose," for an introduction.

CREDIT MONEY is commonly misconstrued, and the misconception is oftentimes applied unfavorably toward mutualist systems of currency. When people generally think about credit, they think about a loan, generally without any backing other than debt, and often paid back with interest. Indeed, this is certainly a form of credit. This is *fiat* credit. When a mutualist speaks of *mutual credit*, however, this specific form of credit should not be applied exclusively to the definition. Instead, mutualism works with a much larger definition of *credit-money*.

To understand what is meant by this, one must understand that money developed firstly from commodity exchanges. Those commodities which were commonly desired and had high exchange-values tended to be used as a means of exchange, and these items became what is today called *commodity money*. Commodity money is any money which carries an intrinsic exchange-value. Examples include shells, gold, bullets, and various other objects, depending on the time and place. Commodity money was an early, now outdated, form of money. *Credit money*, on the other hand, carries only redemptive value. Examples of credit money include bills of exchange and personal or business checks. These are credit monies because the paper itself has no use-value, only redemptive value. When a mutualist (at least one who knows what they are talking about) proposes mutual credit, they are not necessarily proposing that we all start using fiat-credit full time, but that instead of the state and the state's banks regulating credit money, we should cooperatively print our own by way of free mutual banks.

Credit money can be fiat, based solely on decree of the bank, or it can be based on a physical commodity, or even land. Indeed, just as the state prints fiat currency, a mutual bank may do the same. This concerns many, because of the track record of fiat currency, but this track record is due to the federal banking

monopoly, which can lend fiat currency over and above the expected return on labor. Labor is not a physical item, it is a potential, but so long as fiat money is based on this potential, and not above, the fiat currency can maintain stability. If left up to the market, a simple equilibrium would keep this in check.

Governments, and federal banks, not being subject to the laws of supply and demand, can do as they please, and may lend (or spend) fiat credit into the economy over and above the return on labor, in effect stealing the larger population's money-value, through inflation, and destabilizing the value of money for everyone else. This is incentivized through hierarchical decision-making, whereby a certain class may benefit at expense of the others, by carrying out such actions.

A mutual bank, being non-hierarchical and democratic, as well as being subject to supply and demand, will lack both the incentive and the capacity to print fiat money above the potential of labor. The membership will not desire to inflate their own currency. The bank will not be able to provide a stable currency if they do, and, since there is no monopoly on force, people can freely leave if they become dissatisfied. The bank is incentivized, inside and out, from printing an unstable currency.

Clearly, fiat credit is not good enough to provide a means for all of the exchanges in the economy. The problem with the gold-basis, for example, was its inability to provide enough value to coordinate all exchanges on its own. Thomas H. Greco, Jr. says,

The main problem is that when gold is used to back redeemable paper notes, the supply of money cannot grow larger than the supply of gold unless the system uses "fractional reserves," which creates still more problems.¹

The same would be true of a purely labor-based currency. Certainly, a form of commodity-based credit is also essential to a stable currency and plentiful exchanges. Individuals should certainly have the liberty to print their own IOUs, perhaps being fiat (purely on labor-debt), or based on a number of commodities.

It would be disadvantageous to the consumer to have a great number of currencies on the market to keep track of, but by confederating into mutual banks producers maintain the capacity to print a mutually agreed upon currency. They are then enabled for printing a form of mutual credit I like to refer to as *pan-commodity scrip*. This scrip, as that which Clarence Lee Swartz discusses, “can be realized through the Mutual Bank. It will be a credit currency pure and simple, not redeemable in coin of the realm, but secured by tangible values nevertheless.”²

Naturally, a pan-commodity scrip of this nature would be subject to concerns regarding the marginal utility value of various commodities, and issuing their affiliated money. In a bank such as this, producer-members would use their products as collateral, in order to gain an interest-free means of exchange. The bank would be unable to offer a flat-rate for most items, as proper prices are a reflection of supply and demand, not bank dictate. Since the bank would not be acting as investor, as in privately-owned capitalist banks, but instead as trustee, as in a mutual or trust organization, the bank should not involve itself in earning profits or dictating the prices of goods, but rather in reflecting the value ascribed in the market by its members.

When a bank takes a profit from loans— interest—, all prices reflect this profit, and scarcity ensues for everyone but the bank, who gains surplus. When a bank is run without a profit, just paying the bankers a salary or wage, money finds an equilibrium at its clearance price, and supply meets demand. In order to prevent a profit, a bank may use tools such as demurrage, whereby money expires alongside the goods it represents, and dividends, whereby profits become redistributed. Dividends and demurrage are not to be praised, however, but are rather safety-nets. It’s best if they are unnecessary. In order to do away with their necessity, it would be essential to issue money perfectly in accord with supply and demand. This is impossible, of course, but it can be approached and approximated, making demurrage and dividends less necessary as time passes. Traditional banks lack the incentive to do so, but a mutual bank has much incentive.

The bank would adjust its prices with supply and demand. This is called *spot-pricing*. Spot-pricing is used all of the time. Take,

for instance, the business of pawnbroking, which is ages-old. Pawn shops offer customers loans based on collateral. They are constantly having to spot-price and appraise items. A pawnbroker has to know about the products they are appraising, but their knowledge is not intrinsic, it is extrinsic, and the knowledge can be gained by just about anyone. A pawnbroker will contrast the items to be used as collateral with similar items, looking for wear and tear, scratches, and various other kinds of faults. They also have to keep in mind the supply and demand in the local market at the time. If a pawn shop is flooded with a specific item, they will stop accepting it as collateral, or they will lower their rates. At times, pawn shops may also purchase items for resale. The point is, pawn shops make their income, and some of them a very lucrative one, by knowing the market of the goods they are selling.

A mutual bank can be thought of, in a way, as a community-owned pawn shop. Instead of a single owner, partnership, etc. the people who use the bank/shop are the ones who own it, collectively. It may be operated by a few individuals at a time, such as employees or volunteers, but, if they are paid at all, they will not be individuals who make any profit or interest from their capital. Instead, they will be employed by the banking community, and paid a salary or wage equal to the market rate of like services. Their duties will be to appraise items and offer interest-free loans to the community of members, as well as tending to more standard affairs of bank management.

If carpenters, organized into a cooperative or as independent artisans, bring forward their collateral to the bank, the bankers should be obligated by contract (through the bank's constitution, which is governed by the members rather than exclusively by the bankers) to offer loans based on the policies of the bank. The bankers will, indeed, need to be informed individuals, capable of handling the duties asked of them, but their duties should be defined by the collectivity. This is not impossible; the affairs of pawn-broking can be learned, and even further developed, by the general populace, and members can make motions to one another to change policy accordingly, demanding officials to follow certain measures, or otherwise face conviction of contract infringement and termination of employment, and,

perhaps, worse. Banks should, of course, also allow some leeway, as is necessary in any spot-transaction. Pawn brokers today use things such as appraisal manuals, “blue books,” the internet, and current supply and demand in their own area when they appraise items. A member assembly may demand that a collective employee, such as a broker, follow certain procedures, such as making use of these items, and may also specify a range considered reasonable within which a pawnbroker may define more specific and immediate value concerns. This could be as simple as saying, for instance, a pawnbroker may deviate from the blue book price by up to 15% in a given term. Such policy would be defined, yet flexible. As always, being a democratic organization, a mutual bank is always able to change policy that is deemed destructive or undesirable. If a broker, immersed in the task, feels it necessary to break such a rule, and go outside of the allocated 15%, he or she must first persuade the voting collectivity to change policy. Only under this condition is the broker allowed to stray from current policy, as they, unlike the bankers of today, are restricted by a constitution, which is governed by the membership as a whole. Thus, they need permission from the members, who, collectively, are their employer.

Of course, just as when a system only monetizes certain products, or if it only monetized services, scarcity would be faced, the same is true also of an economy that only monetized products, and not labor. Labor, too, must be appraised. This can be done by starting individuals out with a basic or initial credit on their labor, which, if repaid in a timely fashion, becomes graduated, and allows even larger debits.

All members should be treated similarly. If good for their loans, they should be loaned more. If they are not good for their loans, they should not be loaned to any further, and their credit score should be shared; banks should federate with one another for the purpose of sharing credit scores, generally ridding themselves of the problem of free-riders.

Of course, any loan has the capacity for collateral failure. Money backed by labor can become inflated with the death or injury of the individual upon whose labor-debt it is based, and a currency based on product may become inflated with the

destruction of the items which it represents. In such a case, the collectivity, being the bank, must face the losses collectively, just as a private creditor today must face the loss of a default personally. This loss is applied through demurrage. Still, even with this loss, the benefits of a means of exchange make any such loss due to default worth it, and the natural human drive to acquire more, or at least be accepted by one's community, is its own incentive for individuals to pay back their loans. If they don't, they will face a negative credit score, and all of its implications (such as wagedom), forfeiting their otherwise easily acquired interest-free loans, which could be put toward mental or physical capital. Because mutual credit would offer so much accessibility, I doubt that anyone would accept wagedom over paying back an interest-free loan. Because of this, as argued in "Mutual Credit: Its Function and Purpose," a society with such a system of banking would be a society free of spurious returns on money, including interest, profit, and rent.ⁱ

In conclusion, mutual credit does not suppose pure fiat money, but, instead, secured fiat money based on the general return rate of the economy, coupled with a pan-commodity scrip, whereby members may contribute their own products as collateral toward an interest-free loan, determined by the constitution of the bank, likely according to cultural norms of value-measurement (blue books, merchant prices online, etc.), as well as the educated assessment of the broker, who is not the owner, but the elected trustee of the bank. Any returns to the bank above the costs of management will be paid to the members as a dividend, and any losses will be socialized through demurrage. Ideally, these costs will not occur at all, but in the real world they should be used as safety-nets against the limits of human knowledge. A mutual bank may be understood, in many ways, as a community-owned pawn shop; legislating is done together, and a trustee is elected to act as executive. The purpose is not to accrue interest for the broker, but,

ⁱ To see what I mean by these terms and their implications, see my other articles, "Interest and Premium: A Geo-Mutualist Synthesis," and "On Mutualism & Interest on Capital"

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instead, to create a means of exchange that is interest-free and, thus, beneficial for the community as a whole.

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¹ Thomas H. Greco, Jr., 129.

² Clarence Lee Swartz, 67.

The Proper Rate of Money

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE PROPER RATE OF MONEY? Money has always carried with it a price of some sort. When one is loaned money, one is asked a price, called interest, for the loan. If one mortgages their things, there is a seigniorage fee which often must be paid. At times, governments will devalue currencies by way deflation, or increase their value by way of inflation. What is the *proper* rate of money, though? That is the question which is being asked. How much interest should really be charged? How much should the price of money stray from the value of its basis? How much inflation and deflation should occur?

THE NATURE OF MONEY

IN ORDER TO EXAMINE the proper rate of money, we must begin with its nature. Today, money is simply a title which is backed by goods and services. It has value to its holder only because of its redeemability in those goods or services.

In many ways, money can be thought of as an IOU. As Thomas Greco, Jr. suggests,

The money issued [by a bank] can be thought of as an IOU that the buyer uses to pay for the goods and services he bought. That IOU may be passed along from hand to hand as each recipient, in turn, uses it to pay for his or her own purchase. Eventually, it must come back to the originator of the IOU, who redeems it by selling something of value and accepting the IOU as payment.¹

An IOU is a form of simple contract, which allows exchanges to occur by way of agreement. Thomas Greco, Jr. says,

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We can see [...] that the essence of money is an agreement (a consensus) to accept something that in itself may have no fundamental utility to us, but that we are assured can be exchanged in the market for something that does. Whatever we use as money, then, carries information. The possession of money, in whatever form, gives the holder a claim against the community of traders who use that money. The amount of money informs us about the magnitude of that claim. But the legitimacy of that claim also needs to be assured in some way. The possession of money should also be evidence that the holder has delivered value to someone in the community and therefore has a right to receive like value in return, or that the holder has received it, by gift or other transfer, from someone else who has delivered value. Unfortunately, throughout history, this ideal has been subverted in various ways depending on the kind of money used at the time.²

When one writes an IOU to another person one is writing a promise of future repayment. One is, in effect, writing a deed to their labor. This deed can be a claim to efforts of their past labor, as in a currency backed by product, or it can be a claim to efforts of their future labor, as in credit backed simply by good will. The IOU can read “IOU two drinks when we get back to my place” (past labor purchase, backed by hard goods), or “IOU one 20 square-yard lawn mowing” (future labor effort, good will), for instance.

The entire purpose of writing an IOU, or issuing credit, is to allow an indirect exchange to occur in absence of direct exchangeability. IOUs allow exchanges to happen when one or more of the parties do not have anything to directly exchange in the moment, but still have something of value, such as good will for the future or something in stock somewhere out of hand. For

example, if person A has something to trade, but it's at their house, they may write an IOU. If, instead, A wants something B has, who doesn't want what A has, this is called a problem of *double-coincidence of wants*. IOUs can be written in this case, as well. It is best done according to the method of generalizing IOUs, rather than by using personalized IOUs, however.

At one time, money was backed by gold, and was redeemable in gold, but this proved insufficient for large volumes of trade, as the value of all of the gold in the world does not equal the value of all necessary exchanges in the economy. Today, money is backed more abstractly. The US dollar, for instance, is backed largely by the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) as a whole, which includes all of the work at the movie theaters, grocery stores, warehouses, construction sites, and anywhere else in the nation.ⁱ

Like tickets being redeemed for a choice of prizes after having been won in arcade games, we have many options in how to redeem our dollars. Just as tickets can be used for various prizes, dollars are not tied to *one* good or service alone, but represent a *percentage of all* goods and services in a given economy (including involuntary ones, provided by way of taxation). Dollars are *generalized* value redeemed for the *specific* value of labor, living space, or commodities.ⁱⁱ A dollar is an abstract unit of measure. No longer is it only redeemable in gold; it is redeemable in French fries, car washes, rent, and, ultimately, in "protection," by way of taxation (the state is a protection racket).

ⁱ It is also given value by way of taxation, which is forced payment for "protection," and is the reason we must ultimately accept the currency instead of alternatives. This tax burden was also responsible for much of the value of gold during the era it was used as an exclusive basis.

ⁱⁱ To understand the generalization process and monetization of goods and services, I suggest a reading of "Credit, Collateral, and Spot-Pricing."

Essentially, banking, since money is backed by goods and services in the GDP, is the business of writing generalized IOUs on others' behalf. The reason for generalizing the IOUs, of course, is for the ease of exchange. Keeping track of specific IOUs, and redeeming them accordingly, is much more work than keeping track of generalized IOUs. Personalized IOUs are also less trustworthy from strangers than generalized certificates ensured by a third-party. The banker, as a third-party, takes responsibility for ensuring the stability of the currency, by applying strict standards to credit and lending. This allows credit to be distributed outside of one's immediate circle of friends, who otherwise have no reason to extend trust. ⁱⁱⁱ

IOUs can be generalized in a number of ways, but normally use a unit of account which is universal and which has no specific backing. Instead of being backed exclusively by one item, like gold, the unit, in a manner similar to the US dollar, is an abstract measure of value, which "floats." A dollar can buy a number of whole things, or a fraction of other things. In other words, three dollars may buy a person a bagel, or it may buy them one percent of a bicycle. Tomorrow, however, the price may change, depending on supply and demand. This issue will be further addressed later in the essay.

We are familiarized with the general idea behind money and, in due time, we will turn our attention to the nature of opportunity costs as they relate to interest, but, first, a necessary discussion on words and their intentions.

SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

BEFORE WE CONTINUE ANY FURTHER, we must lay semantics aside and look at *intentions*. Words mean different things to different people, thereby carrying many meanings.

ⁱⁱⁱ Still, for the time being, for sake of ease in understanding, and because the principle remains generally the same, we may use examples of personalized IOUs in this essay.

The Proper Rate of Money

One of the main topics of which I will be discussing in this essay is that of *interest*, which can generally be thought of as lending at a price. Specifically, however, I may address interest in another manner, which is consistent with that of my mutualist heritage. As I address interest, I will be discussing the interest I *oppose* as well as the “interest” I *support*, while simultaneously stating I oppose interest *in general*. This may be confusing at first, but let’s take a deeper look at why I take this position, before we continue, in order that we may speak the same language and will be able to mutually address the topic at hand.

Words are often caught between meanings, and the word *interest* is no different. The meaning of the word *interest*, like the meaning of *cooperation*, as described in “Two Incentives of Cooperation,” has been confused, conflated. This is a drastic error, though! This error is as dire as mistaking theft for purchase. If *theft* described any exchange, be it voluntary or coerced, such would be the position of the word *interest* in our daily habits. Indeed, this is the role it plays, when it describes both fair and unfair returns to capital.

It appears that, if interest is to be considered a return on any form of loan, some forms of interest are fair returns, while others are not (as determined by their relationship to cost). In “Interest and Premium” I have separated these returns into *interest* proper, which I consider to be unfair, and *premium*, my term for “fair interest.” The difference between the two is a matter of monopoly and returns above cost, which exists on behalf of interest proper, and not of premium. A return on capital which is not due to monopoly-privilege, but instead from opportunity costs, innovation, risk, or entrepreneurship, is what I understand to compose the majority of premium. In other words, I use *interest* as a term for unfair gains on capital, and *premium* as fair gains. Most don’t make this distinction, opting instead to call it all *interest*. For this reason, I am generally opposed to interest, but, more specifically, I oppose unfair interest, which is gained from monopoly (and which I believe to be the norm).

When people get wind of the fact that I oppose monetary interest in general, questions arise, the most common of which being “What is the incentive to loan without interest?” This is a

very valid question indeed. What *is* the incentive of such an endeavor?

OPPORTUNITY COSTS AND INTEREST

“WHY WOULD SOMEONE LOAN THEIR CAPITAL to someone else, when they could do something with it themselves? This would be an opportunity cost?”

Indeed, many people like to argue that opportunity costs are the basis of interest, but I don't believe this to be (entirely) so. At least, I don't believe it to be so in regard to the mutualist definition of interest, which is a return above cost to monopolized capital. In other words, it is often believed that interest covers opportunity costs (meaning that one is paying for the inability of the lender to use their money for themselves), and in some forms of interest this may be true, but this is not the interest I oppose, but rather the “interest” I support, being fair and making up a small percentage of the total interest in the economy. The mass majority of interest is due, rather, to state-given privilege, either directly or indirectly. Since this portion far exceeds returns from opportunity costs, this is the portion I deem *interest*, while I believe the other, smaller portion, deserves a moniker of its own, which I have distinguished, at least for the time being, as *premium*.

It will be important to remember, throughout this essay, that the interest I oppose is a return to capital which is above cost. This depends on monopoly granted by the state. Premium is a return to capital which is determined by cost. This includes returns to entrepreneurs, who deal with unexpected matters that the market isn't always prepared to deal with. As this essay moves forward, I will further clarify the form of “interest” that is valid, which I call *premium*, and the form of interest I am referring to when I condemn *interest* in general as a mutualist. Let's first take an example for mutual reference:

Say you ask to borrow your friend's car. You say, “Can I borrow your car? Mine will be out of the shop soon, and I'll let you borrow it if or when you ever need to.” This seems like a fair exchange, but life circumstances get in the way: Your friend will be fined \$10 if they don't return their library book in an hour. This

loss, if they were to loan you their car, is their opportunity cost of not keeping the car. Because you'll make \$70 or so at work, you offer to pay for the fee as well, covering the opportunity cost. Agreement is made, freeing the car for your use. Your debt to your friend, which can be written as an IOU if you like, is an equivalent use of your car and \$10 for the fee, paid at a later moment.

Let's look at what happened here. You were willing to pay the fee because the opportunity cost of not accepting was \$60 in wages (because of missing work for \$70, minus paying the \$10 fee), and because your friend was otherwise unwilling to let you use their car due to their own opportunity cost of \$10.

But, isn't the \$10 interest? Well, if we were defining *interest* as any return over that which is loaned, the \$10 would be interest. This particular instance would be the "interest" I defend as premium, and not the interest I oppose, as it is governed by the cost principle. Remember, I am defining *interest* (in a negative sense) as a return on capital above opportunity costs.^{iv} In the example provided above, paying \$10 on top of the use of the car is not a price above cost, because that is the highest apparent opportunity cost of the friend's lack of having their car.

What keeps the friend from charging more than their opportunity costs, when the consumer's opportunity costs are much higher? In other words, if a workday pays \$70, and you are willing to pay \$10 for your friend's opportunity costs, so you don't lose the other \$60, what, other than good will, keeps your friend from charging more than the \$10 opportunity cost? Why can't they charge \$30?

Price-gouging cannot occur under free conditions. In the existence of a free market in transportation, the prices asked are necessarily harmless, rising no higher than cost. In a free society,

^{iv} This interest can stem from many places, but commonly starts with the monopolization and disequilibrium of money. This is often applied by way of debt which is not monetized, and is unable to be repaid, or which is issued against a person's will. This is explored later on.

one could shop around for competitors or join a democratic association to reduce prices. If one is in need of a car, and asks a friend who needs \$10 on top of equivalent usage of a car, in order to cover library late fees, one is likely to go ahead and call the next friend, and continue to do so, until they find one that is willing to offer use of their car at a lower price. Really, the only reason they should pay \$10 on top of equivalent usage, is if all of their friends will face a similar late fee at the same time. This is unlikely. Therefore, the price of producers—in this case, friends with cars to use—is kept in check by way of competition. Prices under the proper conditions are forced down to cost. It's unlikely that the \$10 will be paid, let alone \$30.

Just as it is true that competition can force the price of transportation down, it can also bring down the price of money. The only reason one would need to borrow a car from a friend is if they don't have a working car themselves. If they had a working car, they would not need to get transportation from someone else, and thus face a potential premium. Likewise, if everyone had the ability to monetize their own labor, they would no longer have to borrow money from others. This would eliminate interest. Why would someone accept a loan at interest, when they have access to free credit?

INTEREST NEVER MONETIZED

IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTICE, from the prior example, that the opportunity costs, or premium, were accounted for in the credit, or IOU. Opportunity costs are the reason for writing the thing!

Opportunity costs are the basis of payment. It is because the grocer would rather be eating dinner with their friends and family—their opportunity cost—, than serving you, that you must pay them to serve you instead. Paying them offsets this cost. If not for this opportunity cost, and those similar, service would be free. This is important because many people argue that opportunity costs are the basis of interest, but the majority of interest is not due to opportunity costs.

The Proper Rate of Money

Monetary opportunity costs earning a return is only valid in regard to independent investors, who have earned their money, and not of banks, who have simply monetized the labor of others. Even then, this is only true when everyone else has fair access to loans as well, which usually isn't the case. The difference between interest on independent investments and interest on bank loans will be defined later on as being a difference of interest on money, and interest on monetization.^v

If you accept the \$10 fee for the use of your friend's car, and write an IOU which includes this fee, the opportunity costs have been monetized. A proper money is a measure of such costs. This is, unfortunately, not how things are done today, when interest is charged. The nature of interest is that the money to pay it back is never created at all.

A conventional bank will loan you federal bank notes, depending on your credit or collateral, at interest. Not only is this interest a problem in itself— because it is an unfair return above cost, since the only thing backing that money is your own good will (credit score) or collateral—, it is an unfair return above cost that keeps growing, and which a large portion of the population are unable to pay, because it is never monetized.

It is only by loans with interest that the money makes it into the economy at all. When the banks loan money (100%) at interest (7%), and there is no other means to acquire the money (107%), there is necessarily a class of debtors created (7%), despite their effort. Their lack of ability to pay interest is not necessarily due to lack of virtue. Even so, this class of debtors may even be forced to accept debt upon debt, consolidating loans, just in order to more easily get out of the debt trap.

People are kept in perpetual debt, and people kept in perpetual debt must find employment by others, being unable to

^v A quick definition will suggest that interest on money is interest from money which is loaned by someone other than a bank, but interest on monetization is interest from money that is loaned by a bank. We'll get there shortly.

afford their own capital. This ensures that the ruling class, who have benefits from government privileges, and are able to earn money in an easier manner this way, are able to live off of the work of others.

The only reason we accept such an unjust system of banking is because the state does not allow us to create our own untaxed currencies, which would be capable of solving the problem, and because we must pay our taxes in federal notes. This ensures that everyone must essentially do what the state tells them. This will change with nothing short of civil disobedience.

INTEREST UPON MONETIZATION

BEFORE WE CONTINUE, let's make a distinction: We'll make this distinction a) interest/premium on money, and b) interest/premium on monetization. What is the difference? For sake of this example, interest/premium on *money* is interest/premium attached to the good or service which money represents, or on money which was gained from another source, while interest/premium on *monetization* is attached to the service attributed to creating currency. Some call it *seigniorage*, but that word carries many contradictory connotations (I will be using seigniorage in both positive and negative senses, as you will see later on).^{vi} Take an example, for mutual reference:

You work a wage-job and save up \$2,000. You really want to use your money alongside a trade-in for a newer car, which you

^{vi} The definition on Investopedia defines *seigniorage* as,

“The difference between the value of money and the cost to produce it – in other words, the economic cost of producing a currency within a given economy or country. If the seigniorage is positive, then the government will make an economic profit; a negative seigniorage will result in an economic loss.”

expect to save you \$100 in gas per month. However, you've just received wind that your friend was arrested, and their bond is \$800. They are unable to pay it out of their own account. You visit them in jail, and they say they can pay you back the \$800 in one month, plus \$100 to make up for the gas you won't be saving (your opportunity costs). According to some folks, you just earned \$100 in interest. According to my view in "Interest and Premium," you've just earned \$100 in *premium*, my word to distinguish "fair interest." The question, though, is what the source of this premium was. Was this premium on money, or premium on monetization? This (like the car example) was an example of premium *on money*. You have loaned your money, but had no hand in its creation, you *earned* it at your job. As Thomas H Greco, Jr. suggests,

Am I saying [...] that all interest is dysfunctional and must be avoided? Not necessarily. It is one thing for those who have *earned* money to expect a return for its use when they lend or otherwise invest it; it is quite another for banks to charge interest on newly created money that they authorized based on debt.³

So then, what is a return on *monetization*? Monetization is the act of deed or title-writing for the sake of exchange. This can be forgone (as in barter, vocal contract, or gift), done for oneself, or mediated by a third-party, such as a bank. When this action is forgone, or is done for one's self, it is generally without a price at all, premium or otherwise. It is when a third party, such as a bank, enters the picture that we see the first signs of wages, premium, or interest paid upon monetization (money becomes necessary in all advanced market economies). A return on *monetization* is payment for creating money. A return on *money* is payment for money that is already created.

A return on monetization necessarily involves a third party, like a mutual credit association, which extends credit to a second party so they may make exchanges with the first. If a person comes to the association, having good credit, or substantial

collateral, the association can fairly appraise the value of this, and can issue currency backed by it. A return on monetization would be any payment to the association for such an act. Some know this as *seigniorage*.

The act of monetization can extract interest, or it can keep payments at cost. Since the association is monetizing the good will or collateral of the person in question, and is extending money to them which is backed by their own value, the opportunity costs of such a loan are non-existent. In a free market, competition will force interest out of the picture, but, when the bank is allowed to maintain a monopoly, interest can be charged.

MEASURING THE COSTS OF BANKING

THE PREMIUM AND INTEREST (or seigniorage) on monetization, just as on money, can be established by analyzing costs. As stated before, it helps to have a third-party certify our money, in order that it will be willingly accepted by strangers in the same network. This third party certainly deserves pay for taking on the workload of banking. Is their payment interest? The portion that is fairly due to them is not the interest I oppose, but is instead wages or premium (if an entrepreneurial bank), that which I support. The line of demarcation here is at the cost of operation: Once a banker earns more than a proper competitive wage and their entrepreneurial premium (if existent)—that is, when they charge monopolistic prices above cost—, they begin to earn interest (in the negative sense).

The interest mutualists oppose is measurable. In regard to monetization, it is the difference that exists between cost and usury. The costs of creating money includes the price of printing paper or recording digital data, insurance or demurrage for losses, rent (if applicable) and utilities, security, etc. as well as the staff's salary. These are all very measurable. It is when the bank's income raises above these costs that *interest* (as the mutualist defines it), or unfair seigniorage, is being made by the bank. In the mutual bank, it is non-existent.

The only reason usurious banks can exist today is because of state-granted privilege, and private (instead of cooperative)

ownership. If banking were competitive, mutual banks would offer the most competitive prices available, the most member influence, and would surely win out with free loans.^{vii} Of course, those who have better credit ratings, or more valuable collateral, should be able to make larger claims for credit, and receive larger loans.

One can see now that interest and premium on money is different from interest and premium on monetization, because of the nature of its acquisition. Returns from monetization imply returns from creating money, payment for making it. Returns from existing money imply that this money was gained in some form or fashion from another party. While both monetization and existing money are capable of gaining fair and unfair returns alike—premium or interest—, monetization exists at the macro level, and existing money is lent on the micro. For this reason, interest on money depends principally upon interest on monetization. Due to the scarcity of money at the level of monetization, those folks lucky enough to acquire money can lend it to those who cannot. For this reason, it is most necessary to attack interest at the point of monetization. This entails a deeper look into collateral and its assessment.

COLLATERAL AND ASSESSMENT

AS MONETIZATION OFTEN DEPENDS ON IT, the topic of collateral and its value comes up. If money is printed based on collateral, this money must represent the value of the collateral at all times— no more, no less—, less inflation or deflation take place and destabilize the money's worth.

When an abstract unit of measure is being used in the economy, which represents various goods and services, the supply and demand of the goods and services fluctuate in relation to one

^{vii} Free loans not because they don't have to be paid back, but because there is no interest attached to them. The loan itself is free (but the service of the bank is not).

another.^{viii} To keep the value of money constant with the goods and services it represents, the standard must be allowed to float,^{ix} the goods and services must remain under constant assessment by way of spot-pricing, and the account of the holder must be adjusted accordingly. In other words, if the market value of the collateral used for a loan goes up, the owner of the collateral should be able to make a claim for more credit. If the value of the collateral goes down, the bank should have a claim for credit reduction. If this does not occur, interest is made possible on behalf of the collateral-owner or the bank, and monetary inflation and deflation become an issue. Another example:

Say you live in a free society. In order to make purchases there, in lieu of state money, you find a neutral third-party to certify and insure your transactions. You sign up for a line of credit, which must be paid back without interest. The loan is extended on your

^{viii} By this I mean the following: If money is backed solely by a single product—we'll use gold for sake of tradition—the value of the money remains constant so long as the ratio of money to gold stays the same. If a grain of gold is worth \$3, for instance, so long as the bank issues \$3 for every grain of gold deposited, the redemptive value of the money stays the same. However, once a second commodity enters the picture, the standard needs to enter a “float,” whereby the unit is made more abstract. If silver enters the picture, for instance, the marginal utilities of these commodities fluctuate in accordance with one another: Some days people may demand silver more than usual. If the standard is “fixed,” this creates a problem of scarcity and abundance.

^{ix} Meaning it has an abstract value, and is not redeemed in one item alone, but represents a percentage of the economy as a whole.

behalf according to the bank's estimate of your current income and its level of security, and is further insured by your past credit history. It must be paid back according to the estimate of the income you'll receive in the future. Another option is extending credit according to collateral's (a mortgaged item) current value, to be paid back according to its future value (spot-price). So, if your labor or collateral becomes more valuable in the future, you pay more back for it. This fee is a form of negative seigniorage. If it becomes less valuable, you pay back less. This is a positive seigniorage. Here is how it works, beginning with the entrepreneur, and then into particular industries and further into the economy as a whole:

Say an individual, A, is the first one in the market with a product, x , and they want to use it as collateral for mutual credit. They agree to the spot-price of \$100 (to keep things simple), the bank's estimated value for two units of x , making a single unit worth \$50. No interest is demanded. If the loan is not paid back, the bank will sell the items for a price of \$50 a piece, but if it is paid back they will give the title or items back to be sold or used by individual A. Only upon spending the money does A actually go into real debt, and need to do work to claim their collateral back. Until they spend, or competition drives a change of value in collateral (creating negative or positive seigniorage), they hold the entire title to their collateral, all \$100 with which to buy it back. This goes on for some time, with debits and credits. The product is a success, and is stable collateral at \$100 (ideal situation, but using it for sake of simplistic demonstration of principles).

Another person, B, copies A's idea upon seeing their success, and starts making the same product (there is no intellectual property protection outside of contract). Person B goes to the same bank and asks to use the product for collateral. Because demand remains consistent, a new person entering the market with the same product means a drop in value (because-value is largely determined by scarcity).^x Person B does not mind that they won't

^x Example: Say a person is selling bread to two friends, who don't know anyone else who is baking bread, but who can get all

The Proper Rate of Money

receive the entrepreneurial price, and is willing to settle for less. The value of the product, because of a new supply, has dropped to exactly half. The two producers, A and B, are at par with one another in productive capacity. The bank, under obligation of contract, has no choice but to offer a new spot-rate to person B. Instead of offering \$100, as was done to entrepreneur A, \$50 per two items is now offered to person B, and a \$50 demurrage fee is applied to person A^{xi} (this is an extreme amount, but gets smaller

the bread they need from their baking friend. Say the bread is sold at \$5 a loaf, but cost of ingredients is only \$2 a loaf, making a wage of \$3/loaf for the entrepreneurial baker. Another friend hears about this, and decides to make bread as well. The amount of bread (supply) has doubled, but the amount the friends are willing to pay for bread (demand) has remained the same. Now each seller can only sell half the amount of bread as before, or must drop their prices. The first person tries to sell less bread at the same price, but the other person is willing to accept less. The first person has no choice but to lower their price and make more bread, or they will be unable to make any sales. The two friends now get twice as much bread for the same price. The value of bread has decreased, and it has become more abundant.

^{xi} This may seem unfair at first, but it is simply an uncomfortable part of reality that our things do not always maintain their value. Money, properly representing things, should reflect the value of those things absolutely. Anything else is an act of magic, and as enticing as magic is, attempting to live by its intentions is an attempt to dismiss reality. This is dangerous. I would love for entropy not to

as more people enter the market. If one more person would have entered the market, it would have been $\$33^{1/3}$ instead. Most markets have multitudes of sellers, especially the more competitive markets). If demand would have increased, and the bank would have loaned \$200 to person B instead, person A would have received a dividend of \$100 to make up for their seigniorage adjustment. Why is this?

SEIGNIORAGE RATES

PERSON A WAS THE FIRST in the market, and supplied the whole market, so they had an uncompetitive price, and could get away with it because they were first and thought of the idea. For a time, they receive a higher price for their collateral. This is fair that they get such a premium, because they did the work of origination. The value of the goods when they entered was \$50/unit and remained \$50/unit until person B entered the market, adding to the supply, which dropped the value down to half. So, let's look at the bank transactions. Person A got \$100 for two units, and when person B enters the market, it drops the value, so person B gets a loan for half the original value, \$50 (or \$25/unit), and person A must pay back \$50 in demurrage if they want to maintain title to their product. Each one's products are valued the same, and the value of money remains consistent with the value of its basis. When the value of money is kept consistent with the value of its basis, in the manner described above, money floats at its clearance price.^{xiii} If this did not occur, deflation and inflation of the money would occur.

Think about it, the above example keeps the value of money constant with its basis, but allows the value of goods to fluctuate. A product may drop from \$50 to \$25 a piece, but so long as the supply goes from two to four units the value of the supply as a whole remains the same, \$100. The value of the individual

exist, but until this is possible, it must be accounted for in our economy.

^{xiii} The clearance price is the price at which "everything must go."

product was reduced (but the physical amount was increased!), due to new supply, and the amount of money in the system was reduced with it relative to quantity (by way of not giving out the full loan of \$100 to person B, and charging A demurrage). The values as wholes completely match, however. Had the product maintained constant value at \$100/two units with B's production, and were demand to rise at the same rate as the supply, the amount of money would have increased at exactly the same rate.

Say person B got the full loan for \$100/two units of collateral (or \$50/unit x 2) and spent it, but the consumers still only wanted to pay \$100 total. Now, person A and B are both producing two units (total of four), and trying to sell them at \$50 a unit to pay back their loans. That's \$200, but the consumers are only willing to spend \$100! The producers have no choice but to reduce their prices or make fewer products, and thus fewer sales. The producer who is willing to drop their price and make more sales has the competitive edge, and thus makes the other conform to their new, low prices. So what has occurred with the money? There is only \$100 in sales being made, so the currency has deflated and lost purchasing power. There is an extra \$100 in the economy, with no backing in sale-rates. Money which cannot buy anything has no use, it is a loss of value to its holder, who had to work for, or trade collateral for, this item without value. Money representing products without demand must be recalled by way of demurrage fees.

Let's say, instead, that the value of the collateral increases. In this instance, the bank owes more money to the holder of collateral. If this money is lacking, exchanges are hindered and the original supplier is ripped off. Say the items mentioned above retain their value of \$25/unit, with two sellers in the market, but loans are given for \$15/unit to two people, who produce two units each. The items are still *worth* \$100 in total, or \$25/unit, but there is only \$60 in the economy representing them. If this \$60 is dispersed evenly between the two people, they can only purchase one item each from each other (at \$25), and have an extra \$10 between them without redemptive value left over (since neither producer will let go of an item valued at \$25 for \$5), as well as two extra units which cannot be exchanged, due to a lack of means (money). This makes

for a dysfunctional economy, where items are being produced which cannot be sold.

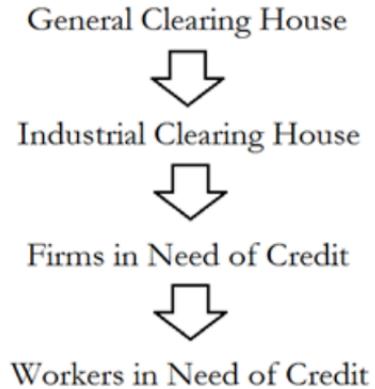
Obviously, two people in the same market have no interest in actually buying one another's products; what we're really talking about, though abstractly, is purchasing power in a more general sense. Instead of buying one another's products, they would more properly monetize their products to buy products from other industries. This is where purchasing power really comes into play; I only use the example above to make the discussion of value more simplistic. This now being cleared up, I want to discuss the various levels of demurrage needed in a healthy credit clearing network, which exists across industries.

CREDIT CLEARING

JUST AS IT IS NECESSARY to charge a demurrage to the entrepreneur, whose collateral has devalued with competition, or to pay them a dividend for its gain, it is also necessary to charge demurrage on, or pay dividends to, entire industries (or departments, or however much we decide to break down relationships), as their prices fluctuate in comparison to others. The firm must pay demurrage or receive dividends for fluctuations of prices within particular industries, but industries must pay demurrage or receive dividends for fluctuations of prices within the economy as a whole. If the value of gold were \$3/grain, but decreased to \$2 the next day for some reason or another, while both days carrots sell for \$2/lb., the gold industry needs to pay \$1/grain demurrage for their loss of value on the second day. If the next day it goes up in value again, the \$1/grain will be returned as a dividend.

This may seem like a lot of calculating, and it is, but it can be rather decentralized. The best method I can think of is a credit clearing system in which clearing houses are organized by the firm, industry, and then by the entire economy, from the bottom up. One would sign up for a particular industry's mutual credit, which adjusts seigniorage rates for entrepreneurs in the industry. This clearing house would be associated to the larger clearing house, which extends mutual credit to it and adjusts for the seigniorage of

the collected industries, on behalf of the economy as a whole. The firms act in a similar manner for the workers, who ultimately receive the credit as wages or premium. This can really be broken into as many relationships as one sees fit. Some industries may demand departments of craft, some firms may demand committees, some committees may need subcommittees, etc.



At every level below the general clearing house and above the individual worker, mutual credit is extended from the level above to the one below it. General clearing will issue credit to entire industries. These industries must pay demurrage as values go down, or receive dividends as values go up on their collateral. These industries release the credit to firms. If the value of a firm's collateral fluctuates, the industrial clearing house will charge a demurrage, or pay a dividend. If the value of an entire industry's collateral fluctuates, the general clearing house will charge a demurrage or issue more credit, either of which are passed down through the industrial clearing house for collection or distribution.

If someone defaults on their loan, and their collateral cannot be sold by the bank at the expected price, any loss will be passed on to the sphere of the issuing sovereign in question— be it industry, department, firm, etc.—, by way of demurrage. Any collateral under the attendance of the bank will be subject to demurrage from entropy suffered. Some products may be unable to work as collateral, due to spoilage or quick loss. Those portable products used as collateral may be subject to a storage fee, while stationary items, such as buildings or warehouses full of goods, may be subject to inspection or insurance fees throughout the duration of the loan, and must issue warehouse receipts to the bank. In this way, the individual issues a specific title to their things to the bank in return for a generalized title to things in the economy.

TWO MARKETS: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

MY PERSONAL INCLINATION is that housed or stored collateral loans may not always take place as often as direct-sales to the bank. Because of this, the bank may take on the role of public distributor and perhaps even public employer, where it will ask for prices equivalent to loans made, plus operation costs. Imagine a giant community-owned, non-profit, pawn shop, which is an analogy I have made in “Credit, Collateral, and Spot-Pricing.” Like a pawn shop, a mutual bank may make transactions that are permanent, whereby the bank becomes the owner of the collateral and gains the rights to sale; or those that are temporary, whereby the collateral is used for a temporary loan.

There are two forms of market under such a scenario: One can go to the public distributor, the bank, or to a private one, the individual firm or worker; one can receive credit directly or indirectly, by loan or sale (but either way, one needs to be a member of the bank).

The prices of the public and private markets will stabilize and adjust to one another by way of spot-pricing. If an entrepreneur feels they can get more by selling on the market than they will make by using their product as collateral or selling to the bank, they may do so, and, if they succeed in receiving a higher rate, the bank is influenced to raise its spot-price. If they feel they will get less by market sale, or it will be more hassle because of the public nature of the bank, they can check the appraisal of the bank. If the bank cannot sell the item for an equivalent price, demurrage is applied to the person or firm’s credit. The bank will constantly adjust its spot-prices to market standards. In the end, the public and private prices should even out, but this will be evened out by public and private market forces influencing one another’s equilibrium in their fluctuations.

Those who are particularly skilled, or are involved in work of a more artisanal nature, producing unique products, may be more interested in trying their luck in private markets, trying to receive credit from other folks, rather than directly from bank loan based on surveillance of past markets. Those who are involved in more menial tasks, perhaps manufacturing goods industrially in

mass, may find themselves more prone to accept spot-pricing and to forgoing the efforts of marketing. What is important is that this be left to the free decision of the persons impacted.

Mutual banking supports all realms of economic relations, competitive or cooperative, and may itself be seen as a form of competition, wherein individuals cooperate (by way of shared banking institutions) in order to compete (by way of market relations). In this way, mutualism is a radically centrist ideology, supporting both a public and private sphere of life. In many ways, it is compatible with other centrist, antiauthoritarian, or populist “third-way” positions such as distributism, and concepts such as subsidiarity and sphere-sovereignty.

Semi-public institutions may spring from the structure and concerns of the mutual bank, such as insurance or welfare programs, so far as they are accepted by their membership according to their bank’s articles of association. Some programs, no doubt, will be accepted—those with common benefit, or in common agreement, to all—, while others will not. Such is the nature of consensus democracy, a reflection of the will of its membership.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

IN THE FUTURE, mutual credit-clearing and spot-pricing can be managed by computer algorithms. These algorithms could adjust according to organic inputs, such as prices offered or demanded by individuals, firms, or industries as a whole. Not only does this allow for the democratization of industry, it has immense potential for wage and task allocation in the firm.

Currently, cooperatives face a poor ability to fairly distribute tasks and income to their membership according to labor inputs. With a computer algorithm, successes and failures (according to needs of the firm or committee) can be logged as organic inputs and outputs, following the actual inputs and outputs of the individual, giving a *job score*. In an assembly line, inputs and outputs—job scores—can be easily adjusted according to simple unit production rates. That is, it can be logged according to the actual number of things produced (Jim produced 20 and Suz

produced 23), being rather objective. Instead, service-based industries may decide to follow inputs/outputs of consumer satisfaction, letting the consumers rate them directly and more subjectively. The ultimate decision on matters of rating, however, belongs to its corresponding sphere of sovereignty (industry, firm, committee, etc.).

The computer algorithms would be used to generate job spot-pricing for a firm based on the individual's rate of success. The ultimate goal would be to seek a clearance price, in some ways similar to Sperner's lemma. People would be free to trade positions or not, according to their willingness to accept the spot-price offered for their work according to their job score. This may include a tier system, such as used by guilds, wherein some positions must be entered as an apprentice or as a similar initiate. Graduation from one tier to the next may depend on one's job-score, rather than the arbitrary will of one's master. This may even take the place of some, perhaps all, elections. Of course, if one doesn't like the price offered for a job or task, they may always shop around, and it will always fluctuate according to supply and demand.

Imagine getting to work and signing in on a computer. Upon doing so, you click through a chart which lists the positions and their duties, the term length, as well as the price offered you for the work, based on your past success rate (relative to others), or job rating. You scroll through until you find a position you like at a spot pay-rate and term-length you can accept, and you sign up for the position. Demurrage and dividend of wages will apply as others accept or deny spot-prices offered and, therefore, shift equilibrium. It shifts until everyone is reasonably satisfied.

CONCLUSION

IN AN ECONOMY functioning on mutual credit, all prices are determined by cost. The interest I oppose becomes non-existent, but premiums may remain. When they do, they are monetized and able to be paid back. Since opportunity costs upon *monetization* do not exist, money is best issued into the economy freely, with associated charges only for the labor of banking. In

order to keep money at cost, it is necessary to maintain a system of spot-pricing for collateral (goods, or, services) wherein seigniorage payments balance one another out (in an economy with steady demand which is growing in competition) or follow the contraction and expansion in line with the value of goods and services in the economy. That is, to keep its value constant, money should remain consistent with its basis, and a seigniorage fee or payment, which adjusts throughout the duration of the loan along with the fluctuations of supply and demand, should be applied. Money, put into perfect competition at this point, will reflect all costs, and the third-party lending of money at interest will become scarce, or, quite probably, non-existent. The interest I oppose will disappear, perhaps leaving very small and temporary premiums.

The best way for a system like this to be carried on is by a nested credit clearing system that is organized from the firm to the industry all the way to the general economy; but it should be broken down even further. Each tier will adjust its own debits and credits, dividends and demurrages. Interest will be nonexistent, followed by rent and profits.

This may lead to a dualistic marketplace which has elements that are both public and private. These two spheres of marketplace will constantly work toward equilibrium as the spot-prices of the public bank adjust to the prices of the private sphere, and vice-versa. No one will be restricted to one sphere or another, and all prices will be fair.

This leaves us prospects for the future where computer algorithms may follow organic inputs to ensure a stable, fair, and secure form of credit-money distribution, based on supply and demand. This may even take the place of some sloppier procedures for imbursement within cooperatives, and even their committees and subcommittees, wherein jobs and payment can be allocated according to current job-scores and the supply and demand, amongst all employees, for the work being done, ensuring a fair distribution of power and specialization.

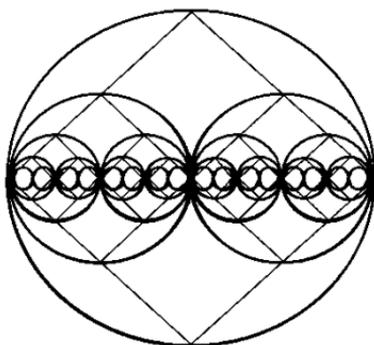
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Interest & Premium: A Geo-Mutualist Synthesis



INTRODUCTION

TWO BEAUTIFULLY LIBERTARIAN and populist philosophies, Georgism and mutualism, should not find themselves at such odds with one another, and, yet, they do.

In this treatise I will analyze the conflict between these two schools of thought, Georgism and mutualism, and show that these two groups, at the root of their philosophies, actually share a lot more in common, than different, from one another, and would gain largely from cooperating and adapting one another's ideas. I will also be contributing a new model of returns, which will allow us (Georgists and mutualists) to better communicate our meanings with one another as it relates to issues regarding the returns and fairness of distribution. I will conclude with discussion regarding the social effects of geo-mutualism and its expression as a panarchy.

THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE

MANY DISAGREEMENTS between people, in my opinion, are semantic in nature. This is because we form our beliefs based on the information we have received in the past, and inform our actions with these opinions. This is all natural and well, but semantic limits should be recognized in order to

transcend our current paradigm, which has been built on these opinions and actions. The limits, of course, are tied to our inability to share experiences. This, of course, is changing, and, with the evolution of human capacity for the use of signs, we are becoming more and more capable of describing our experiences to one another. Communication is becoming, and, although we still get into arguments of a semantic nature, it is in these difficulties that we find the next modes of construction and innovation of language. It is our duty as human beings to create and use dialects in increasingly reconcilable ways, in order that language itself may be universalized. *La Parole* becomes *La Langue*.

There are a number of debates being held that, while signs of healthy desire for communication, often remain stuck on the surface, taking words to be intrinsic in meaning, rather than descriptions of a particular portion of reality. When the deeper meaning behind words are lost, so too are the intentions. *Dog* to one may mean *Chihuahua*, while to another it may be *Doberman*. A sign reading “Beware of Dog” has very different meaning when set beside these very different (but almost identical, genetically) animals; one is undoubtedly comical, while the other is quite serious. Likewise, there are homophones between languages, which carry very different connotations to their speakers. At times it is more important to try to get a grasp of the context of another’s signifier than to assume it applies to the same referent. That is, we must look to the intentions behind words, and not get caught up on the surface values.

Some commonly discussed, and misunderstood, signifiers we use in our speech and writing today are the words *interest* and *rent*, particularly as discussed in anarchist, libertarian capitalist, libertarian socialist, and Georgist circles. The purpose of this writing is to create a common dialect, by which these groups may better understand one another. I will especially be focusing on the area of economic returns to land, labor, and capital.

Though I hope to encourage more thought from the wider anarchist audience, this paper will focus more largely on the debate between Georgists (especially geo-libertarians and geo-anarchists) and mutualists than between any other groups. This is in assumption that most voluntaryists, agorists, panarchists, and

others on (what I consider to be) the libertarian right can agree with the Georgist distinction of the three factors of production (land, labor, capital) and their returns (rent, wages, interest), while most libertarian communists, communitarians, collectivists, and more on (what I consider to be) the libertarian left can agree with the traditional mutualist use of these terms (I'll be getting into the returns in a moment). Looking past the quarrel, I will demonstrate that most of the debate between Georgists and mutualists is semantic in nature, and that both tend to describe similar desires of outcome, while using different language. First, an introduction of each.

MUTUALISM

MUTUALISM IS A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC philosophy that was developed during the mid-19th century by thinkers like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and, to a lesser extent, the individualist anarchist Josiah Warren. Mutualism is typically considered the original form of anarchism. Mutualists subscribe to the cost-principle, as established by Warren (and implied by Proudhon), and to the principles of shared-ownership and federation as provided by Proudhon, as well as occupancy-and-use standards of land tenure, and the approach of mutual credit banking, which was shared between them.

Mutualists believe that in an atmosphere of free mutual credit and usufruct land-titles that few, if any, would voluntarily sell their labor on the market for less than its fair rate, and would instead prefer to work in self- and cooperatively-owned and managed firms. Mutualists envision a banking system that offers credit to the populace at large without, or at minimal, interest, and believe that such a system would make land and capital abundant to all, eliminating the artificial bargaining power of employers, and allowing every worker to have the means to own their source of employment.

One of the core elements of mutualism, the cost-principle, can be stated as *cost the limit of price*. The mutualists believe that the fair limit to prices should be based on labor, or cost, because, as Adam Smith notes in *Wealth of Nations*, “The real price of

everything, what everything really costs to the man who wants to acquire it, is the toil and trouble of acquiring it.”¹ Thus, mutualists hold to the labor-theory of value; although, a more subjectively-measured one than often thought.

Among prices that are considered outside of cost are taxes, which are clearly taken against the will of their victims, as well as rent, interest, and profit. These are all considered returns that are due not to labor, but to privileged property given by the state. Mutualists argue that without the state providing monopolies economic power, that profit, interest, and rent would completely or, at least, almost completely, disappear, that workers would largely own their own jobs and keep their returns without paying bosses, money would be lent into the economy without any interest going to bankers, and land would be freely occupied and used, without anyone having to pay rent to landlords.

GEORGISM

GEORGISM IS A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY named after its founding thinker, Henry George. George was famous for his proposition that everyone had a right to the Earth, and that *economic* rent, or the surplus value of natural resources, is the most sensible thing to tax, as the Earth is not a product of human labor, but instead precedes it:

The equal right of all men to the use of land is as clear as their equal right to breathe the air — it is a right proclaimed by the fact of their existence. For we cannot suppose that some men have a right to be in this world, and others no right.²

Statements such as the following led the Georgists to also be known as the *Single-Taxers*:

The tax upon land values is, therefore, the most just and equal of all taxes. It falls only upon those who receive from

society a peculiar and valuable benefit, and upon them in proportion to the benefit they receive. It is the taking by the community, for the use of the community, of that value which is the creation of the community. It is the application of the common property to common uses. When all rent is taken by taxation for the needs of the community, then will the equality ordained by Nature be attained. No citizen will have an advantage over any other citizen save as is given by his industry, skill, and intelligence; and each will obtain what he fairly earns. Then, but not till then, will labor get its full reward, and capital its natural return.³

The philosophy regarding a common claim to the Earth did not originate with George, but George was perhaps the largest popularizer. Before George, such thinkers as Baruch Spinoza, Thomas Paine, John Locke, Herbert Spencer, and many others also made arguments in favor of common or collective ownership of the Earth (although Spencer would later recant his ideas, causing George to write a strong criticism of Spencer in *A Perplexed Philosopher*).

Henry George proposed that the most just basis of taxes was the tax on land's surplus, or economic rent, as such taxation would not rob the laborer of their product, but would allow them to retain their full return on their labor and capital. Georgists refer to returns on capital as *economic interest*, and on labor as *economic wages*. They argue that so long as these wages and interest are not interfered with, a tax on land would not interfere with the economic incentive to produce, like most other taxes do, and so would not cause scarcity and economic stagnation. Georgists also argue that such a system would still allocate the most productive land to the most productive workers, increasing productivity, in line with comparative advantage.

Though Henry George himself was a statist, and had heated written discussions with the individualist anarchist,

Benjamin Tucker, not all Georgists are statists. Contemporaries such as Fred Foldvary have written favorably about the coexistence of anarchism and Georgism. Ralph Borsodi, before him, who was influenced later in life by the anarchist, Laurence Labadie, and the writings of Josiah Warren— although his manifesto espouses a localist, minarchist, decentralism rather than anarchism—, was influenced heavily by George, as well, and created the Community Land Trust movement, which is still promoted by his School of Living, and was promoted also by E.F. Schumacher.

Community Land Trusts are voluntary associations for the purpose of sharing the ownership of land, largely to protect the security of land for future generations, bring down the cost of rent, allocate surplus, and share in community life. Typically, the community places control of the land in a common trust, which usually operates on consensus or some sort of supermajority voting, and which leases the land to its members, usually for 99-year terms (yes, you can leave). According to many anti-state Georgists, a society that is both compatible with Georgism and anarchism would include many such institutions, which would provide protection and other agreeable services, and would distribute the rest of the collected rent as dividends to all involved parties, serving to equalize, and legitimize, property rights for all.

THE MUTUALIST AND GEORGIST DISCONNECT ON RENT

GEORGISM AND MUTUALISM have historically been antagonistic to one another. This is largely due, in my opinion, to the fact that the two philosophies really have so much in common, but have such a hard time understanding one another. Both mutualism and Georgism are rooted in libertarian approaches to socialization, or at least to distributed wealth, but where mutualists focus first on socializing credit, Georgists focus on socializing land. Mutualism comes from a stronger historical tradition of (small-s) socialism than Georgism, and reflects this greatly in its aims of owner-operators, while Georgism comes from a largely capitalistic approach, generally being sympathetic toward employers, but bends to socialization of wealth in the area of land.

This is partly because mutualism, as an organized movement, developed in France, where space was shared and collectivism was on the rise, and Georgism developed in the Americas, which had gone through a period as a frontiers society, with space giving promise to individualism. A hard line is not drawn because of the differing approaches to labor and management, however, as many Georgists favor cooperation in industry and free banking, and many individualist anarchists who have supported mutual banking have also argued in favor of employment as an organizing principle.

Taxation of rent provides one of the large debates between mutualists and Georgists. Getting into the classical factors of production (land, labor, capital) and their returns (rent, wages, interest), mutualists generally stray from the idea of paying “rent” to anyone, and Georgists propose rent be paid to the community by way of taxes. Mutualists and Georgists view the payment of rent in different ways. To the mutualist, rent is the return not to the tenant-landlord, but to the absentee-landlord, who is not using the property they are gaining from; rent entails payment for the use of property which the owner is not using. To the Georgist, rent can include wealth that never left the hands of another person, but which was gained by virtue of the land.

In rejecting the Georgist analysis of rent, I feel that mutualists are at fault. They would do much better to understand the argument of Georgists in regard to returns on land, and do away with the simplistic notion of rent simply as a *transaction*, rather than a *return* on land itself. In many ways, absentee-landlords are only enabled by title to economic rent to begin with, which allows them to rent their land to someone else, and use that rent to pay for another piece of land which may be less productive. They’re okay with this, because they probably don’t intend on producing there anyways, since they can subsist off of the efforts of others, by collecting the rent from their tenants who are using their productive land.

In my view, the contemporary mutualist position is short-sighted in regard to land, going against its own mission of internalizing costs. That is, economic rent distorts the cost-principle, because the wielder of economic rent can charge a price

for their resources which is not due to incurring cost (effort, disutility) toward their trade-partner's benefit. That is, they can gain someone else's labor product in an exchange, even while they themselves have exhausted little or no effort on their end (and thus, have reduced zero costs for the consumer by way of labor, deserving no reward). To the Georgist, this return without effort is economic rent.

While today's mutualists are against Georgist rent-sharing — the payment to society for use of land— on principle, Proudhon himself was actually in favor of such compensation. This can be seen in such statements as,

Let us suppose that an appropriated farm yields a gross income of ten thousand francs; and, as very seldom happens, that this farm cannot be divided. Let us suppose farther that, by economical calculation, the annual expenses of a family are three thousand francs: the possessor of this farm should be obliged to guard his reputation as a good father of a family, by paying to society three thousand francs,—less the total costs of cultivation, and the three thousand francs required for the maintenance of his family. This payment is not rent, it is an indemnity.⁴

One can see by Proudhon's words here that, though he may rail against rent, he believes something similar to George, though he calls the payment to society *indemnity* here, in opposition to *rent*.

OCCUPANCY-AND-USE

OCCUPANCY AND USE must be given a deeper definition than the one commonly used by mutualists if it is to be considered a viable option. The current usage thrown around, taken too literally, has no practical application, has no standards of determining what constitutes such possession-usage.

What if I step out for a bit? Is my land, my house, free to claim by squatters? Who has the right to occupancy-and-use, and when? It is my belief that this must be sorted out by contract, but in setting up contracts people look to what is most fair.

Typically, Georgists are seen as antagonists of occupancy-and-use standards of land tenure. Some Georgists do insist that conflict over land creates the necessity of a state, but others are increasingly fond of anarchist, or panarchist, approaches. Some geo-libertarians and geo-anarchists have indeed insisted that communities that voluntarily subscribe to a land-value dues (rather than tax), like Proudhon's "indemnity," will be able to outcompete communities that don't. Fred Foldvary points out that,

In a libertarian or anarchist world, some people might be unaffiliated anarcho-capitalists, contracting with various firms for services. But if we look at markets today, we see instead contractual communities. We see condominiums, homeowner associations, cooperatives, and neighborhood associations. For temporary lodging, folks stay in hotels, and stores get lumped into shopping centers. Historically, human beings have preferred to live and work in communities.

He continues, saying that in anarchist geoism (Georgism),

Geoist communities would join together in leagues and associations to provide services that are more efficient on a large scale, such as defense, if needed. The voting and financing would be bottom up. The local communities would elect representatives, and provide finances, and would be able to secede when they felt association was no longer in their interest.

[...]

In the anarchist context, private communities and companies would provide the civic works and collect the payments by contract. Geoist communities would try to assess how much of the rental is natural rent, and distribute that equally to the population in those communities. Market anarchists outside the geoist leagues would probably be hostile to this rent-sharing system and might refuse to trade with the geoists, but that would not be much of a problem for geoists, since the efficiency of geoism would attract much of the enterprise.⁵

On a similar note, the geo-libertarian, Daniel Sullivan, says,

There are excellent reasons for libertarians to prefer the land trust route over the political route. Private communities can be built on explicit contracts (leases) with the citizens, can have internal democratic processes that are vastly superior to electoral democracy, can be far more flexible and free of state intervention, and can be downright profitable (even with trust investors pocketing a mere fraction of the rent). Most of all, dealing with investors is far more pleasant and self-affirming than dealing with politicians.⁶

In circumstances such as these, it seems that there is no longer a need to have a riff between Georgists and mutualists about taxation. Geo-anarchism, depending on how it is applied, could be the very mechanism that mutualists are lacking when *defining* occupancy-and-use standards to land rights; if you're paying your dues the land is clearly being occupied and used, and is protected as such by your geo-association, or land trust, even in your physical absence. So long as the Georgists can practice geo-anarchism, I see

no reason to continue arguing about the method of land distribution.

A PLEA FOR THE COMMONS

BOTH GEO-ANARCHISTS AND MUTUALISTS seem opposed to land monopoly and state-ownership. *Geo-mutualism* may not be so unrealistic. Clarence Lee Swartz:

Mutualists believe that both of these forms of inequity [monopoly and state-ownership] may be avoided. They believe neither in giving absolute titles to the unqualified possession of land, nor in denying all titles whatsoever. They propose to recognize conditional titles to land, based on occupancy-and-use by the owner; and they engage to defend such titles against all comers, so long as the owner complies with those sole conditions of occupying and using the land of which he claims the ownership. Under these terms there can be no monopoly of land, and no one who desires land for occupancy-and-use may go landless. Since no vacant land may then be held out of use if anybody desires it, each person may, in the order of the priority of his selection and according to his requirements and occupation, have equality of opportunity in the selection of land.⁷

Mutualists, like geo-libertarians, should favor not private (capitalism), nor collective (socialism) rights, but the higher synthesis of common rights to land. Capitalism is an instance of *private* rights, which are rights to absolute and perpetual control of land by an individual, even at the expense of the collective; land-monopoly as we frequently have today, and as promoted by Austrian-style economists. Socialism is an instance of *collective* rights, which are most often managed by a power-wielding state,

while geo-libertarianism is an instance of *common rights*,⁸ which can be managed by the people themselves. Daniel Sullivan, on the matter of collective and common rights, notes that,

A parallel confusion exists between common property and collective property, and the classical liberal concept of common property has been all but obliterated. An open park perhaps comes closest to the idea of common property, for anyone has an equal right of access to the park. However, restrictions on what one may do in a park, to the degree that they are arbitrary, render the park a collective property.⁹

THE NATURE OF RIGHTS

CLARENCE LEE SWARTZ, a proponent of occupancy-and-use, is careful to clarify that rights (such as those to property) are not something that can be assumed, but must be either asserted with force, or, in lieu or forfeiture of force, with mutual understanding and reciprocity of rights through contract:

Fundamentally and elementally, of course, there is only one right – the right of might.

To talk about “natural” rights and “inalienable” rights is to talk about something that does not exist. To speak of natural rights implies that there is an unquestioned or an indisputable right of some kind that is inherent in the individual when he is born. If that were really true, then the right of might could not operate against it. In order that the right of might could not so operate, the inherent or natural or inalienable right would have to be of such a nature that no force could overcome it. Merely to state the case in that way is sufficient

to show the nonsense of the notion that there can be anything superior to the right of might; unless there is some metaphysical meaning attached to those three adjectives that is not fathomable by the finite mind.

The real truth of the matter is that, since there is no right superior to that of might, all other rights, of whatever nature, exist only by sufferance; in other words, by contract or agreement.¹⁰

I must say it's rather ignorant of Clarence Lee Swartz (whom I consider one of my own dear and well respected teachers) to have such intelligent views regarding the nature of rights only later to downplay economic rent, and act as if it should not play a role in the formation of the contracts he is maintaining. He'd do much better to have followed after Proudhon. If rights are not natural or inalienable, it should not be assumed that someone has ownership rights of *property* simply for *possession*. A truly mutualist society, where people freely forgo violence in favor of cooperation, wouldn't be one based on *assumption* of property rights, but on *reciprocity* of property rights; that is, property rights by contract, meaning rights to equal value. I don't think any institution could provide a better system of such reciprocal possession of land, defining *occupancy-and-use* by giving it practical application, than a geo-libertarian one.

There is no reason for any anarchist— if rights are not assumed, but claimed— to respect another's self-claimed title to economic rent. In fact, as Jeremy Weiland tells us,

we may find the answer to the problem of persistent wealth imbalances in human nature. Two aspects of that nature are greed and envy. Just as stockholders are always in danger of management and employees siphoning off profits and imperiling the long term viability of the business, rich individuals face similar uncertainties of theft and fraud.

Because the lack of a State would force these costs to be internalized within the entity rather than externalized onto the public, it is highly likely that the costs of maintaining these outsized aggregations of wealth would begin to deplete it.

The balance of power between the rich and non-rich is key here. Direct plundering of wealth, though fraud or theft, threatens the rich in a crippling way. It raises their costs directly in proportion to their wealth, either through insurance costs, defense costs, or losses. They have to worry not just about outside threats, but also the threats posed by their servants, employees, and even their family members. Because the wealth is centralized around one individual or one management team, it is near impossible to find any fair way to distribute the responsibilities of stewardship without distributing the wealth itself. Having a lot of stuff becomes more trouble than it's worth.

Then he starts to sound a bit like a geo-anarchist,

Meanwhile, less rich people economize on these costs by banding together with other modest individuals to either hire outside defense (socializing protection on their own, voluntary terms) or by personally organizing to defend property (via institutions such as militias). Because the ratio of person to wealth is relatively greater, there are more interested individuals willing to play a role in defense and maintenance of property. It's the distribution of the wealth over more people that necessarily makes that wealth easier to defend. And since everybody has basically the

same amount of stuff, nobody has an interest in taking advantage of, nor stealing from, others.

In fact, normal human greed suggests that there will always be an element of society that wishes to steal and cheat others. What the wealthy offer criminals like this in an anarchy is easy targets, because big estates are harder to defend and so invite more opportunities for plunder. Not only that, but its far more likely that wealthy estates will be targeted because its easier to steal a million dollars from the bank, or a vault, than to rob a thousand or so common people. The larger the disparity in wealth, the more intensively the wealthy will be targeted by criminals.

On the other hand, normal people would necessarily be less likely to be targeted by the criminal, for a few reasons. First, since the ratio of human bodies to wealth in a modest community would be much greater, the deterrent effect would be insurmountable to all but the most stupid crooks. Second, the criminal elements in a modest community are more likely to share in the legitimate wealth of the economy, preventing them from preying on their neighbors. Since the economy is completely free, current mentalities about the reasons for criminal behavior are minimized because people see that by working hard they can actually get ahead.¹¹

Similarly, it is my belief that rights to property stem either from physical force, contract, or both, and that, in the context of a free market, an equilibrium can be found where forceful action balances property rights and bilateral contracts emerge to forgo force, which is detrimental to both sides, compared to agreed-upon standards. The healthiest equilibrium I can imagine would be

facilitated by geo-communities, as a standard of occupancy-and-use. Anyone not part of a geo-community would face a possibility of plunder, thus forfeiting their own rights to property. As Max Stirner makes clear, “Whoever knows how to take, to defend, the thing, to him belongs property.”¹²

Economic rent can more easily be sorted out by contract than by force, in a way that is beneficial for all participants. Conflict escalates, and is hardly ever beneficial. Dan Sullivan illustrates the simplicity of sorting out land by contract:

Consider three fair-minded people who have come to inhabit an island, where sustenance is derived from fishing and from a small coconut grove. As there are plenty of fish and plenty of fine places from which one can fish, no conflict, and, therefore, no rent, arises. However, as the coconut grove is small, and all three people have an interest in possessing it, it becomes a matter of dispute, which can be most equitably resolved by the utilization of rent.

They could, of course, divide the coconut grove in three, but if it is inefficient for each to tend a third of the grove, they might resolve the dispute as follows:

One might say, “If you give me exclusive access to the grove, I will give you four coconuts per week per week to divide between you.”

Another, who believes he is more talented at maintaining a coconut grove, offers five coconuts per week. Ultimately, the highest bidder gets the grove, and the other two get the rent. This rent is a natural rent, and is used to equitably resolve the clash of conflicting rights to land. Thus, the rent does not belong to “society,” but the individuals who have given up their rights to the land itself.¹³

If mutualists can define *occupancy-and-use* more deeply, to include geo-communities, I think we can be on the way to something exciting, but Georgists have to return the favor. If mutualists concede Georgists the community claim to economic rent, Georgists should concede that mutualists are correct about *interest* and *profit*, at least as they define them. Much of the disconnect between mutualists and other schools have been semantic, and if Georgists and mutualists can share a common language, we can get past this problem. Mutualists, when referring to *interest* and *profit*—like Georgists when referring to *rent*—, are referring to something completely different than when Georgists refer to *interest* and *profit*.

THE MUTUALIST-GEORGIST DISCONNECT ON INTEREST AND PROFIT

AN AREA OF CONTENTION between mutualists and Georgists, nearly as strong as the issue of taxes and rent, is in regard to interest and profit. This, sadly, is much more semantic than realistic, as geo-libertarians, as well as mutualists, oppose state-regulation of industry, often including the area of banking. Most of the contention is due to the fact that mutualists have historically called the return above the natural rate of labor and capital—due to privilege—*profit* and *interest*, in line with cultural definitions, while Georgists refer to any return on capital as *interest*, and on labor as *wages*, with any return higher than expected being *profit*. In-so-doing, Georgists ignore half of the economic problem, at least in popular terminology, as it has been described since the beginnings of civilization and modern economies: Interest, especially *usurious* interest. Stephen Zarlenga says,

it can be questioned whether George was too easy in extending [his] “justification” [that interest is due to the fecundity inherent in the “power of nature”] to all forms of taking interest. Rather than his usual approach of carefully discerning between economic activities, in this case he lumped them

together. For example the Scholastics carefully distinguished between different forms of earning interest, which were always permissible, and usury, which was not. In effect properly charging interest on some loans becomes a cover for improper loan sharking, for example as practiced today by credit card companies, or the IMF, to take an extreme case.¹⁴

Usury has been condemned by Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and more; and I'm not speaking about changes in recent years, I'm talking about early-on in civilization, when money was a newer phenomenon, and many exchanges still took place by way of barter and gift. Zarlenga says,

In all George's works read for this study, the word usury came up only once. George's avoiding the usury issue, in a morally based work, may have stemmed from his faith in freedom of trade; in this case emphasizing the freedom portion of his two part formula; and de-emphasizing the responsibility portion of it as regards the kind of lending activities that are permissible within a framework of justice.¹⁵

Indeed, the nature and treatment of usury has been a controversial subject for a long time. Many reject the concept altogether, and often because those who accept the concept prescribe solutions which hinder freedom of trade. Hugh Barty-King, in *The Worst Poverty: A History of Debt and Debtors*, remarks that, in medieval society,

A person without the necessary ready money who wished to affect an air of solvency, if not wealth, could do so by acquiring temporary affluence by borrowing, not from the tradesmen who sold goods, but

one who sold money. The retailer's profit came from the mark-up with which he charged the price he had paid the wholesaler or producer. The trader in money made his living from the charge he made his customers for the temporary use of his money, a trade known as usury (*usura* in medieval Latin).

Anyone who volunteered to relieve another's financial embarrassment, by handing over some of his money with which to pay the bill which had caused the embarrassment, and then had to wait longer than he had bargained for to get his money returned, could claim compensation for his temporary loss to the extent of 'that which is in between' (*id quod interest*). The phrase referred, in the words of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to 'the difference between the creditor's position in consequence of the debtor's laches (neglect to pay at once)* and the position which might have been reasonably anticipated as the direct consequence of the debtor's fulfillment of his obligation.' It was a principle which had harked back to Roman Law. The compensation which became to be known as interest (*interesse*) was permissible when it could be shown that such a loss had really arisen (*damnum emergens*). Later, loss of profit through inability to reinvest the money (*lucrum cessans*) [opportunity costs] was also recognized as giving a claim to *interesse*. The sum which could be requested as interest was a fixed one and specified in the contract; though in thirteenth-century England they substituted a percentage of the money which was reckoned periodically to correspond with the creditor's loss.

In medieval England the two procedures were only sanctioned by tradition.

However the Christian Church in England, which took its ideas from the Pope in Rome, held that whereas compensating someone who had lent money to another to bridge a temporary shortage of cash was permissible, charging for the use of money lent was not.

It was not just impermissible. The Christian Church's body of rules and regulations on how a Christian should conduct himself, the Canon Law, ruled that usury was 'a sin'.¹⁶

The usury argument has two prongs. Those who ignore the problem, in protection of freedom of exchange— though their concerns about freedom of trade are reasonable—, do a great disservice to its victims. Those who see the problem, and treat it with coercive systems of law, do just as much disservice to the community. Under these circumstances it only makes sense for the two sides to dispute one another. One ignores the problem, and the other treats the problem with a bigger problem (the state). Instead, it should be noticed there is a cause of usury, and this cause is monopolization of credit, not payment for opportunity costs of the lender. Usury is very much an issue. Thomas H Greco, Jr. contemporary author of mutual credit, writes that,

The word usury has become taboo in our culture, particularly in academic and financial circles. It is almost never mentioned in the media anymore. But if we are to remedy the obvious inequities in the economy and discover a sustainable way of life, it is vital that we reexamine this concept and understand its economic and social impact. We need to know how it affects people in their daily lives— their ability to meet basic needs, to provide for their families, to enjoy lives that fulfill their creative potential. Those who call themselves economists have, for the most part, been derelict in their duty to provide such

analysis. The few who have ventured onto this path have been ignored, repressed, and even vilified.¹⁷

Indeed, the mutualists allowed for enough “interest” to cover the operational-costs of the bank, usually teetering around 1% or less. Mutualists, then, should be more careful in their wide-sweeping condemnation of interest, or should at least define their terms more thoroughly, because at times there seems contradiction, even if the intentions are clear (to me, anyway). Mutualists teeter in their language between condemning all interest, and condemning interest over cost. Still, there is effort; Clarence Lee Swartz makes a careful distinction between profits of *privilege* and profits of *business* or *enterprise*, before clarifying that through the rest of his book (in line with mutualist tradition) he will be exclusively referring to *profits of privilege* as *profits*:

The item, Profits of Business, includes that profit which comes from enterprise and efficiency in the management of business as well as that which results from the legal privileges and monopolies that individual business firms enjoy. We may call the first the Profit of Enterprise, and the second the Profit of Privilege, i.e. – the profits resulting from tariffs, franchises, and other special privileges.¹⁸

[...]

(Hereafter in this book the term “profit” refers only to the “profits of privilege,” and does not include any reward which goes to enterprise, to managerial ability, and to labor).¹⁹

When mutualists are talking about profits and interest, they’re pointing out the returns from privilege, the same privilege

that Henry George condemns, but, in all of his glory, lacks the wording to distinguish when he says,

But while wages of superintendence clearly enough include the income derived from such personal qualities as skill, tact, enterprise, organizing ability, inventive power, character, etc., to the profits we are speaking of there is another contributing element, which can only arbitrarily be classed with these—the element of monopoly.

When James I granted to his minion the exclusive privilege of making gold and silver thread, and prohibited, under severe penalties, every one else from making such thread, the income which Buckingham enjoyed in consequence did not arise from the interest upon the capital invested in the manufacture, nor from the skill, etc., of those who really conducted the operations, but from what he got from the king—viz., the exclusive privilege—in reality the power to levy a tax for his own purposes upon all the users of such thread. From a similar source comes a large part of the profits which are commonly confounded with the earnings of capital.²⁰

It is precisely this sort of tax which is passed down that mutualists refer to as *profit* and *interest*, and not the returns that exist from having capital, unless that capital is privileged. One could levy a fair shot to the mutualists, because of their lack of terminology to distinguish fair returns and unfair returns, but this same charge could be faced by the Georgists, who use the terminology of *interest* as a return on any capital and profit as any return larger than expected (which is not composed of rent, which is then considered “spurious”). The fact of the matter is that the two systems of terminology clash horribly, while at the same time the demands of the two schools of thought are very similar.

THE NATURE OF INTEREST AND MONEY

CLARENCE SWARTZ DECLARES that “The bankers’ profits are the cause of all other profits, and the reduction of the bankers’ profits, through the abolition of interest, will by the same token decrease all other profits.”²¹ At the same time, he admits that interest is further the result of state-protectionism. Such interest could very well be argued, then, to be the levying of taxation which George is discussing, as the state relies on taxation for its existence. Clarence Lee Swartz:

The reasons why banks are able to make such large profits are that the State permits only one basis of value for the issuance of money, namely gold; that it further usurps the exclusive right to issue money on this one basis and to lend this money to the banks at a small rate of interest against security which is largely furnished by the bank’s customers; that it prohibits the issuing and loaning of current notes (no matter how well secured) by anybody but a lawfully organized bank, with penalties ranging from fine to imprisonment. By the Federal law the fine takes the form of a ten per cent tax upon the notes circulated, which, of course, acts as a complete prohibition.

Thus is established the money and banking monopoly which, by eliminating competition, makes it possible for the financier to exact interest for lending, not his own capital, but merely a claim to capital which is secured by the borrower himself.²²

Swartz wrote this just before the gold-basis was dropped, but his argument applies today. Instead of gold, however, the basis of money has shifted to all taxable goods in the economy. Unregistered, untaxed, goods and services, are not monetized by

way of bank loan. Registered business is taxed and subject to interest upon using their credit, creating a scarcity of money.

Henry George certainly had his own criticism of privilege, which was not so different from the mutualists. The philosophies are so similar in their demands, at times, that their clash over language hurts. George was even involved in some mutualist currency schemes. Stephen Zarlenga, in “Henry George’s Concept of Money,” suggests that, alternative currency

systems can be traced back to Josiah Warren, the originator of the Labour Exchange idea, put into practice by Robert Owen in London in 1832 after a very tight money period. In fact, Henry George was associated with organizing a variant of such a system for Tom Johnson’s company in Johnstown.²³

He says that,

In a separate case, Michael Flursheim [“one of George’s earlier protégé’s who emigrated to New Zealand helping to raise the land question there and in Australia”²⁴] formed the Commercial Exchange Company in New Zealand in 1898, which created its own money form, substituting debts between member merchants for cash. They accepted script from one another which had been printed by the trustees. The trustees loaned out the scrip, based on the credit of the participants, with the interest going to cover administrative costs.²⁵

Georgists typically fall into two camps: There are the traditional Georgists, who support a return to a government greenback of sorts, which is not necessarily backed by hard goods, and then there are the free-banking Georgists, who typically support full-reserve banking with hard-backing. George himself

was a proponent of money in the first view, not as representing hard goods, but as representing government credit. He says,

The truth of the matter is that the power to issue money is a valuable privilege which, to secure the best circulating medium and to put all citizens on a footing of equality, ought to be retained by the general government, and to be permitted to no one else, either individual or corporation. The greenbackers, who have insisted that national bank notes should not be permitted, and that all money should be the direct issue of the government, are in the right. It is a pity that so many greenbackers permit themselves to be used by the silver men, instead of insisting on their own principles. If we want two millions of notes issued every month, let them be greenbacks, and let the two millions now expended in buying silver be saved.

Nothing can be clearer than that the silver notes now in circulation do not derive their value from the silver which is supposed to be corded up in the treasury to redeem them. For they circulate at one hundred cents on the dollar, whereas the silver that is supposed to be lying in the treasury vaults for their redemption is only seventy-two cents' worth. They would circulate just as well as if there were no silver in the treasury, and we might as well sell that silver off or put it to some more sensible use than hoarding it—say, for the construction of long-distance telephone wires for the post office department. And what is true of silver is true of gold. It is the credit of the government that furnishes the real basis for our paper money, not any deposit in government vaults.²⁶

This sentiment is clearly contrary to that of the free-banking Georgists— some of the geo-libertarians, and especially the geo-anarchists— who would have government reduced to nil. It may, however, ring out as being somewhat true to the mutualist, who sees necessity in confederation of mutual banks; though the term *government* would strictly not apply. The mutualists and Georgists did not get along, however. Henry George criticizes the mutualist, Alfred B. Westrup, when he says,

In this issue of THE STANDARD we give place to a condensation of a long communication from Mr. Alfred B. Westrup, of what styles itself the "Mutual Bank Propaganda," in reply to a criticism by Thomas G. Shearman upon a circular issued by that concern. As to the article itself it is hardly necessary to say much. Who would profit if everybody were allowed to issue money? Evidently the richer class, who could start banks and issue money, and the large employers of labor, who could in many cases force money on their employes.

He continues, citing examples of private currency:

Lee Merriwether, the active and efficient labor commissioner of Missouri who recently made an exposure of how the Mendotta mining company was working the "free money racket " on its employes by paying them in checks, has recently investigated similar cases in the southern part of that state. Here are some samples: "Holloday has a store, and if his employes do not wish to purchase his goods they get no wages at all. One of his employes, an intelligent German, whose board shanty, although meagerly furnished, leaky and full of cracks and holes, was scrupulously neat and

clean, stated to me that last August, on the so-called pay day, he went to Mr. Holloday and asked that the wages due him be paid in cash, as he wished to return to his old home in Michigan. 'I was feeling very poorly,' said this employe, 'and told Mr. Holloday that I wanted to go back to my old home to die. Mr. Holloday said to me: 'You can die here just as well as in Michigan. I can't give you anything except checks.' The checks are only good at his store. The railroad won't take them, so I cannot go. My lungs are weak. I want to go to Colorado, but do not see how I shall ever get there, as I am never paid in money.' The wife of this man, who at the time I saw him looked weak and consumptive, told me that although \$17.17 wages were due her husband, she could not get enough money to buy a pair of shoes. She talked simply, not complainingly, as though it were the usual and proper thing to be paid in pasteboard, as though Mr. Holloday, in refusing to give her husband his wages in money, merely refused a favor.

While one of my agents, Mr. C. N. Mitchell, ex-mayor of La Plata, Mo., was in the office of the lumber mills, an employe entered and asked for his wages. The cashier handed him a check. Mr. Mitchell heard the employe ask for money. The cashier refused. The employe said he wanted to leave town, that he was tired of working for pasteboard. The cashier coolly replied that he could walk out of town if he wanted to go, that he (the cashier) was authorized to pay only in checks. On another occasion when an employe who had just received a check for his wages asked for cash, the cashier refused, saying: 'I have paid you your wages, but if you want me to buy

that check, that is another thing. I will give you \$4 for it.' The amount of the check was \$7.20. The postmaster of Williamsville buys checks from employes for seventy-five cents on the dollar. Sometimes all that the employe can obtain is fifty cents on the dollar.

I have a number of other statements of Holloday's employes to the effect that they had applied for their wages on pay day, but were refused payment in cash and were compelled to accept checks on his store. One man says that he waited at the office until eleven o'clock at night to see Holloday and get his wages in money. During this time Mr. Holloday remained locked in his private office. At eleven o'clock the clerks forced the employe to leave in order to close the office. He went the three following days, but with no better success and was finally obliged to accept checks in lieu of lawful money of the United States." If the free money people had their way Holloday's pasteboard checks would be lawful money of the United States, and pretty much every large employer would constitute himself a bank and begin issuing this sort of money.²⁷

George is very right to fear free-banking under a classical system of property, where there lies a distinction in ownership between employers and employees. He sets up a strawman, however, when he challenges Westrup of this dynamic. Clearly, when Westrup argues against consumer cooperatives, in "Co-operation," he sees no need for such fiddle as George accuses him, because he favors worker-ownership:

All who have means should never let it pass out of their control; instead of a cooperative store being started or contributed

to by those who purchase, subscribing to its stock, in which case their means pass into the control of other parties, such store should be started and carried out by a few cooperators among themselves, as we propose, each furnishing the stock in the department which he manages. In this case if he makes any mistakes it is at his own cost, and he alone is the sufferer.²⁸

There's no reason to follow Westrup's logic that consumer-ownership is never necessary. The mutualists, Westrup himself, were all in favor of mutual banks, anyhow, which are banks whose policies are owned by the policy-users, similar to a modern credit union (but generally more democratic). They favored worker-cooperation in industry, but many mutualists, such as Clarence Lee Swartz, looked favorably upon consumer cooperation as well. To my view, the necessity of consumer ownership follows scale. If a natural monopoly arises, due to economies of scale, it is necessary to build a monopsony, and utilize economies of scope, and vice versa. Regardless, and back to our original point of conversation, it is clear that George does not understand the ownership models put forward by the mutualists in this challenge to Westrup.

Mutualists, to be clear, are not atomists. We favor cooperation on large scales. There is no reason to believe that local currencies will not, cannot, or should not confederate for the purpose of inter-regional trade. In fact, this is promoted by mutualists. The idea that some Georgists have about mutualists—having small, atomized economies, where people are slaves to their locality— is complete nonsense. Mutualists are proponents of trade. So long as its membership is voluntary, there is no reason to believe we would oppose the establishment of an international banking confederation.

The conflict between free-banking, hard-banking, Georgists and mutualists is a bit different than that of the classical debate. Part of the conflict between free-banking Georgists and mutualists may be rooted in the fact that mutualists have

historically looked at money as labor-credit, or title to potential labor, while many Georgists—especially of the free-banking variety— have looked at money as representing already existing wealth, having a physical basis. That is, mutualists have looked to the potential to monetize any labor, including services which have not yet been rendered, as credit, while many libertarian Georgists have looked only to monetizing already existing capital (such as mined gold) or land as a basis of money. Thus, the mutualists' arguments are often more pertinent in regard to monetized *labor*, while free-banking Georgists look at money as monetized *capital*. Under these conditions, it makes sense that the two would argue; in lending already-existing capital, one is facing a potential opportunity cost, which should derive a fair price of compensation, but in simply writing IOUs for oneself or on behalf of another, as the mutualists have contended, one does not face such a cost. Any charge above the cost of currently-rendered labor is usurious, or unfair, by its very nature.

I feel that conditions like these prompt the argument in defense of the interest on *capital*-money, as represented by the Georgists and, similarly, thinkers like Bastiat in his debates with Proudhon, while also promoting the argument against interest on *labor*-money (service), as represented by Proudhon's side, as well as the arguments of mutualists such as Swartz, Westrup, Tandy, and Tucker, promoters of free and mutual credit. It may also be noted that this distinction is certainly not a hard one. Mutualists are certainly in favor of monetized capital, including gold and any other product of labor (remember, credit money is any kind of paper money, not just fiat), and many Georgists may be openly in favor of mutual credit.

Mutualist criticism of interest is not based entirely on the return that capital receives *as capital* (though it may include the rent in the capital and *profits of privilege*), but especially the return the banker receives for simply monetizing, or writing credit toward, that capital. In other words, interest, to the mutualist, is largely a return on capital *as means of exchange*, but the means of exchange should *not* carry a value or price in itself, but should only represent the value carried in the things it represents, lest exchanges be hindered from occurring. Again, monetary interest is not the

reward commodities get simply for being lent, which would be equal to their opportunity costs, it's the return that is derived from having exclusive privilege to create currency, or title of ownership (or from other privileges handed down by the state).

As any economist understands, it's rather difficult to make exchanges without the convenience of money, due to the problem of double-coincidence-of-wants, and so costs of exchange may be reduced by using money, even while paying tribute to the state's banks for their exclusive right to create titles-of-ownership over land, labor, and capital. Interest is not so much regarded by mutualists as a return for lending *one's own* capital, but a return for the exclusive, state-provided privilege to monetize the capital *of others*, as they are legally unable to do so for themselves. Swartz:

Thus is established the money and banking monopoly which, by eliminating competition, makes it possible for the financier to exact interest for lending, not his own capital, but merely a claim to capital which is secured by the borrower himself.²⁹

It may also be worthwhile to note that mutualistic thinkers such as Silvio Gesell (also influenced by George) make strong arguments for the elimination of even that monetary interest that Georgists refer to as *fair*, instead promoting the competitive idea of *demurrage*. The argument is largely based on agricultural societies and their reactions to spoilage; instead of giving surplus, which would otherwise spoil, to others with an interest-fee attached, which would be unsuccessful, farming societies will give surplus away as gifts, in order to promote good social relations. Such transactions may be loosely likened to buying insurance, or giving credit, as one's good deeds may be returned in time of need. Gesell noticed that all goods expire over time. Money, representing such goods, he reasoned, should too expire. Thus, he reasoned further, money should carry with it a holding-fee, or expiration, similar to the goods it represents. In such a scenario, lending money would be encouraged not in order to increase at the *gain* of interest, but in order to pass along the *loss* faced by expiration. The proper rate of

demurrage is, in my view, the rate of expiration faced in the economy.

Outside of monetary policy, the *interest* referred to by Georgists, being any return on free capital (excluding rent), would also tend to disappear. Indeed, the mutualist, Francis Dashwood Tandy, admits the existence of temporary gains which are not strictly due to manual labor, but to innovation:

If an article suddenly acquires an increased utility, people will be willing to give articles which embody a great amount of labor in order to obtain the more useful article. So the producers of that article, will be able to reap a greater reward for their labor than the other members of the community. This immediately causes a number of the producers of other commodities to leave their old occupations and engage in the one which promises higher remuneration. Thus the supply is increased to meet the demand, until the equilibrium is once more established.³⁰

Whether innovation is due to an article, or capital, as described above, or to labor, the matter at hand here is that equilibriums are being deviated from. This is where many mutualists face criticism, because this is seemingly a deviation from cost itself, until the price again reaches expected equilibrium. Such criticism relies on a false understanding of the meaning of labor value and cost.

COSTS AND BENEFITS

COST IS, of course, anything anyone does not want to do or go through. It is anything undesirable to the individual. As Josiah Warren tells us, cost is the “endurance of whatever is disagreeable.” He says,

Fatigue of mind or body is cost. Responsibility which causes anxiety is cost. To have our time or our attention taken up against our preferences—to make a sacrifice of any kind—a feeling of mortification—painful suspense—fear—suffering or enduring anything against our inclinations, is here considered cost.³¹

Cost is all of the above— forms of labor or disutility—, but such emotions which give rise to cost— such as fatigue, anxiety, preference, suspense, fear, suffering, and endurment— are not able to be objectively or externally measured, but only their effects may be measured so, as emotions are subjective and internal by nature. This leads us to a more subjective labor theory of value that is consistent with marginal utility. As Francis Dashwood Tandy, in his mutualist flagship, *Voluntary Socialism*, points out,

It should be noted that the labor value does not necessarily mean the actual amount of labor embodied in the identical article, but the amount of labor necessary to produce an article of exactly similar and equal utility.³²

Thus, to the mutualist, the cost of labor itself is subjective in nature, and, again stated by Tandy,

As the margin, or desires which are left unsatisfied, increases, the price decreases. Thus it is the 'margin of utility' which determines the price.³³

With this understood, any positive deviation from expected equilibrium a firm experiences in the free market may indeed be unexpected, but it is not a deviation from the *cost-principle*, as such a return from entrepreneurial innovation is not due to *privilege*, but brainwork. The innovation has *reduced the costs* for

others in society. When others pay the fair, free market price, they are doing so because it is less costly than doing the work themselves. As Tandy has already pointed out, though, there are plenty of outsiders looking to take some of the newly found return that the entrepreneur has found; and any return due to *innovation* will soon be lost to *replication* in the market. Thus, the entrepreneur's gains, as deviating from expected equilibrium, are neither *profits*, according to the mutualist definition—being above cost—, nor permanent under a free market. These gains do, however— if not *profits*—, deserve their own moniker, which we will be getting into later.

THE MUTUALIST-GEORGIST CONNECTION

AS HOPEFULLY DEMONSTRATED, the main disconnects between mutualists and Georgists, or at least geo-anarchists, are not in scenarios and outcomes, but rather in the language used to describe them, or in their practical application. Mutualists tend to refer to *taxes*, *interest*, *rent*, and *profit* in general as usurious forms of income, gained only by the privilege of the state, but they have also always maintained caveats and provisos to such statements, allowing for such things as “enough interest to cover costs of operation” and “profits of enterprise.”

Georgists have always condemned unfair banking and industry (though they are divided on its fix), and have criticized their returns ferociously, but have never adapted the language to refer to the returns of such privilege, as the mutualists have done when referring to prices above cost as *taxes*, *interest*, *rent*, and *profit* or, collectively, as *usury*.

Mutualists have always maintained a strong position against land speculation and monopoly, opting instead for a system of *occupancy-and-use*, which has often been loosely defined, and has long been in need of further clarification. They are correct, in my view, to condemn the statism of those guilty Georgists, but those Georgists who have transcended the statism of George himself offer mutualists the further clarification of *occupancy-and-use* they have long needed.

In rejecting Georgist proposals whole-heartedly, instead of drawing the positives from them, most mutualists have ignored the problem, not of absentee-landlordism and rent collection, but of the rent that is collected by landlords from the land they are personally occupying and using, which is brought to market and traded for goods and services that were purely returns on others' labor and capital (where marginal land is used). While they are correct to reject statism, the mutualists have been short-sighted in their rejection of full positive liberties not just to land as *space*, but to land as *resource*. In other words, mutualists are often wrong in rejecting common rights to *economic rent*, while they are correct to support common rights to having one's own *area* of control. Such rights, under the conditions of differing grades of land, must be granted socially, as they impose restrictions on the positive liberties of others' use. John Locke, oft-cited father of the homestead principle:

Nor was this *appropriation* of any parcel of *land*, by improving it, any prejudice to any other man, since there was still enough and as good left, and more than the yet unprovided could use. So that, in effect, there was never the less left for others because of his enclosure for himself. For he that leaves as much as another can make use of does as good as take nothing at all. Nobody could think himself injured by the drinking of another man, though he took a good draught, who had a whole river of the same water left him to quench his thirst. And the case of land and water, where there is enough of both, is perfectly the same.³⁴

Despite all of the arguments between Georgists and mutualists, there is certainly a common populist and libertarian heritage to be found in both schools of thought. Both are concerned principally with the freedom of the laborer over their product, and indeed both ideologies focus on land and banking

reform. Proudhon, the father of mutualism, said of the matter, "The right to product is exclusive; the right to means is common."³⁵ This is not much different than the argument that Georgists put forward. Both schools of thought see validity in a social claim to land, and both see validity in the individual's claim to their own labor and product. The mutualist-Georgist connection is one of practicality rather than description, and both would do better to learn to read, not just the words of the other, but, the meanings behind them, in order to coordinate descriptions for the general public. At the same time, the debate has led to this synthesis, which would not be possible without it, so, as with all conflicts, which most often result from misunderstanding, perhaps both Georgists and mutualists should be thankful, as the disagreement has incentivized discussion and allowed for the exchange of ideas and possible resolution, resulting in hopeful unity between both groups of libertarian populists.

THE FACTORS AND THEIR RETURNS

AS MOST OF THE DEBATE between mutualists and Georgists revolves around words and their definitions, in the following sections I will be using the law of rent to propose new usages, which may be adaptable to a new language of geo-mutualism. I will also be clarifying a particular concern I have with the usual assessment of rent.

There are three factors of production according to *classical* economics. These factors are *land*, which is natural resources; *labor*, which is human effort (whether it be mental or physical); and *capital*, which is the mixture of these two things. From these factors can be derived their returns. The return on land is classically called *economic rent*, the return on capital is *economic interest*, and the return on labor is called *economic wages*. These returns can be measured by knowing the productivity of land and average intensity of labor and capital.

Say, for instance, that there are four plots of land, of varying grades. With average intensity of labor and capital, the land can produce 4, 3, 2, and 1 units. The margin of production is generally treated as being equal to the classical economic wages and

interest (which I will be renaming later in order to synthesize Georgist and mutualist thought). When these are subtracted from the total productivity of a piece of land (using average intensity of capital and labor), we get the economic rent. Like such:

Total Wealth	4	3	2	1
Wages/Interest (Margin of Production)	1	1	1	1
Economic Rent	3	2	1	0

From the Georgist perspective, wages and interest are the fair returns derived from labor and capital, and rent is derived simply from owning land. Land cannot justifiably be owned, however, as humanity did not create land, but exists instead at its mercy. Georgists insist that economic rent be paid to the community at large by way of taxes or dues, to be distributed by dividends or public services. This is all good and well, in my opinion (except taxes).

GEORGISM TOO SOFT ON RENTS

MY BREAK WITH MOST GEORGISTS comes when other influences are added, such as increase or decrease in intensity of labor and capital productivity. Say, for instance, the person who takes the best piece of land and pays 3 units of rent to the community works twice as hard. Here's what we're looking at:

Total Wealth	8	3	2	1
Economic Rent	3	2	1	0
Total Income	5	1	1	1

The problem here is that, though the worker is producing *double*, and the others are producing average, he or she is receiving *quintuple* the amount of everyone else. If their labor was applied to the margin, they'd receive only their duly double. Of course, it could be argued that the double effort of the worker changes the

average productivity, and thus the rent, which is a fair assertion. It does. If the other workers above can produce only one unit of value on the worst land, and the worker laboring twice as hard can produce two, that brings the average to 1.25 ($5^i \div 4 = 1.25$). In this case, the rent on the worst land, as calculated with *only average labor*, is 0, on the second to worst is 1.25, the next to best is 2.5, and the best is 3.75.

Total Wealth	5	3.75	2.5	1.25
Wages/Interest (Margin of Production)	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
Economic Rent	3.75	2.5	1.25	0

With the new average, the worker who produces double their peers, who work at 80% of the average ($1 \div 1.25 = .8$), still gets more than double return on their labor. It would look like this:

Total Wealth	8	3	2	1
Economic Rent	3.75	2.5	1.25	0
Total Income	4.25	.5	.75	1

I don't think it's fair to consider the amount of increase the best worker has had due to land as wages and interest (I'm going to be clearing these up, too). Instead, the spurious portion of their income that is above their proper rate of return should be considered a part of the rent. There's also the new dilemma that, though each of the three workers who exerted labor at 80% (relative to the average) exerted the same amount of labor, two are forced into plots that make them receive less than the other, with one making half the amount and the other making three-quarters of it.

ⁱ 5 because of three individuals who produce at the rate of a single unit ($3 \times 1 = 3$) and one who produces twice as much ($1 \times 2 = 2$). $3 + 2 = 5$.

Total Wealth	8	3	2	1
Economic Rent	3.75	2.5	1.25	0
Total Income	4.25	.5	.75	1

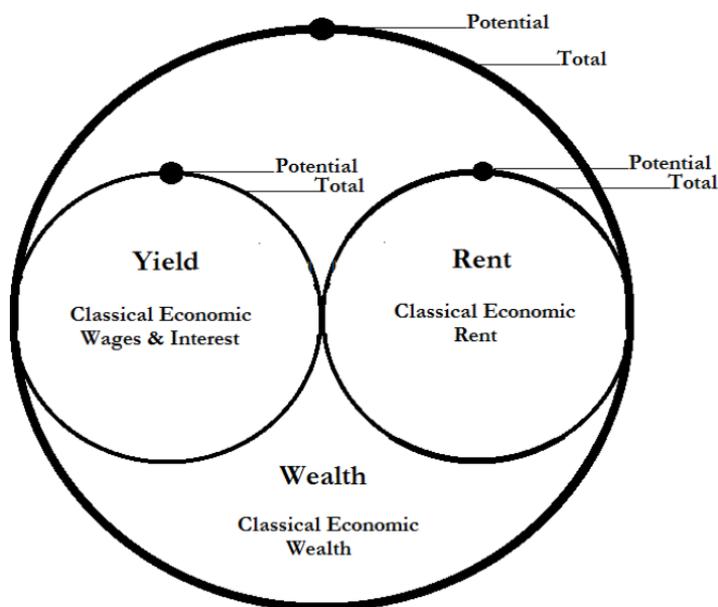
I think there may be a better approach than simply charging rent based on the average value of the land minus the margin of production. Instead of using economic rent— as based on the average productivity of a piece of land using average labor, and then subtracting the margin— as the total *end-result* of rent, it may be best to use it as a *factor* in a *larger equation*. In such case, the total rent of the land would not simply be the average productivity of the land minus the margin of production, but the economic rent *times the productivity rate of other factors of production* (labor and capital). This means the economic rent times the labor and capital power. If a worker works twice as hard as their peers, the total new rent will be the classical economic rent times this effort (1.6, see next paragraph). The same is true of a worker who works only half as hard (0.4). In this case, the best worker, who would produce 2 units on the margin, labors 160% of the productivity of the average worker (1.25) on the best land (first column), or 200% of their peers (2 x 0.8), resulting in 8 total wealth (5 x 1.6 = 8; the average worker produces 5 on the best land), 6 of which is the total rent (3.75 x 1.6 = 6). I will from here on refer to the factor of economic rent as *potential rent*, and the outcome of the larger equation as *total rent*.

Don't let this get confusing, there are differences in the models of average productivity and true productivity. The best worker works twice as hard as their real, shown, peers (2 vs. 1 on the worst land, 8 vs. 4 on the best), but only 60% more than the average ([which is a non-existent, unshown, person in this model] $2 \div 1.25 = 1.6$, or 160% of the average). So, while the best worker may produce 200% ($2 \div 1 = 2$) of the others, who only produce 1 on the marginal land, by producing 2, they produce 160% of the *average* (non-existent) worker, who would produce 1.25 units ($5 \div 4 = 1.25$; 5 because of three who produce 1, and one who produces 2, making 5; and 4 because it's four individuals), on the marginal land ($2 \div 1.25 = 1.6$).

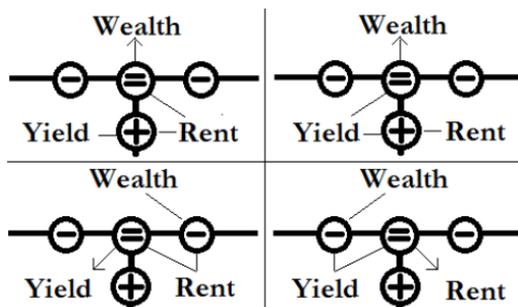
YIELD AND RENT

JUST THE SAME as done with rent, it's possible to use the *classical economic* wages and interest (which will be renamed), as measured by the margin of production with average labor, to determine the true return that is due compared to one's peers. Instead of *wages* and *interest*, I will from here on be referring to classical conceptions of them, together, as *yield*. Yield, then, is the portion of the return on land that is due to labor and capital, and encompasses *classical economic* wages and interest.

From this point onward I will be referring to classical economic returns as *potential* returns. In other words, because we will be using the classical economic returns (such as classical economic rent) as factors in larger equations (as stated in section 'Georgism Too Soft on Rents') and they will not be considered the total return, we will refer to them as *potential* returns. In regards to yield and rent, the classical economic rent is synonymous with potential rent, and the yield is equal to the non-spurious (not due to rent) classical economic wages and interest.



The *potential* (or economic) yield is equal to the margin of production (as measured with average labor), or non-spurious wages and interest, and the *total* yield is the outcome of yield as a factor. The *rent* (coming in potential and total, as well) is the portion that is simply due to having a better grade of land. The yield is always free from land-rent, but may include profit (herein considered a return on monopoly labor) or interest (herein considered a return on monopoly capital), which I will get into later.



Now, we've said that we have four actors, three of which produce 1 unit of wealth on the margin of production, while the other produces 2. We've said further that the best worker takes the best land (in line with comparative advantage, increasing productivity for all), and produces the most wealth. If you *multiply* the *potential wealth* (yield and rent) with the *potential avail* (classical economic wages, we'll be getting into this soon) of a *marginal* (the worst) worker you get the *marginal total wealth*. If you multiply the potential wealth with the potential avail of another worker, you get their total productivity of wealth. If capital is involved, *potential principal* (classical economic interest) must be factored in as well to get the wealth. This example is not currently using capital, just labor. From now on I will use A to describe the best worker, and B, C, and D for the other three marginal workers.

Participant	A	B	C	D
Potential Wealth	4	3	2	1
Potential Avail	2	1	1	1
Total Wealth	8	3	2	1

We can split land's (using the productivity or effort of a marginal worker) *potential* yield from *potential* rent, and when multiplied by the other factors, such as labor and capital, this will give us the *total* yield and *total* rent, which, when combined, gives us the total productivity or total wealth.

Party	Potential		X	Effort	=	Total		or	Total	
A	3.75	Rent		0.8		1.6	=		6	Rent
	1.25	Yield	2		Yield					
B	2.5	Rent	2		Rent	3				
	1.25	Yield			1			Yield		
C	1.25	Rent	1		Rent	2				
	1.25	Yield			1			Yield		
D	0	Rent	0		Rent	1				
	1.25	Yield			1			Yield		

PROFITS & WAGES AND INTEREST & PREMIUM

IT IS POSSIBLE to further break the total yields and rents from labor into *profit* or *wages* and, if using capital (which we aren't yet), *premium* or *interest*. Profit and wages are together called *avail*, and premium and interest are together called *principal*. Profit and interest are herein considered returns from *privileged* labor and capital, while wages and premium are returns from *fair* labor and capital. Say, for instance, that A is twice as productive as everyone else because there is a law which benefits them, either through licensing, taxes, subsidy, zoning, or another mechanism. Say they work the same amount, and all of them produce the same product, but all of the labor is in setup and teardown (and since we're using capital now, let's make everyone using the same capital and capital-privileges, so it can be negligible to the equation, and ignored for the moment), meaning regardless of the amount sold, the labor for the day is the same. Because A gets tax breaks, subsidies, better zoning laws, has a license, or what have you, they get more business, with the same effort. The return that is *not* due to such privilege is *wages*, while the return that *is* due to such privilege is *profit*. If it were instead to be due to capital rather than labor, the privileged return would be *interest* and the fair return *premium*.

Some seemingly fair returns may be spurious. For instance, wages and profit and interest and premium can be yielded or rented. Those returns that are profited, interested, or rented are largely spurious returns; rented-premiums, interested-wages, and profited-base, for instance, are unfair returns. See below for rented wages:

Party	Economic		Pot. Rent and Yield	=	Return		or	Total	
A	Effort	0.8	X	=	3	Wages	or	6	Rent
	Privilege	0.8			3	Profit			
	Effort	0.8			1	Wages		2	Yield
	Privilege	0.8			1	Profit			

The amount of profit A is gaining totals to 4 (3 + 1), and their wages also equal 4 (3 + 1). If we were to go through the other individuals, B, C, and D, who have no privilege, they'd only have wages, without profit. Profit is *unearned* income. Obviously *rented-profit* is unearned, as it is profit from the rent (as above, $.8 \times 3.75 =$ profited rent), which is *always* unearned, but *yielded-profit* is also unearned income, as well as *rented-wage*. This individual, A, when compared to the others, has worked the same amount as the others, who, on the margin, produce only 1 unit of wealth. That is exactly the amount of wealth that is left when one takes away all rent (6) and remaining profits (1) from the equation. The only fair return in this equation is the yielded wages on the third line down ($.8 \times 1.25 = 1$), while the first line is waged rent ($.8 \times 3.75 = 3$), the second is profited rent ($.8 \times 3.75 = 3$), and the last is profited yield ($.8 \times 1.25 = 1$).

BASE & ENDOWMENT AND STANDARD & AUGMENTED

OBVIOUSLY, there will be some workers who are better than others out of their own intrinsic capacity, and not out of privilege, and who thus deserve a higher return, but, in such a case, the difference, which is not due to privilege, but to ability or effort, is better not known as *profit*, but as something else. I'll use the term *endowment*. Therefore, wages are composed of *endowment* and *base*, base-wages being the wages received on the

margin. The same is true of profit. It is composed of base and endowment. If there are those who make more than others, while sharing the same *privilege*, gaining profit, they have gained endowed-profit atop the base-profit that the marginal *privileged* worker makes.

In such a case as capital is utilized, a factor for capital is added. Say that A has a new piece of capital, which increases productivity by twice as much, to 16. Well, firstly, this will bring up the average productivity, and, thus, the economic rent, as all increased productivity brings up the economic, or potential, rent. The new average productivity on marginal land is 1.75, due to the new capital (A: 1-land unit x 2-labor x 2-capital = 4. 4 + the other 3 from B,C, and D = 7. $7 \div 4 = 1.75$). The new economic rent for A's land is then 5.25, B's is 3.5, C's is 1.75, and D's is 0 (total production using average labor, 7, minus the margin of production with the same labor, 1.75, equals 5.25 rent, in A's case). Obviously A is no longer only producing at 160% of the average, or 200% of each of their peers, which have remained the same, but with their new capital they are producing at 228.5714285714% the average, and 400% of their peers' labor. The *potential rent*, 5.25, times the new productivity, 228.5714285714% or so, gives us a *total rent* of ~12 for simplicity (a better mathematician could be more exact). The *potential yield*, 1.75, times the productivity gives us approximately 4 *total yield*. Adding the total yield and rent gives us our *total wealth* of 16, which is the new productivity of the land with the use of the new capital. A's wealth in regard to labor can be broken down into *avail* and *principal*, and then *wages* and *profit* (as above), which are further broken into *endowment* and *base*, or, in regard to capital, as *premium* and *interest*, which can further be broken down into *standard* and *augmented*. These all exist as part of *both* rent and yield.

In order to get a percentage, the factors of labor, or *avail* (x2), and capital, or *principal* (x2), are added, and we get a total of 4. Each factor is then separately divided by the total number of factors (4), giving us the percentage due to the factor (.5). Each factor, then, being equal, gets 50% ($2 \div 4 = .5$). Therefore, half of the wealth is due to capital, and half is due to labor (some yielded and some rented). The portion due to free labor is *wages*, and to privileged labor is *profit*. The portion due to free capital is *premium*,

and to privileged capital is *interest*. Wages and profits are further broken down into *base* and *endowment*, and interest and principal are broken into *standard* and *augment*.

The *total* yield (that part due to labor and capital without rent) on A's land is 4, and *total* rent is 12. If we say that 50% of the wealth is due to labor (*avail*), and the other to capital (*principal*), we can say that the *yield* due to capital, or *principal*, is 2, and the yield to labor, or *avail*, is also 2. Likewise, we can say the *rent* due to capital, or *principal*, is 6, and to labor, or *avail*, is also 6. Similarly, the *avail* held *between* rent and yield totals 8, and the same is true of the *principal*, as they both run at 50%. If the worker is privileged, giving them half (.5) of their labor's *aggregate* productivity (or *avail*) between the two (8), that half, 4 ($8 \div 2$), is profit, and the rest, 4, is wages. If they also have privileged use of capital, giving them half (.5) of their capital's productivity (8), the amount due to the privilege, 4 ($8 \div 2$), is interest, and the rest, 6, is principal. Just as wages may be base or endowed, principal and interest may be standard and augmented.

THE LAW OF RELATION

WHILE SORTING THROUGH THIS ISSUE, I couldn't help but notice a deeper law of relation shining through. This first became apparent when, organizing the ideas, the geometry throughout this paper was expressed to me through intuition alone. To my view, there is something below the surface, something much more metaphysical, dialectical. Indeed, wages and profits are theses and antitheses, sublated into the higher synthesis of *avail* (or *principal*), which is further the antithesis of *principal*, sublated into *yield* (or *rent*), which is antithetical to *rent*, finally to be sublated into the economic Godhead, *wealth*. As Professor M.A. Clancy notes in an introduction to Stephen Pearl Andrews' book, *The Basic Outline of Universology*,

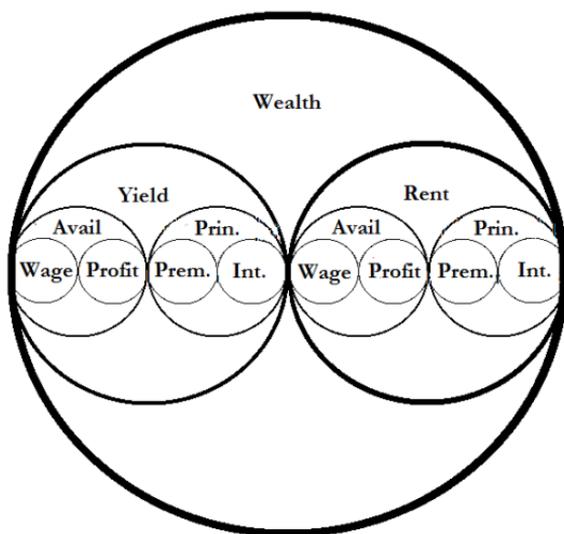
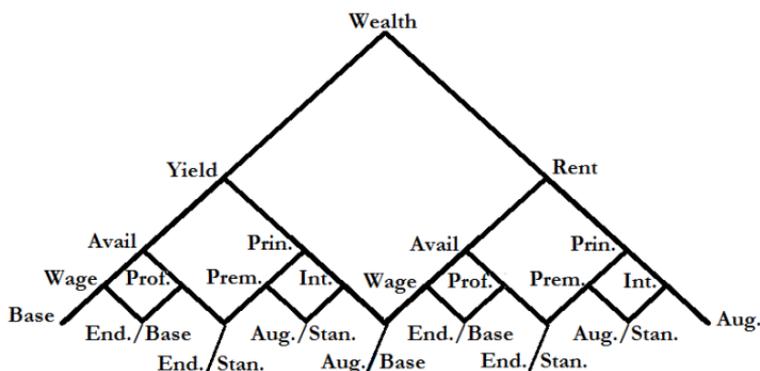
The essence of all Law is Relation,
and the essence of Relation— in the largest
and most comprehensive statement— is

comprised in Likeness and Difference, or
Unity and Variety.

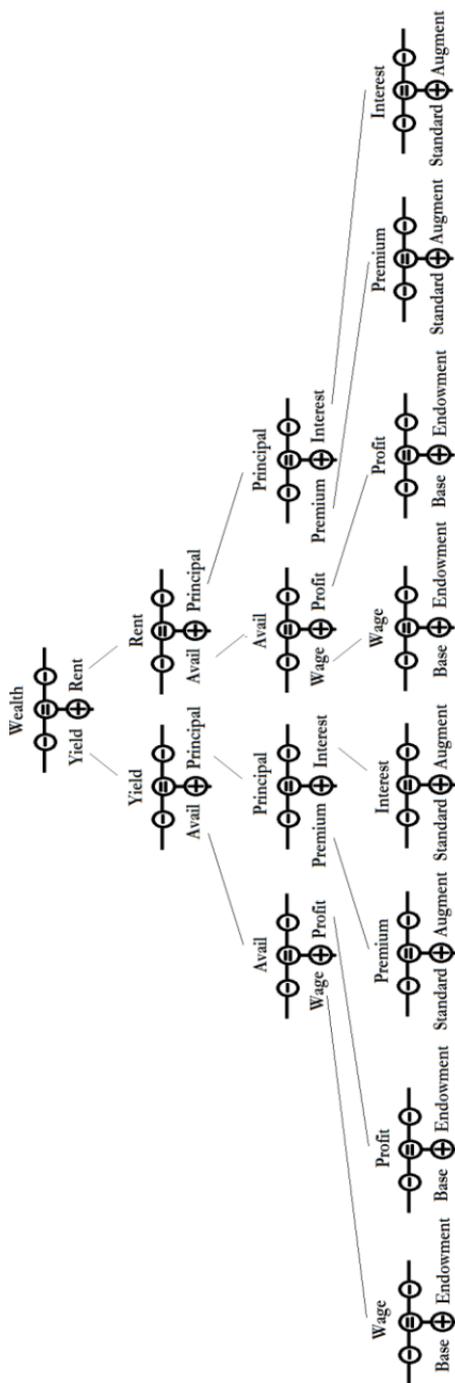
[...]

An illustration of the idea here intended to be conveyed is found in contrasting two branches of the Mathematics—Arithmetic and Algebra. In Arithmetic we deal with Number principally, although Relation is necessarily involved to a minor extent; but as our attention is mainly directed toward numbers, and the quantities represented by them, we do not attend, in our thought, to the Abstract relations existing among them. In Algebra, however, Number drops out of sight, and our task is, pre-eminently, with Relation. From a relatively concrete realm, peopled by ideal *entities*, we pass to an abstract one, where the subject of consideration is, not the entities themselves, but that which intervenes between them—the *Betweenity* of the things. This Betweenity, or Relation, is actually brought into such prominence in Algebra, and such consideration is bestowed upon it, that its characteristics are explored, analyzed, and named—and named in very simple yet expressive terms. Here for the first time in the history of Science the Law of Relations is formulized in any definite and exact way. In the +, -, and = of Algebra we have the representatives of that Aspect of Universal Law applicable to the subject of this particular Science; and as we see that they suffice for all operations in this special department, we may infer, so soon as Analogy is rendered probable, that this is but a single example of a Universal Law, destined to be wrought out

and formulized in all other domains. Such a Law does exist, and is discovered. The most abstract and inclusive statement of that law which can be made, echoing in exactitude to the *plus, minus, and equation* of Algebra, is found in the fundamental terminology of Universology—Unism, Duism, and Trinism.³⁶



Interest & Premium: A Geo-Mutualist Synthesis



A GEO-MUTUALIST RESOLUTION

I HAVE REVEALED the difficulties in communication between mutualists and Georgists, and have demonstrated the deeper compatibility between them. A great deal of the current incompatibility is simply in language-reference to economic returns. Where a mutualist will use language such as *interest*, *profit*, and *rent* to refer to privileged returns, a Georgist makes no distinction in their language between privileged and fair returns on capital and labor, but refer to them both simply as *interest* and *wages* (sometimes referred to as being “spurious” forms of these). If one looks at the diagram with the circles, this relationship can be seen in this way: When a mutualist refers to *interest*, they are referring to the circle that says *Interest* in the diagram, but the Georgist is referring to the circle called *Principal*, in which I am including the mutualist version of interest, as well as the Georgist version of fair, unprivileged “interest,” which I am calling *premium*. *Profit*, to the Georgist, is any unexpected return, but to the mutualist, it is a return from holding legal privilege.

The issue of land should be resolved by geo-communal claims of land as practice of occupancy-and-use. The danger of rent can be solved without the state, as the internalization of land-protection costs would force land to an equilibrium level. Currently, the costs of protection, which are provided by the state through taxation, are handed down in the rent and interest that the landlord charges their tenants, the bankers their debtors, thereby displacing the cost of property protection onto those who have no property at all. The only reason it is possible to charge those *without* property the fee for protecting the privilege of those *with* is because the state provides a monopoly on title-creation, and if anyone challenges that monopoly alone or in small numbers they will face the consequences.

The state is the absolute representative of coercive, unilateral, force. Without the state, those who take up large portions, or productive parts, of land would have to pay for that land to be protected from squatters who may try to homestead it. Without the externalization of costs of land protection on to tenants, landlords would be restricted to the amount of land they

paid to protect. The least expensive option would be joining a geo-community, and thereby paying the would-be squatters, and less-productive types, in rent-dividends, so they take up less productive land. This incentivizes both parties to respect the most productive use of land, being its use by the worker holding comparative advantage there, without involving the costs of conflict. Occupancy-and-use can therefore be given a practical title application.

Geo-communities of such a nature would be voluntary (at least, not “artificially-” or state-induced, but certainly induced by natural circumstances), and as such would reflect the desires of their participants, most likely being consensus-driven in nature, with a strong regard for practices of subsidiarity. Proprietorship would most likely take the form of mutual ownership and confederation.

Free banking would bring the price of money to its cost. Interest on capital-based (land + labor = capital) money, and profit on labor-based, debt credit, would be reduced to absolute zero in the new model, and premiums would consistently be reduced to zero as the market absorbed the methods of returns. No longer would people be content with the lack of transparency, humanity, and honesty of single- or corporate-proprietorship banks today, but would opt instead for mutual banks, or free credit unions. Free confederations of user-owned banks would print money tradable on various scales of the world, and interest would be non-existent. Demurrage, however, would likely be common practice.

When banks lend out money (100%) at interest (10%), without the money to pay back interest (110%), it means some of the debtors will inevitably fail, and, if they are held liable, become debt-slaves their whole lives, as there is simply not enough money to pay back the principal plus interest. Thomas H. Greco, Jr. remarks,

Debtors are always required to pay interest on these loans. Thus, the commercial banks lend something that they create out of nothing and then require that the “borrower” pay interest for the privilege. Further, such

bank loans are usually secured, that is, the banks usually require that the borrower pledge some “collateral,” which they will confiscate if the borrower fails to repay the loan. Interest-bearing debts grow simply with the passage of time, but the supply of money with which to repay those loans, plus interest, can be expanded only by the banks making additional loans. The principal amount is created at the time the loan is made, but the money to pay the interest due in subsequent periods has not yet been created. Thus debtors, as a group, are in an impossible situation of always owing more money than there is in existence. They are forced to compete with one another for scarce money, in a futile attempt to avoid defaulting on their debts. Like the game of musical chairs, the system requires that some must eventually fail. Those borrowers who default on their loans, of course, end up losing their collateral.³⁷

He says,

Thus, the charging of interest on the bank “loans” on which new money is based causes a deficiency of money in circulation, eventually preventing some debtors from earning back enough to redeem their collateral. Thus, the prevailing system guarantees that there will be a steady parade of losers. This is the fundamental flaw in the present money system.³⁸

With the abolition of interest on credit, most profits are also eliminated, as most profits are derived by winning the credit game. Any other profits will be eliminated with the abolition of state-interference with commerce, such as zoning laws, licensing, subsidies, patents, and such other privileges I may be missing.

Without the state, taxes will no longer be collected, but any of the beneficial programs which the state operated can be preserved by institutions operating in the free market, including cooperatives, friendly societies, mutuals, churches, and their confederations, which may oftentimes exist on scales larger, but others much smaller, than governments exist on today. All services from health care, transportation, communication, etc. can be provided by voluntary organizations, without need for taxation, under a premise of dues-based membership or payment for services rendered. Most can be funded by economic rent.

Mutual banks will offer credit services, without interest, to allow for all to own their means, and access to the services described above, making the market fair. They may incorporate all kinds of voluntary service programs, such as those for job-allocation; afterall, the father of vocational guidance, Frank Parsons, is also the author of *The Philosophy of Mutualism*. By providing such services—offering statistics about various markets to their policy-holders—bank programs will be able to guide them to markets in which they will be productive and make a good living. If they become unhappy in those markets, they must simply pay back the loan and sell the capital they have purchased (if it wasn't already sold to pay back the loan), and use the money to enter a new market. One may even be able to receive an additional, potentially graduated, loan, backed by good credit.

GEO-MUTUAL BANK AS PANARCHY

BANKING IS SIMPLY the business of title-writing. I see no reason that the mutual bank and the geo-community, involved in the similar business of title- and lease-writing, but in regard to different factors of production, cannot be the same entity. So long as decisions are being made from the bottom-up, by some sort of formal consensus (and the outcome of such consensus, which may include delegating smaller decisions, setting up committees, etc.), a *unilateral* monopoly is avoided.

I have no intentions to suggest that natural monopolies are completely avoidable. They likely are not. Instead, all that can be asked for is the establishment of a *bi-* or *multilateral* monopoly. Such

a relationship is arguably different from a state, because in such a situation *everyone* holds the monopoly on law. This cannot be established from the top down, as such a relationship involves promises—contracts—rather than commands. On such scales one must take influence from the schools of libertarian communism, which offer not a resolution to monopoly itself, but a resolution to its management. The importance of democratic procedures and shared ownership are not to be underestimated here. If a confederation of geo-mutual banks were to establish itself as a monopoly, such would not be the same as a unilateral hierarchy, but would instead be a multilateral panarchy. While the geo-mutual bank may be a sort of central organization, it is a central organization with the purpose, largely, of decentralizing; that is, of writing titles to individuals on behalf of the collective. There is a dispersal of rights-granting power. Within the larger, multilateral and participatory, but more rigid, monocentric law of the bank itself, there is a polycentric law, which is always innovating, flexible, and free of intrusion from the larger system, with which it is cooperating; a sort of *heno-centric* law, if I may coin the phrase. So long as its decision-making processes are participatory in nature, and between those decision-making processes elected officials are held in check by recall, it will naturally reflect the needs of society. Liberty, equity, and biodiversity of all life and its choices will be reflected in the geo-mutualist economy.

Another school of thought, not yet mentioned, also offers an approach outside of, and within, both capitalism and socialism, complimentary to an economy so desired by the geo-mutualist. This is the school of *distributism*, which offers the important libertarian organizing principle of *subsidiarity*, which says that decisions should be made by the lowest level capable of doing so. This principle should be recognized in all geo-mutualist confederations, as such sphere-sovereignty is an essential element of panarchy. This comes naturally to geo-mutualism.

The effects of geo-mutualism will inevitably be the end of privileged returns, which are granted through unilateral protection by the state. This will lead to a flourishing society, which is generally free of crime, poverty, idle confusion, neurosis, and a

number of other psychological and social reactions to statism. Poverty creates social illness.

Without the state, crime would nearly disappear, mental illnesses would not be manufactured by culture, people—while having more—would have the means of altruism and fraternity, innovation and general application would no longer be damped by illegitimate laws, spirituality would rise in importance (in accordance with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs), displaced anger (like racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc.) would subside, economies and technologies would no longer destroy but promote ecological sustainability, productivity would rise with general happiness, work and play would find their synthesis, education—no longer compulsory—would become an adventure (the final frontier is not the exterior world around us, but the internal world of thought), and money—having done its job of facilitating human innovation and fabrication—may be found to be ultimately obsolete, as transaction costs rise above costs of production.

Getting there involves a lot of work. Even more difficult is that it involves a lot of work from a lot of people, who can only make decisions based on their own experiences, and who constantly want to contradict one another. Any successful plan of action will no-doubt necessitate the synthesis of ideas. Perhaps a new synthesist platform is in order, but such a platform should not be drafted by an individual, top-down, before decisions are to be made upon an issue, but instead should be voted into place by an organization, as means of revolutionary strategy.

All of the weapons in the anarchist and libertarian arsenals should be utilized, including squatting, tenant and worker syndicalism, alternative currencies, counter-economics, tax-evasion, legal dual-power, and more. Each of these strategies are relevant, but only in regard to specific problems. In those areas where the unilateralization of natural monopolies are the nuisance, association is the best answer to the problem, while those markets with ideal firm sizes at competitive levels are best outcompeted by smaller firms. There is also the issue of class. The only revolutionary thing a member of the ruling class can do is give up their privilege. Workers, tenants, and other such tribute-paying classes would do best to form unions. Poor entrepreneurs, without large capital to

put down, may find success in the gray market, while middle-class anarchists may use their efforts to create legal cooperatives and other institutions of dual-power. Human-scaled technology and self-sufficiency movements also offer a method of secession.

CONCLUSION

BOTH THE MUTUALISTS AND THE GEORGISTS would do well to recognize their common position as libertarian populists, and forgo any semantic debates of terminology from the past. Instead they should combine their interests, as both are concerned with the method of title-distribution, one in the area of land and the other in the area of credit (both labor and capital based). Geo-mutualism could represent the most realistic and successful form of panarchy.

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²¹ Clarence Lee Swartz, 62.

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On Mutualism & Interest on Capital

MUCH OF THE CONFLICT between mutualism and other schools of economics seems to be based on terminology. Mutualists lack the terminology to properly separate returns from land, capital, and labor, while Georgists, and others, divide them classically into rent, interest, and wages. Georgists, and others, lack the language necessary to describe returns on these factors due purely to privilege, while mutualists describe these usurious returns as *rent*, *interest*, and *profit*. Naturally, this brings us to conflict.

One reason the mutualists lack terminology to divide the fair and unfair returns on the three factors of production may be because of their belief that competitive markets (or, as I argue, bilateral monopolies) push prices to costs. Because they oppose patent-restrictions, land monopoly, and other privileges, they believe that, fairly quickly, in a free market, positive innovations will be assimilated into the industries which benefit from them, driving down interest to a cost of acquisition that is very small in comparison to today's markets (transition costs associated to new technologies, of course, could be facilitated with mutual credit). Francis Tandy, mutualist, and author of *Voluntary Socialism*, clarifies in this lengthy quote:

If an article suddenly acquires an increased utility, people will be willing to give articles which embody a great amount of labor in order to obtain the more useful article. So the producers of that article, will be able to reap a greater reward for their labor than the other members of the community. This immediately causes a number of the producers of other commodities to leave their old occupations and engage in the one which promises higher remuneration. Thus the supply is increased to meet the demand, until the equilibrium is once more established. So

likewise the converse holds good. If for any reason the demand for any commodity decreases, the wages of the producers of that commodity fall, and many of them will seek more lucrative positions. Thus an increase in the demand is met by an increase of the supply, and a decrease in the demand by a decrease of the supply. So while exchange-values fluctuate considerably, they always tend to remain at the cost of acquisition. The operation of this law is often hindered by such artificial restrictions as trusts, etc., which, by limiting the supply, increase the margin of utility and consequently the price.

But of what does this cost of acquisition consist? If labor were the only factor in production, no one would be able to obtain anything which he did not produce, unless he exchanged it for some article which embodied an equal amount of labor, or received it as a free gift. But there are other factors which must be taken into account. In the first place, it is necessary to apply labor to land. If this land is monopolized, the holders of it can demand a very great portion of the product of the labor applied to it. Under a form of complete monopoly, the only limit to this tribute is the portion which the laborer finds absolutely necessary to the maintenance of life. That it does not reach this point at present, is due to the vast areas of unoccupied land in various parts of the world.

In order to produce anything except the very simplest forms of wealth, money is required to effect the necessary exchange of labor. If a man has a labor-saving machine which increases the productiveness of the community ten-fold, and no one else can

obtain that machine, or any substitute for it, without the consent of that man, he will be able to rent it for at least nine times the former average productiveness of labor. By these means the producer will receive twice as much return for his labor as before, but the owner of the machine will receive more than four times as much as the producer. As money is the greatest of all labor-saving machines, for it is representative of all forms of capital, those who are able to monopolize money are able to reap the lion's share of all the advantages of civilization.

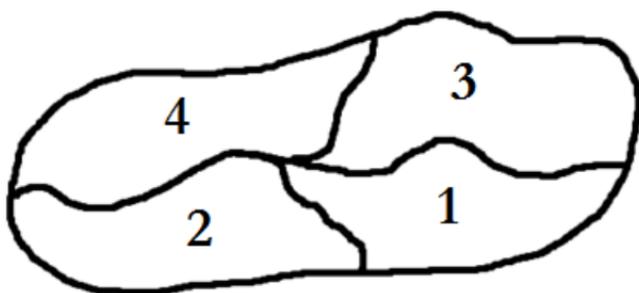
Thus the twin monopolies of land and money, by means of their tribute, rent and interest, prevent an equal exchange of the products of labor. Under free conditions A, the shoemaker, would exchange a pair of shoes for a coat made by B, the tailor. When rent and interest exist, A has to pay three pairs of shoes for a coat, and B pays three coats for a pair of shoes, while the capitalist and the landlord each have a pair of shoes and a coat.

In addition to rent and interest, profit and taxes must also be added to the actual amount of labor embodied in the commodity – which is known as the cost, or labor value, – before the cost of acquisition is fully accounted for.

By profit is usually meant, the difference between the price which a merchant pays for goods, and the price at which he sells them. But this is not a sufficiently accurate definition for economic purposes. Such profit is composed largely of rent, interest, taxes, wages and the necessary expenses of business. Economically speaking, profit is that which is left between the cost and

the price, after the factors above mentioned have been deducted. Much of this is often due to some special privilege, such as the existence of a protective tariff, patent, copyright, or other similar form of monopoly. But it depends principally upon the existence of rent and interest. With the elimination of these various factors, the cost of acquisition will depend solely upon the labor value. Free competition will then force the price down to the actual labor value, making cost and price equal.¹

If what Tandy, and the rest in the mutualist tradition, is continually saying is true, wages and a temporary premium remain the only fair return, because, in a free economy, wages are all that can exist for long. For example, say the four pieces of land below, with their respective productive ratings, are claimed by individuals exerting average labor.



On this land, the rent and wages look like this with average labor:

Party		A	B	C	D
Total Production		4	3	2	1
Wages	-	1	1	1	1
Rent	=	3	2	1	0

On Mutualism & Interest on Capital

Where workers use the same intensity of labor but get different returns from different land, wages fluctuate with the margin of production and are not a reflection purely of the labor exerted.ⁱ For instance, if one worker were to leave, the margin of production would shift, making wages equal to 2 instead of 1. This also changes the rent:

Party		A	B	C	D
Total Production		4	3	2	0
Wages	-	2	2	2	0
Rent	=	2	1	0	0

It can be seen that the rent of land is measured against the margin of production, and when there is no margin of production relative to others, there is no rent. If there was only one occupant, only wages would exist, with the same amount of production.

Party		A	B	C	D
Total Production		4	0	0	0
Wages	-	4	0	0	0
Rent	=	0	0	0	0

The rent here does not exist, even though, in the slide provided before, the same wealth is present, but is divided into wages and rent, due to the newcomers. This is because rent is the difference between returns on land. If there are no differences in those returns, and all of the land produces the same number of units when using the same intensity of labor, there can be said to be zero rent, even when there are more people present. It is only the difference between returns on land that creates rent. Likewise, it is the difference between returns on capital that creates interest

ⁱ It is interesting to note here that Georgists, while recognizing rent on land and interest on capital, do not have a word for a return on labor that is due to a higher grade. Profit, to George, was merely an “unexpected return.”

or premium, and, if capital were freed from state-privilege, interest would cease to exist entirely.

Some may point to the amount of time, preceding economic assimilation, when an entrepreneur will make an increase due to innovation, and will say that, at the very least, this must be interest. I, and most other mutualists, will likely admit this temporary disequilibrium as some form of Ricardian interest or profit, but this is only necessary so long as we are restricted to only using wages, interest, and rent as descriptions of economic returns in their classical senses. Sticking rigidly to classical categories may prove inefficient at this point, however; definitions of words become hazy when *interest* refers simultaneously to “returns on capital” and “returns on privileged capital.” It is time to be more specific.

Obviously, in the innovative use of new capital, returns will be made that aren't due to state-protection, but nonetheless may offer product-pricing that drifts away from, or punctuates, equilibrium. Mutualists in the past have confused people, by allowing for such times of innovative disequilibrium, and small amounts of banking interest, by suggesting “minimal interest” or “interest at cost,” while at other times suggesting in a more general sense that interest is to be avoided “at all costs.” It is no longer necessary to cause confusion, so long as factors and returns are divided according to the method expressed in “Interest and Premium.” In such a model, clearly making distinctions, interest, given by state-privilege, never exists without aggression, but premium, the result of innovation and skill, exists only until these are learned by others. If this model is not used, any mutualist contempt for interest and profit must not be a hard one, as they will always have to admit the justice in small amounts of interest, and can then not be said to thoroughly support the abolition of interest and rent. The model in “Interest and Premium” offers hard distinctions between privileged and fair returns.

Although land values cannot easily reach physical equilibrium, to completely eliminate economic rent (making all land produce the same number of units), this is not so of capital. Competitive and inexpensive capital (the tools of production) can easily be manufactured according to demand and allocated through

the market, making the (non-spuriousⁱⁱ) “interest” the same, and thus, nonexistent.ⁱⁱⁱ

Say, for sake of illustration, that on the three plots above, the worker on the best land, among two other participants, gets a tool, which increases productivity by twice as much. The worker now has 8 units total wealth, 4 of which are wages, 4 of which are premium, evenly sourced between yield and rent.^{iv}

	Potential			Potential			Total			Total			Total	
A	Rent	2	x	Wages	1	=	Rent	2	or	Wages	4	or	Wealth	8
	Yield	2			Yield		2	Yield			2			
	Rent	2		Prem.	1		Rent	2		Prem.	4			
	Yield	2			Yield		2							

	Potential			Potential			Total			Total			Total	
A	Rent	2	x	Wages	1	=	Wages	2	or	Rent	4	or	Wealth	8
		Prem.		1	Prem.		2							
	Yield	2		Wages	1		Wages	2		Yield	4			
				Prem.	1		Prem.	2						

ⁱⁱ That is, increased from rent: Say a piece of machinery adds x2 productivity, it will multiply the rent as well as the wages. Spurious returns are returns resulting from rent.

ⁱⁱⁱ Natural monopolies, however, are discussed in my other articles. They should be held in common. For now, I will say that I encourage bilateral control of natural monopolies, as in mutual ownership, with surpluses, due to its monopolization, paid as dividends to its membership. Also, a transition to such a society would be easier without state-interference, and protection by way of legislation (like Taft-Hartley) that keep monopolies from being bilateralized. See: “Revolutionary Incrementalism and Rebellions of Scale.”

^{iv} See: “Interest and Premium” for more definition on these terms.

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The potentials in this equation are divided between the rent and yield, and further between wages and premium. The potential rent is equal to the (classical economic) rent in the previous table. The potential yield is equal to the (classical economic) wages in the same table. These land-potentials are then individually multiplied by the potential wages, which are equal to the amount of labor exhausted (in this case, it is average labor, so we leave it as a factor of 1; if the worker was twice as productive they would be given a factor of 2), and then by the potential premium, which we have decided results in a doubling of production in the case of this worker, which merely gives them a second line, mirroring the value of the other. The other workers, B and C, would have the same equations with the numbers for potential rent changed accordingly, and an absence of premium altogether.

The shift in production, due to the new equipment, changes the margin of production of the average worker, of course. If we multiply the average marginal-land productivity of the worker (2) times 2 (premium), giving us 4 ($2 \times 2 = 4$), and then add this number to the productivity of the two other workers on the same land ($4 + 2 + 2 = 8$), and divide this number by 3 (the number of participants), we get our new rate of marginal land production while using average labor, which is 2.6667, or $2 \frac{2}{3}$; an increase to 133% of the marginal worker's production who have no access to capital. If all of the workers were using average labor, with no capital, and with yield determined by average productivity ($2 \frac{2}{3}$), it would look like this:

Party		A	B	C	D
Total Production		$5 \frac{1}{3}$	4	$2 \frac{2}{3}$	0
Average Yield	-	$2 \frac{2}{3}$	$2 \frac{2}{3}$	$2 \frac{2}{3}$	0
Rent	=	$2 \frac{2}{3}$	$1 \frac{1}{3}$	0	0

However, when using real labor, the marginal worker does not produce as much on a marginal piece of land as an average worker. This leaves them making a negative "rent"² (if the yield is determined by the average), which translates as an unmet yield of $2/3$ (according to the average):

On Mutualism & Interest on Capital

Party		A	B	C	D
Actual Production		8	3	2	0
Average Yield	-	$2\frac{2}{3}$	$2\frac{2}{3}$	$2\frac{2}{3}$	0
“Rent”	=	$5\frac{1}{3}$	$1\frac{1}{3}$	$-2\frac{2}{3}$	0

If using only real production, and when premium (2) is added into the yield of A, the actual rent can be determined.

Party		A	B	C	D
Total Production		8	3	2	0
Yield	-	4	2	2	0
Rent	=	4	1	0	0

The other workers see the productivity due to the capital, and, if unrestricted by patents and the like, copy use of the tool, either by purchasing or creating their own. This gives them the same capital advantage, similar to what Tandy suggested earlier. Now, the wealth looks like 8, 6, and 4, and each worker has gained premium, doubling their production (in this example, but it can fluctuate even with the same capital). Of course, the margins have shifted again. ($4 + 4 + 4 = 12$. $12 \div 3 = 4$).

Party		A	B	C	D
Total Production		8	6	4	0
Yield	-	4	4	4	0
Rent	=	4	2	0	0

The worker with 8 has 4 yield (2 wages and 2 premium) and has 4 rent. The worker that now has 6 has the same yield, and 2 rent. The marginal land’s worker receives a similar yield with no rent. All that is left now is for the community to charge for the rent.

With proper allocation of credit and community compensation for the exclusion of rentable land, along with the end of other state-given privileges, anything that could be considered “interest” (and which I call *premium*), even by Georgist

standards, drops considerably, and should be contrasted with interest which is due to monopoly-privilege. So long as geo-anarchists and mutualists work toward the same root goals—ending state-privilege—any qualms they have will hopefully be minor and semantic in nature. Still, it would be beneficial for both schools to break down returns into further categories, in order to be more scientific. This would allow Georgists the language to describe privileged returns (rather than simply being called *spurious*), as well as returns on above-marginal labor, and would allow mutualists to stick to a hard definition of usurious returns (*interest, rent, profit*), and the language to distinguish between fair and unfair returns.

REFERENCES

¹ Francis Dashwood Tandy, 82.

² This is classical economic rent as measured by the Henry George Institute on their online seminar, which can be found at:
<http://www.henrygeorge.org/annahatta/manh14c.html>.

Cost, Aggression, and Access to the Land

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS ESSAY, I intend on demonstrating the complementarity between the cost-principle (as used by mutualists), rent-sharing (as displayed by the Georgists), and the principle of non-aggression (as used by the voluntaryists). I will also demonstrate why geo-mutualism is a better way to distribute land than by balancing its use either by individualizing or collectivizing it, as done in the extremes of capitalism and communism. I hope this essay to demonstrate the efficiency, both ethical and practical, of geo-mutualism, and its relatability to the non-aggression and cost-principles.

THE COST-PRINCIPLE

IN “THE MUTUALIST COST-PRINCIPLE,” I outline the dynamic of mutualist economics, which follows the maxim, “cost-the-limit-of-price.” According to this view, any price above or below the cost of manufacture is discouraged, including all forms of taxes, interest, profit, and rent. Wages, salaries, and other labor-based incomes, however, are celebrated.

To the mutualist, cost is not only a matter of political-economy, a measure of proper prices, but is also an ethical concern. To impose costs on another person, without their willing agreement according to mutual exchange, is to act violently, extortively, toward them. After all, mutualists define *costs* as anything disagreeable to one’s body or rightly-earned property, and, therefore, see the inflicting of costs upon another person as agreeable only under the condition of voluntary exchange, where costs are being traded for mutual benefit (like in a sale).

Within the context of voluntary exchange, one takes a cost upon oneself for another’s sake in order to reduce their own overall costs. The reason for this is best understood through principles such as *comparative advantage* and *economies of scale*, whereby

division of labor and team-efforts can reduce costs in general. Let's look at it this way, using comparative advantage:

Say two friends are cooperating in the cooking of a meal; we'll call these friends *Emma* and *Alexander*. Say Emma has had nothing but bad experiences in her time in the kitchen cutting vegetables (say she cut the tip of her thumb off), but she loves to bake. Alexander, let's say, likes to bake as well, but is a superb food handler, and doesn't mind doing the job at all. Who should do what job and why?

It should be quite clear that Alexander should be doing the vegetable slicing, and Emma should be making the pie crust; together they will make a delicious pot-pie. Why should each do their specified tasks? Because they are the tasks each hate the least, and which they are best at.

Let's look at it economically: By taking the job of making the crust, Emma reduces Alexander's *opportunity* costs, and frees him to cut more vegetables, the thing he is best at. By cutting the vegetables, Alexander does not only reduce Emma's *opportunity* costs, by freeing her to bake more crusts, but he also reduces her *direct* costs, because Emma *hates* cutting vegetables (Alexander, we'll say, is neutral). So, what happens when Emma bakes the crusts and Alexander cuts the vegetables? Costs are reduced for both parties. They are *directly* reduced for Emma, because she hates cutting vegetables, but there is also a reduction in *opportunity* costs for both parties, and, due to this comparative advantage, if they specialize according to their preferences and rates of productivity, more can be made.

How their product is divided should reflect the values of each party, and will tend toward a balance of costs, direct and opportunity-based. They can exchange their products loosely by way of exchange, with one of them keeping the final result; they can cooperate in association to produce the pie, and then receive their own portion of the whole to market themselves as independent agents; or they can cooperate in the marketing process as well, and split the final rewards. Their level of association, and method of splitting the income—whether it be by exchange or by dividend— will be determined by their willingness to cooperate, and the value, or lack thereof, for one another's abilities.

When individuals are left to make their own decisions they are most likely to make decisions they believe will be beneficial (either in the long- or the short-term). The economic position of the completely *rational agent*, however, must be better defined; behavioral economists have levied many fair shots at this model of economic life. While their understanding of neither the cause, nor solution of the issue, is without flaw, their approach and analysis of the issue, as it stands, is quite valid. Where they fall short, and their view becomes unsound, is when missing the distortion in the market which is caused by money carrying a price (interest).ⁱ

While behavioral economists certainly understand the positive effects of socialization in regard to the distribution of information, their answer of compulsive association to the state falls short of a real solution, by creating all-new problems related to compulsive authority and forced combinations. Socialization, being around people, can certainly allow one access to more information, and, thus, the ability to make better decisions, but, when one is forced into a political unit, costs are driven up, because decisions begin to be taken from the realm of individual choice and placed in the hands of the political body, which is interested in the well-being of the collective or its mandate, and, many times, at the expense of the individual. While socialization can reduce costs for the individual, this remains so especially in regard to voluntary associations, where one is not coerced into membership, but subscribes freely *because* it reduces their costs.

Behavioralists are oftentimes guilty of restricting themselves to studying the effects of the current money supply,

i For more, please see “Mutual Credit: Its Function and Purpose” for a discussion of money directly, or, on the social effects of market distortion— the effects of prices held above or below cost (an effect of the money supply carrying a price above cost)—, see “Gnosis, Psychosis, and the Society of the Demiurge,” “Information and the Dissolution of Authority,” or “Mutualist Sex Economics.”

and thereby ignoring the market for community that already exists with an unmet demand, easily fulfilled by a proper system of currency. As of now, this demand is virtually unmet, or is at least greatly discouraged, because the credit supply has distorted the natural solidarity of interests, and made humanity so unequal as to have differing class relations, leaving most without surplus, and others in continual competition to control the surplus, or anything at all for that matter. Proudhon clarifies our economic condition when he famously illustrates,

The purchaser draws boundaries, fences himself in, and says, "This is mine; each one by himself, each one for himself." Here, then, is a piece of land upon which, henceforth, no one has right to step, save the proprietor and his friends; which can benefit nobody, save the proprietor and his servants. Let these multiply, and soon the people [...] will have nowhere to rest, no place of shelter, no ground to till. They will die of hunger at the proprietor's door, on the edge of that property which was their birth-right; and the proprietor, watching them die, will exclaim, "So perish idlers and vagrants."¹

The class division we suffer occurs within the framework of a particular monetary system that the few find beneficial at the expense of the many, allowing some to become landlords, capitalists, and creditors, while others must remain tenants, workers, and debtors for the rest of their lives. With so many elements of class division already in place, fraternity finds fruition hard indeed. Where it does exist, it exists for those who share class interests, and, because some classes have more leisure and resources than others, this usually entails organizations of the rich working on their own behalf, while workers remain largely divided, socializing only informally and, thus, in economic docility. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule.

Unions, credit unions, mutual insurance programs, cooperatives, building societies, community land trusts, working-class churches, and more, stand as examples of lower and middle class democracy. These groups all exist within the context of the supply and demand for such organizations. When one joins such groups, however, and pays their dues or voluntary tithe, one buys into a particular culture, which eventually informs their desires. Individuals will tend to belong to those groups they feel they derive the most benefit from, which inform them most, and enable them to make good decisions and acquire a higher standard of living.

Subcultures within societies can be seen as “information packets.” With each subculture, one receives a different “set” of information. Some will argue that subcultures in themselves cannot provide all necessary information, and this is certainly true, but while the statist will argue for one grand book, as an anarchist, I, instead, support a reading of as many perspectives as possible, and adherence to an analysis of one’s own. Still, one cannot read a whole library, and often our choice of reading relies on a simple cover and perhaps a preface. Should we instead be forced to read from *The Bible*, or an equivalent, alone? In my opinion we should read more deeply the books which we find personally intriguing upon shallow investigation, only to remain open to the opinions of those who have done the same with the others.

There is no need for compulsion to solve the issue of disinformation. People naturally levitate toward the solution. They ask friends for suggestions, experiences, or ideas; there is no need for pointing guns. If a person does not ask for help, it is because they don’t trust the source, or they feel qualified enough to decide for themselves. These, like all human behaviors, are strategies to reduce costs. Helping another person, extending them credit, is most often times the surest way to reduce costs for oneself in the future, so people are likely to make use of this fact, and this is especially true if relational value plays a role.

THE NON-AGGRESSION PRINCIPLE

IN MODERN LIBERTARIAN THEORY, the standard approach to ethics is a position known as *non-aggression*. While the cost-principle tends to describe infringement of rights in terms of taxes, interest, rent, and profit, the non-aggression principle tends to describe them in terms of *theft, vandalism, assault, and fraud*.

According to the non-aggression view, violence is only excusable in acts of defense, but is never excusable when initiated. This position is different from pacifism, which even holds self-defense as a form of illegitimate violence, as well as complete narcissism, which would allow for the initiation of force. According to the principle of non-aggression, violence is discouraged, but not fundamentally so. Violence as cause of more violence—its initiation—is discouraged, but violence as defense is celebrated (to the degree it does not exceed the degree of violence, or its threat, imposed). Of course, without the initiation of violence on anyone's behalf, society is as good as pacifist, because there is no need for retaliation. This is the ideal of non-aggression.

This principle is pretty no-brainer; it's not okay to initiate violence, but if it is initiated on you it's okay to fight back. Still, there is some dispute about its legitimacy among radicals on the left. Particularly, there is dispute when it comes to the issue of property and one's sovereignty over it, and its being regarded as an extension of one's persons. Right-wing libertarians, like anarcho-capitalists, will argue for absolute and perpetual property rights, without regard to occupancy-and-use. Left-wing libertarians, such as anarcho-communists, will argue for the complete elimination of property rights. Somewhere in the middle of this dialectic, you will find the Georgists and the mutualists, who see the Earth as a common possession and labor as the possession of the individual. As Proudhon says, "The right to product is exclusive [...] the right to means is common."² No doubt, George would subscribe to a similar view!

Those who reject the principle of non-aggression do so because of its common usage by *vulgar* or *royal* libertarians (the first being a concept of Kevin Carson, and the second of Dan Sullivan), by whom it is used to protect privately-claimed property. Properly-

stated, however, the principle of non-aggression does not include protection on any and all kinds of property—some kinds of property are gained through aggression!—, but only that property which is *rightly*, or *fairly*, earned (not that property that was, say, stolen, or fraudulently gained). This is where I think the principle has potential for re-innovation and integration into a geo-mutualist framework.

My position is quite simple, actually. As stated earlier, I believe, along with Proudhon, that “the right to product is exclusive,” while “the right to means is common.” Likewise, I believe also in his reasoning as to why the right to property is common, and has no business being claimed exclusively by anyone.

Who is entitled to the rent of the land? The producer of the land, no doubt. But who made the land? God. Therefore, proprietor, retire.

He says,

But the creator of the land does not sell it, he gives it; and in giving it, he is no respecter of persons. Why, then, are some of his children regarded as legitimate and others as bastards?²³

The problem with such positions as vulgar and royal libertarianism promote—like perpetual rights to property—is that they are inherently conservative, meant to protect the status quo. These positions are inherently based in positive economics, and ignore normative economics altogether.ⁱⁱ If we look to past property rights as the only possible vision for property relations,

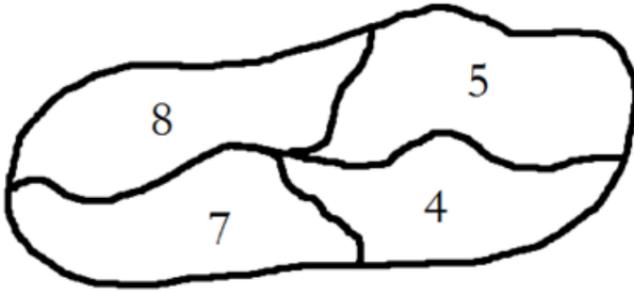
ⁱⁱ I won't get into it here, but in many of my other essays I discuss the limits of objective science, positivism, empiricism, and more; I encourage you to look into these articles as they are pertinent to the discussion.

simply because that is what has established itself in the past, then we are restricting ourselves from expressing our true economic potential and attaining our collective goals. Having such a narrow vision of property leaves one only two options: eliminate property (the position of communism), or celebrate property (the position of capitalism). These are no options, as they treat the whole economy as a single unit, a single part, without complex components; or as atomized individuals, lacking in joint venture. This is not so, the economy has many factors. Instead, Georgists and mutualists look to another way to express property relations. The mutualists oftentimes go as far as to refer to their position of ownership as being in favor of *possession*, rather than *property* (as expressed by Proudhon at times). With common ownership of the Earth put into context of non-aggression the question of “rightly” or “fairly”-earned property is given meaning outside of the vulgar or royal libertarian context, which is used to protect property rights as-is.

The Earth was not created by mankind. This is the strongest argument in favor of common ownership of resources. Perpetual ownership, on the other hand, as supported by most capitalists, does not allocate resources effectively, or according to cost. It contradicts the notion of the cost-principle. The right of claimancy properly belongs to the bearer of costs— pottery to artists, tables to carpenters— until such time they wish to exchange their products with others. As no one toiled to create the Earth (or anything, for that matter, we merely manipulate what’s already there into new forms) or give it its form, it properly belongs to the whole of nature, as expressed by Proudhon earlier, when he exclaimed that God is the rightful claimant of the land.

Say there are four people who stumble upon a fertile valley, which is split into four sections naturally by a river and its offshoots. The land is rich in marketable plant material scarce to other areas, so they partake in comparative advantage and specialize in agricultural export; they are not associated, but, rather, are competitors. Each one of the claimants originally takes a particular quadrant of the valley, but then they begin to notice something: even though they have worked side-by-side in valleys together, with similar results, in *this* valley, there seem to be

quadrants that are better than others, and which allow their claimant an easier time producing. Naturally, jealousy arises, and, from that jealousy, action ensues. At what point is *aggression* asserted? When violence is used toward unfair outcomes.



Let's say the valley in question is pictured, with its respective ratios of productivity (we will use simple numbers). Remember, the claimants of the land assume ownership tacitly, it has not been granted mutually or expressly; it is currently under first-come/first-serve basis. It is only after spending some time in the area that the farmers notice the different grades in land (for sake of this example), but after they notice, the idea of simply splitting it according to its natural divides goes out the window. So what happens? Well, there are different possibilities. One such possibility is for the farmers with worse land to simply shift over and use the better land currently in use by the other farmers, until it evens out, ignoring the natural boundaries of the river in favor of constructed boundaries of the farmers. After all, there is no agreement protecting anyone's property at this point.

Of course, if the farmer with grade-four just starts shifting over onto the land with seven, there will be conflict. There is already conflict, though! There is conflict about the assumption that land can be used on a first-come/first-serve basis, and claimed perpetually from there on. To claim the land, rightfully belonging to all, is an act of aggression, an externalization of costs!

The non-aggression principle and the cost-principle can meet together in the following, simplified, fashion: Land is produced by God, nature, at no expense to mankind. People incur no costs in its production. Therefore, humanity has an equal claim

to the resources of nature, as a common inheritance. There is a joint claim. To hoard land, restricting others from equal value, is to infringe on their positive liberty, their claim to the commons, and, therefore, is also to impose costs on them and aggress on them.

Further dispute may be inevitable, but the escalation of conflict oftentimes leads to higher forms of agreement (to end conflict for its own sake is unhelpful, see “Government and Its ‘Solution’”), because, in conflict, both parties learn that the conflict itself is much more costly than agreement. Otherwise, in the case that there is a lack of contract, conflict will balance itself out. Without the state to externalize costs of land protection onto the landless, people will have to pay for the protection of their own land. As Jeremy Weiland points out, this may mean we should “Let the Free Market Eat the Rich.” Personally, I prefer the geomutualist approach, because it entails conflicts being sorted out verbally, before they occur, rather than relying purely on the balance of violence. Still, I cannot dictate people’s behavior, so it is not purely my choice. I believe it to be reason which dictates behavior, so my hope is only to appeal to reason. If this can be done, violent protection of property—even if non-invasive—becomes unnecessary.

LAND AND LABOR

IN “TWO INCENTIVES FOR COOPERATION” I distinguish two forms of *cooperation*: a) “cooperation,” with clear quotations around it, established by maintaining violent control, and b) true cooperation, without quotes, which is subject to common goals and reciprocity. If the second form of cooperation is our goal, there is no need for guns at all, just mutual understanding about the nature of rent and the best way to distribute it. Once agreed upon, the rules are upheld because they work mutually for the common good. There are three possible models for fair distribution of rent. Let’s take a look at them:

1. **Negative Liberty:** The first, we’ll say, is the position of many individualist anarchists, such as some Rothbardians; the position of property. In this position, the

fair distribution of land could hypothetically be gained through competition over private land in the market. This position is explained well in Weiland's position, but it essentially entails armed protection of the rental value of land; the higher the value of land, the higher its costs of protection. Hypothetically, without state-privilege and externalization of costs of property protection onto the landless, on behalf of the landed, market competition in property protection could lead to an equilibrium price where the value of resources are rather evenly distributed.

2. **Positive Liberty:** The second, we'll say, is the position of many collectivist anarchists and socialists; the position of propertylessness. In this position, the fair distribution of land could hypothetically be gained through collective ownership of land. The position is explained well by collectivist anarchists and similarly by Theodor Hertzka; people would be able to join any association or work any land they wanted to. With everyone being able to use the same land as another, there is no potential for extortion.

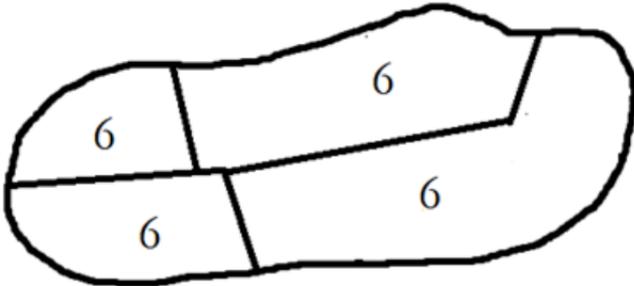
3. **Equal Liberty:** The third, we'll say, is the position of possession; that of the radical center, including mutualists and Georgists, but particularly geo-mutualists. Because occupancy-and-use is so vague, and traditional Georgism relies on the state, I take neither position seriously by themselves as fair distributors of rent. I have touched on this before, in "Interest and Premium: A Geo-Mutualist Synthesis." In the position of geo-mutualism, then, the fair distribution of land is allocated according to contractual claims to occupancy-and-use, which include rent-sharing agreements. According to this view, people respect each other's claims because it is mutually beneficial to do so. If everyone gets the same entitlement to rent, there is no capacity for extortion.

We've now looked at the three possibilities for fair rent-sharing, and, yes, I agree that every one of these positions, if practiced as proposed, is fair, insofar as they *internalize* costs. Still, I think there is a major advantage to one of the positions, which I

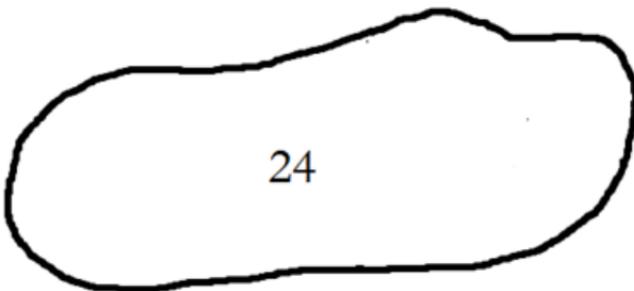
Cost, Aggression, and Access to the Land

will try to clarify: Though positions 1 and 2 are both *fair*, they are less *efficient* than 3, because 3 utilizes comparative advantage and ideal firm sizes, while 1 and 2 do not.

Let me explain: In order to divide land evenly, according to position 1, land must be clumsily divided, without regard to bioregion or natural barriers, and this can get in the way of specialization. See below.

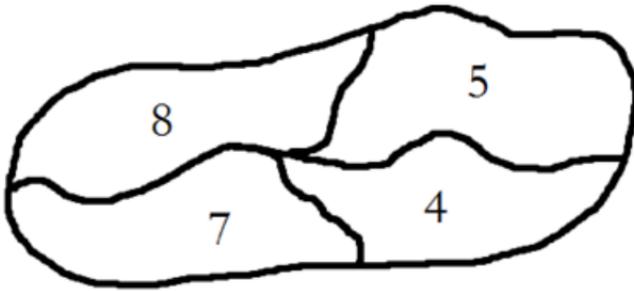


In the prior example every parcel of land produced the same good, but if the original quadrants were used for different production purposes, and had comparative advantages in them, this sort of division would greatly hamper efficiency, because it would encroach on natural bioregions. On the other hand, if the land was undivided, and was held collectively, the land could be worked in its natural comparative advantages, but instead, because anyone can do the work on any parcel of undivided land, the comparative advantage of labor is lost (labor intensity not shown in examples).



Let's look at these positions again: If we divide land equally, regardless of its resources, we lose the comparative advantage of the land. If we divide people equally, regardless of their productive capacity, we lose the comparative advantages of labor. There must be a way around this! And there is.

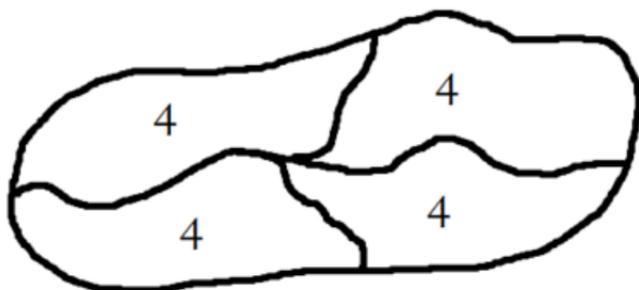
Instead of splitting the land itself evenly, or splitting labor evenly, we can divide them each according to their own capacity, and split the outcomes. This can be done by allowing workers to bid on land, allowing the best worker to get the best land, meaning higher economic production for all to enjoy. The bid, of course, would be a bid of rent-share, meaning that the community is paid for being excluded from the land. Instead of land or labor being divided evenly, the rent of land is divided evenly. This means that comparative advantages in land and labor can better match, but the value of land can still be shared.



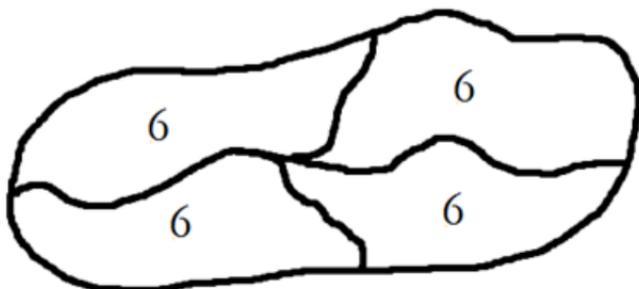
Take the original example. The rent looks like this, from most productive to least productive pieces of land:

1. 8 (productivity of land) $- 4$ (margin of production) $= 4$ rent.
2. 7 (productivity of land) $- 4$ (margin of production) $= 3$ rent.
3. 5 (productivity of land) $- 4$ (margin of production) $= 1$ rent.
4. 4 (productivity of land) $- 4$ (margin of production) $= 0$ rent.

In the following example, the rent is paid to the community, meaning that the workers, so long as they are of equal capacity, retain the same amount of land value. After rent is paid out, but has yet to be divided, it will look like this:



Each portion has been paid above, a total of eight rent. Now, because the land is held in common, the rent gets distributed evenly, to its stakeholders. Each worker gets a portion of two rent, bringing us here:



This has been a demonstration of the fair distribution of land according to comparative advantage, but we have not yet discussed the distribution of labor accordingly. For a more detailed analysis, see “Interest and Premium,” but, in short, we can say that it is best for the most productive workers to hold the most productive land. It is best for the workers themselves, as they can gain more for themselves, and it is best for their community, as they also produce more rent-income.

Say there is one worker who produces more than the rest; say twice as much! If they produce on the margin of production, they will produce a total of eight. If they produce on the best land, they produce 16! The rent paid on the margin is zero, and the rent on the best land is eight (according to the formula in “Interest and Premium”). Either way, they retain eight for themselves after rent is paid. If he or she works on the best land, though, and because

they are a member of the association as well, they will receive their due share of their own rent! That means, they get an extra two of their own rent-production, which they would not have, had they not had the best land. If one of the other workers got the land, he or she'd only receive an extra one, like everyone else.

It just makes sense for the best worker to use the best land, especially when rent can be shared, because all can gain from that comparative advantage. The best worker still gets more for themselves, they just don't get more rent; they get more wages and premium, that part which they earned through harder labor, rather than through their command of better land.

CONCLUSION

CLAIMING THE COMMONS for private use is an act of aggression and infringement on the cost-principle, as it restricts one's positive liberty and imposes undesired costs on the individual. Organizing land into individual or collective plots, in order to evenly divide wealth potential, is fair but inefficient, while organizing the land into rent-sharing commons allows everyone to gain from the comparative advantage allowed by specialization, while retaining the full portion due them by nature of their personal endowments.

REFERENCES

¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon⁵, 128.

² Pierre-Joseph Proudhon⁵, 131.

³ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon⁵, 115.

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INTRODUCTION

THERE ARE TWO NATURAL TENDENCIES within an economy; that toward competition and that which approaches monopoly. While most monopolies are due to state interference in the market, natural monopolies may persist in a free market, though they also have potential to be corrected without state regulation. Thus, economies of scale and scope should dictate not only the preferred economic model for such markets, but also the means by which this model may be accomplished; by way of bilateralizing the monopoly, or out-competing it.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

ECONOMIES ARE SYSTEMS of resource allocation, usually maintained between relations of producers and consumers. In a barter economy there is no distinction between producers and consumers, because goods and services are being directly exchanged, but in a market economy the holder of currency (title to goods and services) is called *the consumer* and the holder of (material) goods and/or services is called *the producer*.

Markets are the voluntary exchange of goods and services using a means of exchange (such as currency). It's important to note that both (producers and consumers) are naturally producers and consumers, since producers must produce to become consumers and consumers have to earn their money through production; but these describe roles in a particular exchange facilitated by currency. The voluntary exchange of goods and services, in a market unregulated by government, relies on the consent of all parties involved. If you have currency, it is because you have produced (at least, in a healthy economy!).

The forces in the market between buyers (consumers) and sellers (producers) are called *supply* and *demand*. Supply is attributed to production and selling, and demand is attributed to consumption and buying. Buyers always want lower prices, and

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sellers always want higher prices.[For sellers (supply), as price is increased more goods and services are being happily provided; for buyers (demand), as price is increased less goods and services are being happily purchased. So, supply increases with an increase of price, and demand decreases with an increase of price. When a price is decreased demand is increased, and supply is decreased.

Equilibrium is the point where supply and demand meet. That is, where the quantity demanded at a specific price equals the quantity supplied at that price. It is the price that makes both consumers and producers happiest. It is the price based on cost. No-one is being overcompensated, and no-one is being ripped off at this price. It is the price that provides the most satisfaction for both consumers and producers.

A free price system operating in a competitive market always results in equilibrium prices that are equal to the long-term costs of the business; that is, the best prices possible for both producers and consumers simultaneously. Prices are kept low because of competition.

Price	Demanded	Supplied	Exchanged	Scarcity	Surplus
\$50	1	5	1	0	4
\$40	2	4	2	0	2
\$30	3	3	3	0	0
\$20	4	2	2	2	0
\$10	5	1	1	4	0

*Equilibrium price highlighted.

Markets can range all the way from perfect competition to monopoly. In perfect competition all prices are brought down to cost by the competition of prices, whereby firms will engage in price wars, constantly trying to reduce their costs in order to undersell the others. This renders these firms *price-takers*, as they have to accept the price the market offers for their service. Perfect competition is a desirable state of a market, where everything is priced on its cost. What mechanisms restrict competition and keeps prices from remaining at an equilibrium level? Barriers to the entry of a market. Barriers to entry create the opposite of competition, known as *monopoly*. Monopolies have no competition and so can set

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their price. They are called *price-makers* and can charge whatever they want; they have the market power.

All monopolies are due to barriers to entry in the market, which means that competition isn't allowed and so there are no price wars to bring down prices. Aside from natural monopoly (where the only barrier is that it's more efficient to have one supplier than many), monopolies are usually created out of state favoritism by way of subsidies, patent protection, zoning laws, licensing, and more. These kinds of monopolies are inefficient and never necessary.

Some monopolies have the ability to be cheaper than firms in perfect competition, but their owners don't usually allow that for long. These monopolies are called *natural monopolies* and become monopolies through benefits of economies of scale (It's possible that most, or even all, natural monopolies don't truly exist, or at least wouldn't under proper conditions). The positive characteristics of a natural monopoly are that they run at lower costs and, under the right circumstances, this means that they have potential to have reduced prices as well. The negative characteristic of the natural monopoly is that, unless they are somehow regulated, they will not offer these lower prices, but instead will opt to make a profit, push their items rather than submit to demand, and create unnecessary surplus.

You can tell if a market is best suited for a monopoly or for competition by examining its ideal firm size. The ideal firm size has the least diseconomies of scale (loss to size) and the most economies of scale (returns to size) relative to one another. If a market has few diseconomies of scale, and many economies of scale, it will develop toward a natural monopoly. All other monopolies are inefficient and are outside of their ideal firm size, suffering from horrible diseconomies of, and negative returns on, scale (costs to larger organization than needed), which are then passed on to consumers in their prices (which are also jacked in order to make a higher profit).

States are entities that interfere with markets and keep prices from being stable at the equilibrium rate through force. They are the chief perpetrator of monopoly. Marxists, Keynesians, and others, not understanding this, or wanting to correct it with a

bigger monopoly, typically look to the state for regulatory power of monopolies. The problem with this approach is that, like most modern medicine, it tends to treat the symptoms rather than the cause of the illness in the economy. The cause *is* the state. The state was the original monopoly, and seeking its help only increases the problem, treating illness with its cause. Anarchism takes a more holistic approach.

There are two extremes a state can take. On the extreme supply-side you have capitalism, which is a system where prices are kept artificially high and those who produce also hold a large portion of unused surplus because consumers don't want to buy. *Capitalism*, being the result of monopolies, exists when prices are above equilibrium and there exists a privately held surplus due to supply controlling the price. On the other end of the spectrum, on the extreme demand-side, you have the communist state, which is a system where prices are kept artificially low and consumers face scarcity because producers don't want to produce. *Communism*, being the result of monopsony, is when there exist prices below equilibrium and therefore the price is dictated by the demands of the state.

Mutualism (anarchism), on the other hand, is when all prices reach equilibrium (cost, the limit of price) and when opposing forces (supply/demand) balance each other either through competition (perfect) or cooperation (bilateral). It is when no one is able to make a better choice given the available resources and actions of others. This is the absence of state.

MONOPOLY, MONOPSONY, AND BILATERALISM

MONOPOLIES ARE CATEGORIZED into “*natural*” and *legal monopolies*. In truth, however, all unilateral monopolies are legal monopolies. This is because a state is necessary for the enforcement of unilateral property-rights. In order for someone to be able to have access to, and exclude others from, a resource, they must be willing to use violence. I can't own all the gold in the gold-mines of the world, unless people will shoot you for mining in them for me in my absence. Thus, the state is necessary for the violent establishment of individual property claims over scarce

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resources (and thus for unilateral management of natural monopoly).

In our economy, many markets are artificially turned into monopolies, creating massive problems. Those monopolies that may exist naturally because of economies of scale are kept by the state from being balanced.

Whenever monopolies or monopsonies arise it is important to find an equilibrium through the opposite. Some want to use the state to promote balance, but this is no balancing act, as a state itself is the lack of balance, and lacks incentive to promote such balance. A better method of regulating these kinds of activities, that doesn't come from a central command center (and is much more libertarian in nature), is the *bilateral monopoly*.

A bilateral monopoly exists when two monopolies exist in the same market; one on the consumer's end and one on the producer's end. When consumers are organized into a monopsony and sellers have formed a monopoly a bilateral monopoly exists and prices are determined by contract. Examples of a bilateral monopoly include monopsonies in the labor market (think of a factory town with a single employer) that employ workers in a monopoly (labor union) or any market that could exist with a single provider and a single user. For instance, if a miner's cooperative had a monopoly on mining metals in a given area and those who bought the metal for refining organized a purchasing cooperative this would be a situation of bilateral monopoly. Such a situation mirrors perfect competition in that there is more balanced bargaining power between the two entities. This is a preferable method of dealing with monopoly to giving more power to the state, which is the original monopolist (and dictates its prices as well, thus giving us taxes, war, and the draft whereby we have no say in our labor's ability to be sent to kill because they have the power to choose).

Monopolies are strictly on the side of sellers, while monopsonies are on the side of buyers. Just as a monopoly is a single seller, capable of determining their price as a price-maker, a monopsony is a single buyer, also capable of determining their price. A monopsony dictates demand-price and a monopoly dictates supply-price. Therefor to reach an equilibrium price at cost

it is important to bilateralize monopoly or use non-market bargaining power, such as civil disobedience and nonviolent direct-action, to demand a price at cost.

The best way to bilateralize, and find the cost price, in behemoth institutions, is certainly to have forethought and plan to become a mutual organization after a certain size is reached; with either buyers or sellers owning the firm (actual capital), and with the other party owning the policy of the organization and given considerable voting rights in the way it functions. This can, and perhaps should, be demanded by capital investment in the early entrepreneurial stage, perhaps by the bank. If such fore-thinking must be made up for later it will take organized civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action to put prices back to cost. Here, as always, the state steps in to protect monopoly.

Who is the first to show up at a general strike? The police. The state is threatened by bilateral monopoly. Without the state, competitive markets would stay competitive, or institutions meant to balance power (such as creating a buyer cooperative for purchasing from a monopoly, or starting a union) and bilateralize monopoly would arise to set prices right. It certainly has potential to replace the state as well.

Despite their affinity for unions, mutualists favor a free market scenario, whereby the individual remains sovereign over him or herself and his or her labor, capable of exchanging it however he or she pleases. Oftentimes those who are against the free market will state that this leads to monopoly. Long ago I would have debated this fact altogether, but I have come to realize that this is so in the case of natural monopolies; the state showing an example of the natural monopoly on the use of force. I have since disengaged from my hatred of monopolies, in and of themselves, as, at times, they can be more economical and thus allow more freedom to the laborer who, with their existence, pays less for their goods (and thereby commands more of his or her own time and energy). This, however, all rests on prices being reduced, which is not so natural for a monopoly that remains unchecked, unilateral. What many are missing is the opportunity that a free market has to offer in the way monopolies can be dealt with.

The free market has never promised a problem-free society; such is the dream of the communists. What the anarchist free market offers is the flexibility of people to deal with, and to solve, problems as they occur. It is not a rigid system, but one which responds to needs organically as entrepreneurs find new ways to make people happy and solve their problems. One of the mechanisms of the free market, just as natural as a monopoly may be, is the monopsony; but look at what occurs when we try to create these institutions; the state finds a way to destroy them. It creates laws, such as the Taft-Hartley Act, for instance, that render labor monopolies incapable to spread as widely as they are needed in order to combat their repressive monopsonies. A natural mechanism of the market it is, but the bilateralization of monopoly is repressed by the state in order to retain its power, and the power of the class from which its participants are derived.

DUAL POWER

DUAL-POWER IS THE ACT of competing with the state by building alternative institutions. If a monopoly is in operation with diseconomies of scale, due to a legal monopoly, dual power should involve the act of providing the service at a smaller scale, at a more competitive ideal firm size. If a natural monopoly is in operation with economies of scale, but is not providing fair prices, it must be balanced with economies of scope from a monopsony, creating a bilateral monopoly that has a much better price, but retains the efficiency of economies of scale and scope. In other areas, it is much more efficient to provide goods and services to each other. We can sell each other food from our own kitchens and gardens. Monopolies, such as Monsanto and other monoculture giants, destroy the Earth and enslave farmers.

We have to stop participating in this and start providing for ourselves and each other. Such an action is known as *civil disobedience* and/or *nonviolent direct action* in some circles.

This process of revolution, known as *gradualism* or *incrementalism*, is not passively reformist in its nature, wishing to win political battles that will always remain statist; neither is it violently insurrectionist, taking part in aggression, the violent act that defines

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a *state* (once it is maintained). The reformist may be well intentioned, but, without others' participation, even their own good intentions may cause people unnecessary misery. The same is true of the insurrectionist, as they blindly take apart a system without having built a framework of mutual aid to replace it. Someone once said, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." This is especially true when these intentions fuel actions taken on behalf of others without their consent.

Mutualist gradualism takes another approach. By providing goods and services to each other, or by uniting against monopolies (or monosonies) and creating the alternative, we are, as the Wobblies say, "creating the new world in the shell of the old." If we don't like what we see, it is up to us to create, and defend, the alternative. No one else will, or should, do it for us, nor should we allow them to do so.

It is important to note, as Gustav Landauer does in his work, and as did many other anarchists, that the state is not a body of people or individuals. The state is their relationship to us, the fact that they can control and extract interest, taxes, rent, and profit. If you can remove yourself from dependency and fear of the state, the relationship changes. This can't be done as individuals, however. To try to secede from the state individually would most likely be suicide. It must be done as a society, and this entails affecting culture and establishing organization.

There are many ways to affect culture, including art, music, protest, and more, but socio-anthropologists, like Gerhard Lenski, teach us that the largest factor in affecting culture is technology, and especially subsistence technology. As societies produce more and more wealth there are many things that change for the culture.

Since hierarchy was established in horticultural societies, all of a society's wealth has been monopolized and held as surplus by a certain class of people. However, we have definitely seen the decentralization of land and capital to a degree, as Roman rulers contracted their land to lords in order to maintain any power at all as people rose up, creating feudalism; as merchants and artisans claimed the capital that was leftover from the plague, creating capitalism as their guilds were chartered by the state; and from the quick wealth from the modern industrial age that allowed enough

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leisure for movements to be built, capable of reforming the system, such as unions. In the post-modern industrial age we are moving toward post-industrialism. We have enough wealth these days that we may create self-sufficient intentional communities.

Many of the things that we use on a daily basis are easily provided by friends and neighbors, such as produce, bread, canned goods, clothes, and just about any skill that doesn't require a large amount of capital to utilize. The things that require a large amount of capital, if we want them, would require economies of scale, which are possible to have, but take more time to develop because they require specialized labor, membership, and investment, among other concerns. However, as a new economy is created and more people get involved it becomes that much easier to organize such endeavors. As a gray market provides a rise in standards of living, leisure time is freed up to be used for organization of other projects.

Oftentimes the first problem I see with movements that try to live sustainably today are that they are made up of, and/or support, and/or are owned by, middle-class people who were born into comfort. This, of course, is not always the case, but the problem facing most people's sustainability is that it is flat out illegal. Many people are tenants, whose landlords are not cool enough to let them tear up the grass and grow. Many can't afford unnecessary licensing to create local business. Zoning creates many problems for sustainability. The plain and gruesome fact is that it's not sustainability if it is just for rich people.

Sustainability, and fairness, is largely related to cost and price. If prices are above cost, and a surplus is held (as in monopoly), there is waste. Surplus is waste. If prices are too low, there is not enough supply, and there is scarcity. When we are talking about sustainability we are talking about creating only as much as we need, but creating as much as we do need and distributing it wisely. If we create too little, we suffer and/or die, and this is not sustainable (if what we are trying to sustain and promote is human happiness, which I am). If we create too much we have waste, which means that people worked more than they had to (because no one needed the goods), and that rapidly

depleting natural resources have been thrown away. Gross. Glut is gross.

Our project for now should be to participate in mutual aid. That doesn't mean doing nice things for the community; it means reciprocity. If we want to abolish the state we have to abolish it from our own lives, individual by individual. The state is nonreciprocal in nature. We may not be able to have a completely separate dual-power and gradualist system that is self-reliant and autonomous from the state tomorrow, but we can free ourselves slowly but surely from interest, profit, taxes, and rent if we take the proper measures. We can create currencies and sell goods and services to one another at cost, generating employment while providing eachothers' needs. If we can create cooperatives, and form unions, that provide for ourselves and our community we can make the state obsolete.

As each one of us takes part in dual-power it will inspire like actions. As we save money by buying from our friends, saving in fuel costs, and we are making good money in a similar manner, being free from the constraints of a boss, others will want to do similarly. As we organize our workplaces for collective victory, others will be intrigued. If we can elevate ourselves with our mutual aid, by eliminating or balancing monopolies in our lives, we will act as an example of the benefits of mutual aid. In biology, this is a process of self-organization known as *stigmergy*; where one individual lays down information or stimuli patterns that others begin to copy. We all have potential to be apparati for the stigmergent process.

CONCLUSION

THERE ARE TWO SCALES on which dual power is necessary, which correlate to naturally competitive and naturally monopolistic markets. In those markets in which competition is the most natural, the best method of solution is the creation of a gray market. This is perhaps more available to middle-class anarchists, who own property, while lower-class anarchists may be inclined toward the organization of syndicates, which are best used in order to deal with natural monopolies. Of course,

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there is also ample room for lower class anarchists to participate in the gray market, especially with the introduction of mutual credit. No matter the solution for which we personally opt, the state should not be seen as an option.

Mutualist Sex Economics: A Post-Feminist Perspective

INTRODUCTION

THE TWO WORDS, *sex* and *economics*, placed together in a sentence, are controversial by nature. Yet, the relationship of sex to money is a very interesting one, and one which has been studied by sex therapists, economists, social psychologists, sociologists, and many other specialists; one which is yet to be discussed by many anarchists, much less anarcho-feminists. The subject itself seems quite taboo, particularly in lefty anarchist circles.

In this essay, I intend to demonstrate that economics does indeed play a role in straight cissexual relationships,ⁱ that this is natural, and, aside from being distorted by capitalism, is otherwise healthy, so long as existing gender dynamics (if they exist at all) are freely ascribed to, and are not externally compelled. I will begin with a look at sex and gender, will follow with discussion on the economics behind sex, and will conclude with the cause of sexual and relational scarcity among straight cissexual couples of the working class.

SEX AND GENDER

THIS ESSAY WILL NATURALLY BE OFFENSIVE to some, but this is not at all my intention. I want to be clear that, although the content primarily regards straight cissexual couples, I in no way support the repression of other forms of relationships, sex-, or gender-identities. I am simply commenting on a common dynamic, among many, and the influences mutualism may have on it.

Though my mutualist economic proposals may be prescriptionist, the gender-dynamics are meant to be read in a descriptivist manner, and one which applies to that subpopulation which acts freely in favor of those gender dynamics, and to no other. My intention in writing this is to analyze the economics of freely-ascribed-to gender dynamics of straight cissexual

relationships, not to argue that everyone needs to be cissexual or straight. As an anarchist, I have no intention to force my will on anyone, and, as a decent human being, I have no desire to take shots at anyone else's lifestyle. It is perhaps possible that, in the future, gender and heterosexuality may be abandoned altogether, and this is fine so long as they go voluntarily, but so long as they exist voluntarily, I mean to comment on the economic effects which cause strife in straight cissexual relationships. If this conversation is to be made obsolete in a free society, by the voluntary abandonment of gender and/or sexual preference, so be it. In the case that it remains in a free society, this is a comment on that.

Discussions on gender generally relate in some way to the topic of essentialism and constructionism. Essentialism is a position which states that for any category there is a crucial set of intrinsic characteristics to define it. It is a structuralist position, seeing a thing as what it is. According to essentialist philosophies, people act the way they do because of their genetics, which are intrinsic to them, and are not external. An opposing position of

ⁱ By "straight cissexual relationships," allow me to be clear: I am especially speaking of relations between men and women who ascribe to their assigned gender. That is, "straight cissexual people" would include straight feminine women and straight masculine men who identify as such.

Masculinity and femininity can here be seen in the Hermetic sense, with masculinity representing the giving force, and femininity representing the developing force. Economically speaking, this translates as masculinity being a force of provision, and femininity being a force of succorance. This is not to pass judgement in favor of one or the other. Both are vices, to my opinion, which may seek virtue only in combination.

non-essentialism, often called constructionism, states that there are no intrinsic traits that make a thing what it is. It is post-structuralist in nature, believing a thing to be defined from the outside, by what it isn't. Hard social-constructionist philosophies of this nature are based purely in the idea of social constructs and nurture as the extrinsic determinants of a person. These views, if taken to the extreme, disregard nature and self-determination entirely.

Relating to the topic at hand (sex economy), hard essentialism would suggest that a woman, for instance, acts feminine because of her intrinsic characteristics (chromosomal arrangement). Hard constructionism would say that a woman acts feminine because of her extrinsic characteristics (social conditioning). Essentialists generally believe biological sex and gender naturally match, while constructionists allow for much more deviation, believing gender to be a social construct.

What limits both of these views and makes them rigid and standoffish in nature is that they exist more exclusively, as vices, than mixed, as a virtue. One believes that nature is the exclusive cause, while the other puts absolute faith in nurture. So far as they do not concede to the truths of one another is so far as they are wrong. Women, like men, have both intrinsic and extrinsic causes for their characteristics. Essentialism and constructionism are both right, but, so far as they reject the other, they are also wrong.

Gender includes the aspect of behavior, but sex is the physical body alone. Gender is included in one's phenotype, which is the result of one's genes placed into one's surroundings, but sex is genetic, as one's sex is determined by genes. Intrinsic differences between men and women are clear in sex, the physical, but become vaguer and less rigid in regard to gender, the mental. One reason for this is attached to the way the sex chromosomes work, another is attached to environmental conditioning.

The sex chromosomes make up only one pair of 23, but the sex chromosomes affect every other chromosome (non-sex chromosomes are called *autosomes*). One can think of sex chromosomes as being "modifiers" of the other 22. Some modifications are more drastic or intense than others. Dr. Louann Brizendine, to open the introduction of her book, *The Female Brain*, says,

More than 99 percent of male and female coding is exactly the same. Out of the thirty thousand genes in the human genome, the less than one percent variation between the sexes is small. But that percentage difference influences every single cell in our bodies—from the nerves that register pleasure and pain to the neurons that transmit perception, thoughts, feelings, and emotions.¹

Anyone who has spent time with animals knows that male and female animals, though mostly similar, work on different impulses and have different instincts. Though male and female humans have evolved a rational ability to overpower our instincts to some degree, our underlying impulses are oftentimes of a different nature. The fact, however, that sex chromosomes modify already-existing autosomes, which differ in their gene content from person to person, combined with environmental factors, allows for a range in the intensity of gender expression, and for gender overlap to occur (but there are still tendencies).

Behavior, being a reaction to environments, is much more flexible than biological programming alone, and also adds to gender overlap and spectrum. As societies adapt to new technologies, or new surroundings, everyone reassesses their relative “fit” for new tasks, based on their interest and capacity relative to others around them. Thus, biological sex is not the only determining factor of gender, as biological sex is placed into a context of environments, some of which make different demands of a society, resulting in differing gender norms. It is important to stress that new situations may present alternatives, and that people can change. Just as importantly, these changes should not be forced, but should be expressed genuinely, from the inside out, if they are to occur at all. When gender is enforced from without, it can be greatly repressive, but when it is expressed from within it is a liberating experience.

Gender doesn't have to be something that is repressive. Many native peoples have allowed for transgender individuals and non-hetero sexual ascription, such as the famed “two-spirit.”

Interestingly, the society which influenced American feminism, the Iroquois Nation, was not without its own roles of gender, but some authors have gone as far as saying these roles were matriarchal rather than patriarchal. They were matrilineal for certain. So far as gender is an expression of a natural range of differences, and one which isn't limited to a dogmatic view of reality, and is not enforced, it is something to be celebrated. This does not preclude the fact that it is still natural for there to exist tendencies or norms which are created by the sex chromosomes, and which divide the population to some degree, according to their behavior, even if this is not a hard division, and there is gray area and overlap left remaining. This being so, and while I celebrate the freedom to choose other lifestyles, I still believe it is important to study binary gender norms as tendencies, rather than absolutes, and from a softly descriptivist perspective, assuming that, at least to some degree, many people's expression of their gender, as it exists today, is freely ascribed to, or is necessary to their own well-being for one reason or another.

Studying gender from a descriptivist perspective should not necessarily be seen as a threat to liberty, but should be understood to better allow us to know other people's wants so that we may better address them. If we see someone eating an apple, for instance, it is generally safe to suggest that they like apples, and it would be in their best interest if we could find a way to make apples cheaper for them (so long as it is done sustainably, fairly, etc.). Likewise, if we look at the genders as they exist, and if they are a genuine expression of a person's internal will, we may better assess their wants, and thus will be better equipped to satisfy their desires. People's desires change, however, and room must be left for those changes to occur within. Gender, if at all useful, should be expressed internally, and not compelled. If it must be compelled from without, it is not useful to the individual.

I want to be clear that my defense of gender is in no way a defense of hard-essentialism, but neither is my intention to stick to a mold of hard-constructionism. The dialectical nature of this issue, in my opinion, demands a higher synthesis, which can be described as little more than the freedom of flexibility and choice. In the case it occurs, I am intending for any prescriptive or suggestive language

to rest atop the value of description, and the premise of the free choice of those I am describing. In other words, if I make suggestions toward the behavior of a gender, I am assuming that gender has been freely ascribed to, and not forced on the individual. This does not preclude the existence of alternatives. I support the ability of an individual to freely ascribe to any gender they so desire, or none at all. I am referencing, however, those who choose their gender within a certain scope. *This does not preclude the possibility that some will not make this choice.*

I would also like to be clear that, though I recognize the existence of alternative modes of sexuality, I am primarily discussing monogamous, heterosexual, cis-sexual, relationships, not out of intended bigotry (some will argue the absence of discussion of these other kinds is a form of oppression, but not one I feel is legitimate) or “othering,” but partly out of ignorance and disconnection, and partly out of my own self-interest in addressing straight cis matters. Just as I don’t feel it is appropriate for many homosexuals to discuss the sexuality of heterosexuals, having no experience in the matter, I will not be writing from a perspective I have not engaged in, or with, personally, though I certainly wish to allow room for freedom of such discussion to develop. I do not have a direct or personal stake in LGBTQ concerns, regardless of my support for their liberties. I have had female partners, and, though I am admittedly restricted from accessing their priorities directly, I have at least engaged in relationships with them, making this discussion more appropriate to address. More than being a discussion of women and their nature, however, this is a discussion of family and heterosexual pair-binding under capitalism.

Now that my position on gender is clear—that it exists, and is found useful to some, but should not be forced onto anyone—we can move on to our economic assessment. What is it that the genders are really after?

THE ECONOMICS OF SEX

ONE OF THE EFFECTS of difference between the gender expression and sexual orientation of straight cis people is a difference in needs and desires in regard to mate selection. Studying these differences is important to the field of sex economics.

Research put out by Arizona State University shows that, while men and women are generally attracted to the same qualities, they are generally offended by different ones. Opening up, the article reads,

Scientists demonstrate for first time that men, women mean what they say – guys care more about attractiveness, women care more about social status.²

When choosing partners, men and women lack a difference in primary attractors, but they screen for different things. We put out different filters. The paper suggests that,

men and women differ mostly on the low-end qualities that they want to avoid, not the high-end traits that they ideally desire.³

Men commonly screen based on physical appearance, being attracted to symmetry and ratios, while women are more concerned with emotional appearance, being attracted to confidence and influence. It's not that men don't want confident and influential women, or that women don't want physically attractive men, it's that they select each other, especially as strangers, with different intensities of these priorities. A man is likely to be attracted to a female stranger for looks alone, but may be willing to date someone they know, who may even be completely looked over as a stranger, because he is attracted to her personality. Women may date less-educated and less-monied males after learning they have strong values, or good senses of humor. Of

course, there are a large range of capabilities, and these are not the only modes of interaction.

There is nothing inherently wrong with either gender. Selection for emotional stability as well physical excellence— both being mere expressions of genetics and environment— have both been essential to the growth and health of our species. It just so happens that women tend to primarily select for the emotional traits and men for the physical. These roles are not opposed, but complimentary. People need their bodies as well as their minds. To polarize either form of selection as wrong is to lose the point.

Men and women generally experience love and sex differently. Women feel loved when they are shown gratitude through gifts, are listened to intently, and are shown concern. They often (but not always) appreciate slower, more emotional, sex. Men feel loved primarily when they are given exclusive physical affection. Of course, both parties gain from physical and emotional love, but they prioritize them differently (though not always). Lance Workman and Will Reader, authors of *Evolutionary Psychology*, say,

it is clear that women generally favour resources and men favour youthful, attractive looks. Gaining a partner who demonstrates such characteristics is only the first step towards successful reproduction, however. If a man has a surplus of resources but deserts a woman immediately after sex or a woman is very beautiful but has multiple sexual partners, then in neither case will their partner be satisfied with the outcome. In other words, for long-term relationships to work, both partners require signals of commitment. Signals of love may provide this commitment. Signals such as promises of undying fidelity and dependability are also rated very highly by both sexes. Signals such as buying gifts for a partner, or listening to their woes.⁴

Researchers, such as Jeff Ward and Martin Voracek, point out that men are more offended by their partners engaging sexually with others than women are, and women are more offended by their partners supplying other women with physical resources or emotional support.⁵ Men tend to understand and receive affection best physically, and to see their partner giving physical affection to others is to face potential scarcity of affection for themselves. Women feel loved when their partners spend money on them, spend time with them, and share feelings. To see their partner giving their time and money to another woman is to feel challenged.

The sexual favoring of resourcefulness on behalf of females and of fertility on behalf of males is due to our evolutionary history.

Speaking in terms of evolutionary psychology, a female needs to be looked after and cared for in times of pregnancy. This has led female sexual selection to regard male resourcefulness as an attractive trait. Men's bodies have evolved greater strength, in part, to compensate for this familial need, and largely by way of female selection. Women have evolved to supply equally necessary familial needs.

A man is capable of reproducing until old age, and with many partners, and often has the desire to do so. Women have fewer chances to reproduce, and for a shorter period of time. This physical aspect has led to a male psychology which largely prioritizes fertility and longevity (youthfulness) in sexual selection, and a female psychology that favors prowess and stability.

Each side is likely to demonize the other. Indeed, women complain often that they are desired only for sex, and men complain that women only want them for money or emotional support. This criticism, while true to some extent on the surface for both parties, fails to see the commonality between them, which exists much deeper. Sex, money, emotional support; these are not ends in themselves, but rather differing means to reach a common goal, the feeling of being loved. Men do not want to have sex with women in order to put them through pain, boredom, or to control them (though women may see it this way at times), but to experience love the way in which it can be comprehended to them.

Women do not want men's resources or time spent listening because they want to financially ruin them or bore them to death (as some men may believe), but because they feel loved when a man demonstrates she is worth his time and energy. Is it selfish? Certainly, but few human interactions are purely altruistic. Both men and women can only make decisions based on their own impulses, which they feel as separate individuals. In a way, decision-making is inherently selfish, but it does not have to be narcissistic (against another's well-being), one can try their hardest to understand the needs of others, and factor them into decisions.

It seems only natural for women to care about the things they care about, and men to care about the things they do, for both parties to accept and understand affection in differing ways. These differences are the results of natural circumstances, and are not something to be demonized. Sex, money, and emotional support are not ends desired separately by the sexes, but are rather means to reach the same goal of feeling appreciated and loved.

One of the five mistakes women make in bed, according to Tracey Cox, is that they don't realize "sex is more than just sex to men." She says;

Men often have sex to feel wanted.

Granted, it's hard to accept he's really after affection when he has one hand up your jumper and the other diving up your skirt. But it just might be the case.

Sex for men appears to be a primal form of giving – it's a way for him to feel accepted both physically and emotionally.

Because some men still aren't as verbose or comfortable with expressing emotion as women are, sex tends to be used as a means of showing his love and getting close to you.

So, if he really wants to say 'I love you', he may suggest sex. If he feels emasculated at work, sex with you could well make him feel manly again. If he's feeling all

vulnerable after a health scare, sex is his way of proving to himself he doesn't have to go through it alone.

All of this means when you reject sex with him, you're not just rejecting sex. In his eyes, you're effectively saying 'I don't like or want you'. Adopt a new philosophy: don't say no, say when and always make it clear you're saying no to sex, not a cuddle or cosy chat.⁶

Sex and money alike have provided troublesome issues for many relationships, and each party has a hard time understanding the other. Many men feel as though they are underappreciated for their contributions, and many women feel the same way. "Don't you love me?" they ask. Their intentions are not to hurt one another, but misunderstandings naturally spring from differing personalities and interests. Either party can have a difficult time understanding the other. This leads to argument, and unintended feelings of objectification on both sides, sexual and monetary. The absurdity can give each party great existential burden.

The conflict between each gender's needs can lead to a domino effect of power play. When one side feels less satisfied, if they don't react outright aggressively, they may passively "hold out" on the other party's wants. This can be a reduction in physical affection, emotional exchanges, gifts, or more. If the other party feels this to be unfair, they may feel the need to make their own power plays. This can become quite unfortunate, and can easily lead to the end of a relationship. This does not mean that it is not natural for each party to act in the manner they feel is necessary, considering the conditions they are in. It is natural for equilibrium to be sought, but there are oftentimes problems created from outside of the relationship, which cannot be solved from inside.

The differences in male and female desire, and their ensuing conflicts, have led to economic research and the field of sex economics. Statistics have shown that the amount of sex is decreasing in general, divorce rates are rising, and monogamy is falling. Sex economist, Susan Walsh, point out that, despite this

fact, the “price of sex” is decreasing, and more people are finding sex more available, but not as frequently, because sex is happening outside of committed relationships rather than inside of them. The “price of commitment” is rising.

Of course economics can't explain individual idiosyncratic relationships, and it's not meant to. What it does explain is the correlation among feminism, relaxed sexual mores, and relationship commitment, which is the “price” of sex. This puts feminists in an uncomfortable bind – feminism has led to women getting less of what they want, in general. For women who proudly call themselves sluts this is not necessarily problematic, in that they don't appear to want what most women want, i.e. emotionally intimate relationship sex. Still, it means that feminism is now relevant primarily to a very small slice of the sisterhood.⁷

Susan, as far as I understand, is really meaning *gender-feminism* when she uses *feminism* generally. Her thoughts coincide with Rosie Boycott's idea that feminity is still rejected, though women are allowed to take up masculine roles (like having promiscuous sex). Rosie Boycott demonstrates that, though women, as a sex, have largely been accepted in the workplace, and have been celebrated in taking up traditionally masculine gender roles, femininity, the gender side, is still looked down on. Transgendered women (male-bodied), for example, are much less respected than transgendered men (female-bodied). “House husbands” are certainly not glorified in this society. While women are being accepted as masculine, femininity is still negatively viewed.⁸ This is largely the result of second-wave feminism, which called for the abolition of gender roles.

Instead of winning victories for respect toward femininity, second-wave feminism won victories for women's (the sex, not gender) respect. Though necessary, it was only half of the battle,

and a battle that some women would outright reject. While some women desired to be able to express more masculine traits (a fair demand) other women wanted to simply be respected for their femininity (likewise fair). Thus, the victories of second-wave feminism were met with a backlash of post-feminism. Post-feminism was a response to second-wave “gender feminism,” which, post-feminists feel, was an effort to masculinize women, promoting the burning of bras, lesbianism, body-hair growth, and other expressions of the rejection of gender roles. Post-feminists, though against discrimination, argue in favor of gender dynamics, but not fundamentally so.

As Rosie suggests, being a feminine woman, desiring to be cared for economically, is still looked down on. Being a masculine woman is encouraged, while being a feminine male is judged with negativity. Second-wave feminism encouraged women to take up employment in masculine roles, but dismissed men picking up the feminine.⁹ A woman is allowed to want sex, but wanting to be cared for economically is forbidden, considered weak. This has left both sexes unhappy, and largely results in gender-conflicts, whereby both sexes feel shut out by the other.

The feminine role has been looked down on as a form of parasitism, and so women and men alike have encouraged the masculinization of women, yet rejected the feminization of men. Both parties are expected to be masculine producers, and neither party is expected to be feminine care-givers. The result, as Susan Walsh suggests, has been a reduction in committed sex for everyone.¹⁰ Metaphysically speaking, femininity is the accepting or receiving force, the attractor and final developer. Masculinity is the giving or penetrating force, the repellent and original source of potential. Both are equally necessary for existence. The masculine seeks and penetrates, but without the feminine nothing accepts and retains. The result has been more masculine, promiscuous sex, without commitment, and less feminine, and faithful sex; meaning less sex in general for everyone. Flexibility, our ability to do this, does not entail happiness, our desire to.

If it is true that gender can be a natural expression, and that the family is a natural unit, incomplete without its component parts, it makes little evolutionary sense that there is so much stress

held between men and women. What we have here is a problem of values and equivalency. Neither party feels they are making their fair share. Each party feels they are working harder than the other for what they are receiving. Why?

SEX ECONOMICS TODAY

NEITHER MEN NOR WOMEN feel as though they are getting their fair share. Both feel as though the other is taking advantage of them in different ways. This has caused a lot of bitterness between the sexes. Men feel as though they are lacking sex in a relationship, and women feel as though they are trapped sex-slaves, and receive no love or support. The main contributor to this, in my own opinion, is the capitalist economic system.

The capitalist economic system is one of extensive government privileges, including subsidies, patents, copyrights, licenses, and more, which give a monopolistic status to particular corporations, largely in order to more centrally control the economy. As I've written before, this system leads to a distortion of costs, whereby a certain class of people can subsist off of the work of others. The result is that workers are making less money than they are working for, compared to people outside of their class, such as employers, investors, landlords, etc. This all means that working men are less able to provide for their families, meaning many women are forced into employment.

Industrial capitalism needs to employ women to keep up its production standards, but this has come at a great cost to the family and home-life. Women generally nurture families better than men, and have played an irreplaceable gender role throughout history, but they're being taken away. We have suffered spiritually from the loss of femininity. ⁱⁱ Society lacks her nurture, her tender,

ⁱⁱ The labor of men has been more historically material, while the work of women has traditionally been more spiritual. Men have oftentimes brought resources from without, and women have managed them from within. Men have protected from external, physical,

loving, and irreplaceable care. Every person needs a mother; every family needs her vigilant love and strong compassion. Women are capable of things that men are incapable of, and the rise of industrial capitalism has come at a great cost to families, whose members lost their mothers and wives, in favor of babysitters and roommates. With the rise of our materialistic culture, we have overlooked the importance of gendered women's spiritual contributions. We have made them feel less than valuable, made them reject their own intrinsic worth, their own desires, in favor of meeting the desires of society. For this we all suffer.

With most women working, and the home abandoned (for restaurants, public school, and babysitters), men are less comparatively able to give meaningful gifts or take economic responsibility, as they no longer play a role of exclusively bringing in the resources, and there is less time in general for quality conversation, planning, and sharing of feelings. This creates a lot more sexual discontent for straight cis women, because they can no longer find the kind of relationships that fulfill them, resulting in an apparent "price hike" for commitment, meaning males that have something to give (non-working class males) are more likely to have lasting relationships, as they are more able to satisfy their women emotionally and financially. Like Susan Walsh suggests, people are having less sex, especially those who desire a mate they can connect with emotionally (and this goes for males and females alike).¹¹

Women naturally tend to desire a mate who cares for their well-being and who they can trust, and men are generally protective

danger, while women have protected from internal, emotional, threat. These are two important and complimentary roles, which are both necessary to keep families and communities together. Nurture is something very existent, but it is something that is not "real" in the sense of materialism and science. You can't touch it. It is something felt, something spiritual.

of their female companions. There is nothing wrong with this, unless it is applied where it is unwanted. Men want to give their female companions everything they want in the world, and women want to make their male companions happy and make them feel loved.

Men no longer have the means to protect or supply, and women, receiving less and having to labor themselves outside of the home now, feel tired and unappreciated, burdened by sex. Men are working harder than their labor is worth, and when they give their companions their labor's reward, it represents much more to him than its true value to her, because, due to capitalism, he worked many times over his necessity in order to receive it.ⁱⁱⁱ When women receive the meager gifts or support of their working class males, surrounded by advertisements of diamond rings, television shows of fantastical relationships, travel ads, and women with more privileged husbands, they feel less than appreciated, less than fulfilled, less than turned on. They want more, like the other women seemingly get. This is due to no fault of either sex. Men working just as hard as women, but they don't own their efforts, and can't pass their entire value on to their lovers. The loss of this effort—which is taken by the ruling class—is a root cause of stress and mis-match of satisfaction in relationships. Men are working just as hard, but have less to give (the part they get to keep). There is a mismatch of values, created by capitalism, because men's gifts mean more to them than they do to their counterpart and, because

ⁱⁱⁱ Imagine a scenario where you have to work really hard for something, and someone else has to work less for the same thing. The thing means more to you than it does for them. If both of you give the thing, say a gold ring, to a partner, it will mean the same to them, regardless of your effort. Thus, workers' gifts mean more to them than capitalist's gifts, but the existence of the capitalist's gifts brings down the value of the workers' gifts to the receiver of the gift.

of this, it seems unfair for the female to satisfy the full value of a gift of which she only received a portion of the value.

I understand that this is a controversial argument. Whenever one puts sex in terms of money it sounds like prostitution. Though I think there is a difference between the two, I do think there is something common between them, as well, which is the result of instinctual patterns. The difference? Well, the difference is a matter of relations. Where prostitution is a matter of direct spot-measure of equivalency, where both parties calculate what is fair before the transaction takes place in a market setting, sex and resourcefulness in a relationship is more like a loose credit-exchange; one party will extend their form of affection to the other, without a spot-transaction. If one party ends up giving and the other taking for too long, the relationship ends, but it isn't a matter of spot-transactions, but rather long-term equivalency and mutual assurance of well-being. Still, the anarchist, Emma Goldman, among many others, argued that marriage was a form of legal prostitution. Historically, I must concur, as "bride tokens" or "bride prices" were often needed to pay a father off for the "loss of his daughter." This is a spot-transaction, a sale. Dating and modern marriage isn't.

Strangers will often charge one another for services, but, among relationships, loose systems of credit are likely to develop, and even true altruism or gifting can occur. Family members and friends are less likely to charge one another for goods and/or services, while some do so and others expect favors later; but strangers are inclined to always charge one another on the spot, unless absolutely necessary otherwise. The same dichotomy exists in close sexual and spousal relationships versus prostitution and promiscuity. Lovers don't charge, but they may expect appreciation of some sort, while johns and hookers always make immediate exchanges.

Women have become less satisfied with their long-term exchanges, resulting in less lasting relationships. Men have felt as though they are giving more than they are receiving, leading them to seek sex outside of the relationship, with porn, prostitutes, or mistresses, and, at times, paying their wives directly. This can lead to satisfaction in one area, but it always comes with expense in

another. If sex is paid for directly, it loses its relational value, and becomes prostitution. Still, some couples have felt so compelled to put a price on things in their relationships. It's hard to have both sex and genuine relationship in the capitalist economy.

As a mutualist, I'm in favor of free, unregulated markets. I also identify with 19th century "small-s" socialism, and support cooperative ownership of shared housing, credit, and the means of production and distribution. I support free association to its fullest realizable application, but, as a socialist, I also understand the benefits of groups and "non-market" decision-making. While I do tend to think with an economic mindset, and describe even non-monetary interactions in economic terms, I understand what people on the left mean when they criticize markets' inability to provide everything. Under their definition, *markets* are monetary exchanges, and under this definition they are correct. Not everything has to have an economic purchase value. Some things simply should not have a purchase value, because their use-value, creative potential, or personhood is so highly appreciated. While markets are great for distributing goods and services between economic units, we should not simply try to break everything, such as families, up into markets. The cells of our body have little use for money, and a market is not the natural structure of our bodies. Instead, cells communicate with one another and arrange themselves accordingly, forming a larger organism. Just the same, a healthy family is not based on market exchanges. A healthy family is based on mutual respect and communication. As Thomas H. Greco, Jr. remarks,

Money, in its current form as the medium of exchange, has not lived up to its potential as liberator. This is largely because it has been politicized and centrally controlled but also because money and markets have been extended into realms that are better served by other exchange mechanisms. For example, within the family and clan, where relationships are close and personal and nurturing is a central concern, needs are easily

assessed, responsibilities are readily assigned, and altruism is generally expressed. In these contexts, free gift exchange, and sharing, rather than buying and selling, are clearly seen to work best. The use of money to mediate exchanges within the household, family, or clan would be destructive to the human relationships that are normal and necessary to their health. Money is better suited for facilitating the more impersonal exchanges that need to take place between social units, where reciprocity and strict accounting are more important.¹²

A family, though composed of smaller units (individuals), is itself an economic unit (perhaps this makes me a distributist). The foundation of this unit, the glue that binds it—love—, at least traditionally, is not due to similarity, but complimentary difference between parents: gender. To try to bind it with money alone is to weaken the actual glue, within which money plays but a partial role.

Just the same, and in mutualist economic terms, a cooperative in a free market is also an economic unit. Decisions in a cooperative unit are internally made outside of simple buying and selling, through democratic process. Between cooperatives is where the exchange market exists. Markets lead to structures as they mature, but are not themselves a form of rigid structure, instead being a flexible system.

A family should be seen as an organic unity rather than a market. While certainly making exchanges, and influenced by external markets—making money a necessity—, families usually exchange more loosely than by adhering to strict purchases. Just as mutualists favor free market socialism in the economy, based on the dual principles of free association and cooperative ownership—whereby an individual can choose to be their own autonomous unit, or join a larger one as an equal—, they should also support the ability of people to ascribe to their own genders or none at all, and to raise a family or not to raise a family. Under conditions of freedom, however, it can be expected that individuals will express

their intrinsic differences more fully, rather than less so, and gender may again be given value.

The cause of most relational issues, and the breaking apart of the family, comes down to a distortion of values created by the state. To solve this problem, we must better understand value.

The mutualist theory of value is a compromise between labor and marginal utility theories of value. It could easily be stated as “marginal utility of labor value.” The marginal utility view is subjective in nature, and explains things best on the end of consumption, while the labor view tends to be more objective, and explains things on the side of production. The marginal utility of labor states that labor is something of objective value to the producer, but subjective value to the consumer; it is the view that the objective is perceived subjectively from the outside. In a healthy price system, labor and marginal utility values match, and supply meets demand.

Men and women are both suppliers of labor, and both have a marginal utility for the others’ efforts, but, like all price and cost matches under capitalism, the two do not match. Cost and price do not meet, and so there is scarcity in some areas and surplus in others. The breadwinner of a family, be they male or female, can no longer be an exclusive role. Both parts of the family must now be taken from the home to feed into the capitalist system of production. Both parties earn such meager wages that they cannot afford to sustain the other’s role of maintaining the family. Neither sex goes home happy. Both feel they are putting in more than the other, or that they are simply undesirable and worthless.

People in general have become more depressed, resulting in obesity (people try to fill the void of sexual happiness with other kinds of stimulation), and face much more failure due to capitalism, resulting in insecurity. Insecure and obese people have less sex, and are generally considered less attractive. Humans are sexual creatures, and oftentimes a truly deep connection is better facilitated by sexual interactions, which open up a path of closeness, trust, and communication. Thus, emotional connections, the more feminine side of sexuality, have also suffered greatly.

Externalization of costs is to blame. The rich don't have so many rampant problems (such as high divorce rates or sexual and emotional complaints). The rich subsist off of the surplus of the working class, oftentimes having no stress at all. If you want to know where all the sex went, well, it went to the rich, like all the other good things in life.

As roles have been switched for the poor, with women taking up the masculine gender, making both sexes focus on work, the rich have gained by allowing all of their members to express their femininity, allowing both sexes to focus on nurturing the home. When all of the labor is externalized from one class to another, the sex also swaps around. This ends up in a class that has a surplus of nurture and scarcity of labor, while the other has a scarcity of nurture and surplus of work to do. Needless to say, this results in a class that is fulfilled and a class that is extremely stressed out. This can lead to all sorts of strange and sometimes violent sexual expressions, which otherwise wouldn't come out, but exist as a result of sexual scarcity under capitalism. Class is the main economic contributor to relational frustration.

CONCLUSION

GENDER DOES NOT have to be a repressive concept, but can instead be a recognition of the free expression of individuals. Straight, cis, women and men are born under different circumstances, have different ways of giving and receiving affection, and have varying needs and expectations from one another. Equivalence of give-and-take is distorted by the wage system of capitalism, whereby costs are externalized, leaving both primary genders of the working class feeling as though they are giving more than they are receiving in exchange. This problem will persist until the end of capitalism.

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¹ Louann Brizendine, 1.

² Anonymous¹

³ Ibid.

⁴ Lance Workman and Will Reader, 109.

⁵ Jeff Ward and Martin Voracek

⁶ Tracey Cox

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⁸ Rosie Boycott

⁹ Rosie Boycott

¹⁰ Susan Walsh

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Thomas H. Greco, 20.

Epilogue

IF YOU HAVE READ THIS BOOK traditionally, going from cover to cover, you should now be at least somewhat versed in both dualistic pantheism and geo-mutualist panarchism.

It is my view that these two perspectives, which are prominent in my work, naturally must feed one another to have any cultural momentum, but that in doing so they have the potential to flourish, creating a positive feedback loop. Both dualistic pantheism and geo-mutualist panarchism place great emphasis on the will of the individual, and the necessity of concerted action in liberation. One provides the metaphysical foundation upon which the physical reality of the other may be built.

I hope in some of the essays, such as “A Mystical Look at Evolution,” to have demonstrated the necessity of including a non-empirical and subjectivist interpretation, without rejecting empiricism or objectivist perspectives in their entirety. I instead hope to reinforce the importance of well-roundedness and inclusive knowledge to virtuosity. This is necessary for any model of respect, upon which any free society depends; for any sense of absolutist certainty may be used as justification for domination, while a society that embraces a healthy degree of uncertainty naturally clings to the importance of perspective to understanding.

A lack of certainty legitimizes a socio-economic and political movement which actively finds shared truths. Geo-mutualist panarchism fits the bill for such a program more than any other view, as it allows room for the expression of self-government, while conceding, rather objectively, the positive rights to land, and, more subjectively, the negative rights in the expression of labor, as allocated through a geo-mutual bank.

The deepest expression of humanity depends firstly on the will to believe and to succeed, and secondly on the proper allocation of resources by way of a means that makes sense, and which appeals to the reason of the masses. This may currently seem impossible, but it is increasingly made probable by every individual who takes it upon themselves to make it possible. By studying metaphysics, as I suggest in “The Role of Metaphysics in Socio-

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Political Revolution,” we may greater empower ourselves, and our society as a whole, to overcome obstacles otherwise too trying.

It is without a doubt that our society could use a bit of alchemizing, but so long as it is transmuted by authority, and not a plethora of liberated individuals, it will continue to lose sight of the smaller truths that are held on a more personal level, truths which can only serve to benefit humanity through a process of communication and consensus, wherein each individual is treated more as ends— from whence their personhood, their perspective as an individual, is given weight— than means to the ends of another.

It’s a beautiful world and life itself is quite tremendous. We are quite gifted to even be able to have these conversations, but we’d be ignorant, indeed, were we to take these gifts and cast them aside, costing us the exponentiality inherent in the gift of freedom.

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