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# Economics as Seen by the Many Peaces

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## Abstract

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### Economics as Seen by the Many Peaces

Beginning with the postmodern assumption of radical plurality, this dissertation investigates different interpretations of what can be summed up as economics. The purpose is to investigate and explore the concept of transrational approaches to economics. This is done by using Wolfgang Dietrich's Theory of the Many Peaces and applying it to economics. Dietrich lays out five families of peaces: energetic, moral, modern, postmodern, and transrational, the final being a dynamic synthesis of the first four. Each peace family has its own unique ontology and epistemology, which is in turn used to explain how economics manifests in each family. The main body of this dissertation is thus an ontological overview of economics in history and culture. Six common threads are compared in each family: time, justice, relationships, currency, environment, and peace. The insights from the four constituent families of peaces are gathered to offer postulates of transrational approaches to economics.



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It is part of my transrational understanding that it takes a whole village to write a doctoral dissertation. I may have written the words, but the ideas and all the necessary support have all come from my surroundings. It is therefore incumbent upon me to acknowledge some of the important strands of the web of life that have supported me through this process.

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All my relations.



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# Resumen en castellano

## *Preámbulo*

El título de esta disertación, Economía desde la perspectiva de las paces múltiples, refleja que se trata de una vista panorámica a la ontología de paz y economía. Los capítulos corresponden a las cinco familias de paces como las ha descrito Wolfgang Dietrich (2012). Cada capítulo explica cómo la correspondiente familia de paces interpreta la economía. Así, el objetivo de la disertación indica la forma. En el curso de la elaboración de esta investigación, emergió el tema de la descolonización de la economía. El proceso de moverse de una perspectiva moderna a las perspectivas diversas de las otras cuatro familias de paces abre una puerta de posibilidad de poder percibir el mundo a través de los ojos de los demás, y así, descolonizar la economía.

No se puede hablar de la economía sin referirse al modo de pensar de la modernidad. Un tema clave de esta disertación es la separación de las actividades humanas en esferas distintas, en las cuales el trabajo, a su vez, está separado de todo el resto de la vida, es un concepto únicamente moderno. Como esta disertación cuestiona la presunción de esa separación, es por su naturaleza una investigación posmoderna. Yo no puedo considerar la existencia de múltiples interpretaciones de la economía sin aceptar la condición posmoderna de Lyotard (1979) que duda la existencia de una verdad singular y absoluta.

Así, la investigación no puede llegar a las profundidades de la economía sin chocar contra las paredes mentales de sus propias precondiciones ontológicas. Yo, como autor, investigador, y creador de esta obra, asumo el desafío de identificar y deconstruir mis propios

prejuicios. ¿Cómo puedo discutir perspectivas no-modernas sobre la economía cuando la palabra en si implica la modernidad? ¿Cómo puedo presentar perspectivas no-modernas de una manera justa cuando toda la investigación presupone un pluralismo posmoderno? No se puede evitar tales paradojas, pero puedo hacerlas explícitas.

### ***Objetivo de la Investigación***

El principal objetivo de esta disertación es describir una perspectiva transracional de la economía. Adicionalmente, es la intención abrir nuevos campos de investigación en estudios transracionales y desarrollar una comprensión más profunda y matizada de las familias de paces. En un marco secundario, se pretende crear un texto que pueda acompañar la trilogía de paces múltiples de Wolfgang Dietrich, específicamente al primer volumen que elabora la teoría de las familias de paces.

### ***Pregunta Central***

La disertación se basa en una pregunta central y una pregunta secundaria:

¿Qué es una perspectiva transracional a la economía?

¿Cómo relacionan los modos de vivir de cada una de las cinco familias de paces con su conceptualización respectiva de la paz?

La respuesta de la primer pregunta es elaborada en el sexto capítulo sobre perspectivas transracionales de las paces y en el capítulo de conclusiones. La respuesta a la pregunta secundaria se presenta en los capítulos 2 a 5, en cuanto que las interpretaciones de modos de vivir son explicadas a través de las cuatro familias oblicuas de las paces.

## ***Metodología***

La metodología de esta disertación se basa en una perspectiva transracional, por tal motivo, es igualmente transdisciplinar. La investigación fue enteramente bibliográfica: no hubo investigación de campo salvo de los campos semánticos de mis propios prejuicios. Concibo esta disertación como una conversación con la teoría de las familias de paces, en que le pregunto si cabe y encaja con concepciones de economía. El método consiste en utilizar las cuatro familias oblicuas de las paces para lograr un acercamiento a la quinta: la familia de paces transracionales. Además, propongo seis hilos conductores que son tejidos en el texto: tiempo, justicia, relaciones, moneda, medioambiente, y paz. Un tercer marco filosófico es la teoría de David Graeber sobre las oscilación entre épocas de lingote y crédito.

En conjunto con los métodos estructurales, también empleo el concepto de la compasión al sujeto como método. Formó parte de mi proceso creativo el encontrar un tono de compasión que ni lauda ni insulta las propuestas de una teoría específica, sino que aprecia los puntos fuertes y elucida los fracasos. Dejo al juicio de los queridos lectores el determinar si lo logré transmitir esa empatía. Sin embargo, fue una decisión consciente en cada momento de mi proceso de escritura.

## ***Estructura de la disertación***

El primer capítulo es una introducción en que comienzo por plantearme como autor y ofrezco explicaciones de cómo esta obra ha emergido de mi alma y de mi circunstancias concretas. De ahí, sigue con establecer el objetivo y la declaración de la pregunta central de la disertación. En la siguiente sección. se explica la metodología y continúa con un resumen del

estado de los debates centrales acerca de economía desde la perspectiva de cada familia de paces. Adicionalmente, presento un resumen de literatura clave en el tema, la cual complemento con fuentes secundarias que encontré. La parte final del capítulo introductorio define los conceptos centrales de esta obra, como la teoría de las paces múltiples, la economía, y la transracionalidad.

El cuerpo del texto es una matriz explicativa compuesta de los seis hilos conductores mencionados relacionados con las cinco familias de paces. Así, hay por lo menos dos líneas de comparación simultánea: tiempo, justicia, relaciones, divisa, medioambiente, y paz en relación con las perspectivas energéticas, morales, modernas, posmodernas, y transracionales de paces. Esta matriz demuestra cómo cada familia de paces interpreta cada uno de los conceptos de los seis hilos y la manera en que las interpretaciones de un concepto, por ejemplo justicia, cambia entre las familias de paces.

El segundo capítulo introduce la primera de las cinco familias de paces, que es la de perspectivas energéticas. Comienza por definir una perspectiva energética de la paz y explicar una interpretación energética de economía. La discusión lleva a un argumento contra la existencia del trueque como forma premonetaria de comercio, y sigue con una discusión sobre la economía del don y unas descripciones del potlatch, en donde incluyo un toque personal. En este punto el texto vira hacia una discusión de conceptos del tiempo no-lineal, lo cual forma el primero de los seis hilos conductores. La siguiente sección introduce una interpretación energética de la justicia, comenzando con una discusión del concepto de David Graeber de economías humanas. La sección siguiente, sobre las relaciones, hace hincapié en las relaciones entre seres humanos más que entre individuos. El caso específico de wampum



explica una interpretación energética de moneda. La visión energética del medioambiente incluye al ser humano como parte integral del mundo natural. La última sección es un resumen del concepto de paces energéticas como paz desde la armonía y paz desde la transcendencia de la dualidad.

El tema del tercer capítulo es las perspectivas morales de la paz. La discusión comienza con un resumen de las características sobresalientes de las perspectivas morales y de ahí se adentra en el tema de los orígenes del tiempo lineal y sus implicaciones para la usura. Como consecuencia del tiempo lineal, la sección sobre justicia explora sus orígenes y los vínculos con la deuda y la restitución, para profundizar en una discusión sobre la deuda y la usura. Se exploran relaciones a través jerarquías, relaciones personales y la ayuda mutua que complementa la discusión sobre la justicia. La sección sobre moneda discute lingote y las interpretaciones físicas de dinero; también explora los conceptos de la sobrestadía y las esferas de intercambio. La interpretación moral del medioambiente se explica por la separación, administración, y el sojuzgamiento de la naturaleza. El capítulo termina con un resumen de las paces morales y una conclusión.

La economía moderna es el sujeto del cuarto capítulo. Empieza con una discusión sobre la definición de la modernidad y de la economía moderna. Tal discusión lleva al concepto del tiempo lineal y cuantificable, que es clave para entender un paradigma de escasez y crecimiento. La sección sobre justicia explora una interpretación moderna de la justicia laica y material mediada por la economía. La sección sobre relaciones interpreta el estado-nación y se divide, aún más, en discusiones sobre la definición del estado-nación, la economía política, y la psicología de las relaciones que esos tipos de estructuras sociales

promueven. La siguiente sección es sobre moneda, con énfasis en la moneda de papel como símbolo deíctico. La sección sobre el medioambiente se caracteriza por una disociación del mundo natural. El capítulo concluye con un resumen del concepto de la paz desde la seguridad y unas reflexiones que abren el camino a las perspectivas posmodernas.

En el quinto capítulo la discusión se centra en perspectivas posmodernas. La primera parte del capítulo introduce una definición de la posmodernidad, el posmodernismo, y la economía posmoderna. Después de esa introducción, la discusión vuelve a los seis hilos con el concepto del tiempo-espacio. La discusión sigue con interpretaciones posmodernas de justicia que renegocian la justicia en relaciones concretas y en momentos precisos. La sección sobre relaciones discute el derrumbe del estado-nación y las críticas del paradigma de desarrollo. Se presenta el concepto de xenomoneda, una interpretación posmoderna de la moneda. La sección que sigue el hilo del medioambiente discute los temas de bienes comunes y la ecología profunda. La última parte del capítulo es un resumen de paces posmodernas y una conclusión.

El sexto capítulo sobre perspectivas transracionales contiene los mismos seis hilos de los capítulos anteriores. La discusión empieza con una definición de la transracionalidad. El capítulo sigue con un contraste entre el aquí y ahora y el presente largo. La sección sobre justicia contrasta las posiciones respectivas de Dietrich y Lederach y discute el bienestar subjetivo. La sección siguiente discute relaciones y el concepto de una frontera de contacto. La sección sobre moneda argumenta qué formas de dinero representan relaciones humanas. La sección sobre el medioambiente visita de nuevo la idea de la interconexión humana con la naturaleza. El fin del capítulo incluye una descripción de las paces transracionales y una

conclusión.

El último capítulo es la conclusión de la disertación, presenta una recapitulación de los capítulos y los temas de la tesis. Además, ofrece un resumen de las conclusiones pertinentes de la obra. La conclusión no ofrece ninguna póliza de garantía específica, sino unas orientaciones filosóficas.

### ***Aportaciones originales***

Las aportaciones originales se encuentran, coincidentemente, en tres áreas: Primeramente se trata de la expansión del trabajo y pensamiento fundacional de Wolfgang Dietrich. Seguidamente, la obra es una elaboración de la teoría de las paces múltiples, de las familias de paces, y de paces transracionales. Finalmente, esta disertación es una profundización de la filosofía transracional.

El ámbito más específico de la obra es la aplicación del marco de las familias de paces al tema de economía. En el estado del arte y en la revisión bibliográfica se explica dónde encaja esta disertación en la discusión actual sobre un acercamiento transracional a la economía. Esta disertación no es la única obra sobre comprensión transracional de la economía, pero, —según pude averiguar— es la única obra que lo denomina así. La diferencia, y lo que delimita la aportación original, es la integración de la estructura de las cinco familias de paces según las explica Dietrich y la pirámide de transformación de conflictos, la cual ofrece un marco para entender y categorizar los éxitos y críticas de distintas teorías y propuestas sobre economía. Así, se presenta como una novedad el no procurar una verdad final en el tema de economía, sino apreciar que así como las familias de paces son perspectivas, formas de ver y de entender el mundo, que son válidas en si, la

economía puede entenderse desde la diversidad.

Como autor, dependo tanto en las fuentes que cito, que es a veces difícil separar lo que es una idea original, una novedad, de lo que son datos repetidos y repetitivos. Es mi opinión que la mayoría del texto es poco más que una agregación del trabajo de otros, a pesar de eso, se puede encontrar a lo largo de la disertación momentos de innovación y claridad.

## ***Conclusión***

Crecí en las afueras de una ciudad pequeña. Tuvimos gallinas, los vecinos tenían cerdos y caballos; había una granja al fondo de la calle. En mi vida, corta que sea, he visto los bosques y campos de mi infancia convertidos en centros comerciales, restaurantes de comida rápida, complejos departamentales baratos, y casas replicadas. Mi familia y amigos encontraron estos cambios con una actitud de desaprobación y complacencia simultánea, diciendo cosas como: «no se puede parar el progreso». Fue evidente que no les gustaban los cambios, pero igual se sentían obligados a aceptarlos. En el proceso de escribir esta disertación me di cuenta que este tipo de progreso no es una parte primordial e inexorable de la vida, sino es el resultado de una cosmovisión particular de un grupo elite de personas en posiciones para lucrar con esos cambios. Había gente que creía que seríamos todos mejores si hubiera en el pueblo unas tiendas más, que vendieran baratijas plásticas hechas en China en las que se les pagara a los vendedores el salario mínimo y el beneficio real fuera para unas pocas personas.

Estas reflexiones se giran por un punto central de mi conocimiento transitorio del mundo. Las leyes inevitables parecen decisiones. Las presupuestas de la economía, sean sobre el uso de tierra o sobre los derechos a la propiedad privada, no son leyes inmutables, sino decisiones basadas en una cosmovisión: las cosmovisiones —como esta disertación

propone demostrar— son siempre múltiples. Ofrezco estas reflexiones como un desafío, a mi mismo más que a nadie, para tener la osadía de imaginar nuevas posibilidades.

Hay un mito moderno de que durante la mayor parte de la historia de la humanidad todos sufrían en la pobreza y la mayor miseria hasta la revolución industrial. Durante el derrumbe del feudalismo europeo, unos industrialistas visionarios salvaron a la humanidad y desde entonces, todos nosotros hemos podido trabajar menos y tener más. Posiblemente, la verdad es todo lo contrario: durante la mayoría de la historia de la humanidad, la gente pasó un porcentaje relativamente bajo de su tiempo en actividades de subsistencia y el resto del tiempo —es decir, la mayoría del tiempo— se dedicaban a las cosas más importantes: la educación de niños, la formación de personas y la recreación de los miembros de la sociedad, creando lo que ahora llamamos cultura. Es como si conociéramos los pasos de la danza de la vida, pero se realizan al revés: la vida y la economía sirven para crear seres humanos sanos y actualizados, por lo que hay que pasar grandes cantidades de tiempo en la fábrica o en la oficina es para servir a tal propósito. Desde luego que se puede culpar a la ética protestante por la comparación del trabajo a la moralidad y la abundancia a la piedad espiritual, pero no es ninguna disculpa que niega la responsabilidad de las decisiones personales. La idea de que una persona debe pasar cuarenta horas por semana haciendo algo que que no le gusta y aguantarlo sin queja, porque de llegar a quejarse la persona es considerada perezosa y por lo tanto, merece ser pobre, es una aberración y resulta contrario a la experiencia humana durante la mayor parte de su historia.

Interpreto la obra de Eisenstein sobre la economía sagrada como una llamada de atención a esta aberración para reclamar algo perdido de un pasado preindustrializado e

idealizado. Einstein aboga a favor de la economía del don y de la reinserción de principios energéticos en la modernidad. Como propuesta universal parece a veces ingenua, en virtud de que privilegia el cuadrante energético de paces transracionales. Sin embargo, es parte de una perspectiva transracional aceptar que varios niveles de la pirámide de transformación de conflictos interactúan al mismo tiempo, por lo tanto, con el lenguaje de las familias de paces, una interacción puede ser simultáneamente moral y posmoderna. Una perspectiva alopática, en la que el problema A requiere la solución A, chocará siempre con este dilema, porque, si mantengo que cada instante es único, entonces una sola solución no encaja con nada más que con un solo instante preciso.

Si adopto una perspectiva de la cartografía elicitiva de conflictos, puedo coincidir de nuevo en puntos de acuerdo con Eisenstein. El método de la cartografía elicitiva de conflictos es para darse cuenta dónde está el desequilibrio en la pirámide de conflicto y reaccionar como corresponde. La diagnosis de Eisenstein es que el desequilibrio existe en un exceso de instrumentalidad racional e insuficiente gratitud energética, por lo que la solución es, obviamente, disminuir la instrumentalidad y aumentar la gratitud. Con eso estoy básicamente de acuerdo, sin embargo, soy firmemente escéptico cuando una diagnosis no se combina con una orientación de equilibrio dinámico.

La misma perspectiva de la cartografía elicitiva de conflictos puede usarse para explicar por qué tiendo a favorecer el presente de doscientos años como perspectiva transracional a la economía. Es mi cálculo que el desequilibrio actual favorece una perspectiva fragmentada y de plazo corto. Para lograr un nuevo equilibrio, se necesita una visión de la eternidad. Nuestras vidas no están aisladas, sino que forman parte de una

tapicería compleja del espacio-tiempo y, en este sentido, son parte de un porvenir cíclico. Recordando el ejemplo del pueblo Iroquois que citó Graeber en que un lado del pueblo enterraba los muertos de la otra mitad, siempre habrá otro lado del pueblo. Una conclusión principal de Graeber (2011), es que el capitalismo requiere de la ansiedad del Apocalipsis, lo que requiere de la cronosofía vectorial, para poder extraer lo más posible lo más rápido posible. Un enfoque en el presente largo no es un aspecto intrínseco de perspectivas transracionales, sino un resultado de mi evaluación de dónde residen los desequilibrios actuales.

El objetivo de esta investigación es descubrir los contornos de una perspectiva transracional a la economía. El método empleado fue la aplicación de la estructura de las familias de paces al concepto de economía. Como la economía es en si un concepto moderno, el análisis se derrumba por su propio peso. Por lo tanto, las familias morales y posmodernas también cubren cualidades reconocidas como economía contemporánea. Las interpretaciones energéticas parten de los presupuestos ontológicos de la modernidad y así aún la idea de una economía energética es un oxímoron o aún más, es tan indefinido como dividir por el cero. En este caso, integrar las cuatro perspectivas de las familias de paces a un equilibrio dinámico de una perspectiva transracional significa que la economía cesa de ser una categoría útil de análisis. Es precisamente el tipo de dilema posmoderno que argumentó Immanuel Wallerstein (Graeber 2006:65): si todas nuestras categorías de análisis solamente tienen significado adentro del sistema capitalista ¿cual base para comparación existe afuera?

Que hay más en la vida que la materia física, son las buenas noticias. Aunque algunos ateístas extremos podrían estar en contra, yo creo la evidencia apoya mi aseveración. Hay

más en la vida que la economía y ha sido comprobado desde hace milenios, fuera de la aberración histórica la que llamamos modernidad. Hay maneras de crear significados que no suplican ni al estado-nación ni al capitalismo por su validez.

Para recapitular, hay varias características de las perspectivas transracionales. Primero, el tiempo está aceptado con sus paradojas intrínsecas: puede ser simultáneamente una dimensión del espacio-tiempo por los márgenes de la comprensión y una vivencia humana subjetiva e incommensurable. La justicia existe en perspectivas transracionales únicamente en relaciones concretas, como «satisfacción de necesidades subjetiva y comunales» (Dietrich 2013:198). Así, las necesidades materiales son solamente una parte del episodio de cualquier conflicto y no son la causa. Los seres humanos existen como holones, totalidades-partes, que son simultáneamente individuos únicos y parte de un colectivo, y además tienen una frontera de contacto distinta y permeable que está en interacción constante con el ambiente. El dinero existe por acuerdo mutuo como una representación simbólica de las relaciones humanas. El desarrollo existe solamente en el sentido no-lineal de la transformación de una cosa a otra. Cualquier referencia al desarrollo, sea el desarrollo sostenible, el desarrollo cualitativo, o el desarrollo de abajo hacia arriba, mientras esté basado en una epistemología teleológica, no encaja con una perspectiva transracional. Concedo que el desarrollo entendido como un cambio de una forma a otra, desde una perspectiva lineal a una perspectiva integral, es compatible con una cosmovisión transracional; sin embargo, dudo que sea útil seguir llamándolo “el desarrollo”. Los seres humanos son expresiones del divino inmanente y son inseparable de la danza del cosmos. Finalmente, las paces transracionales son relacionales, plegables, y siempre moldeadas por los flujos caprichosos



del único momento presente.

Esta disertación intenta definir una perspectiva transracional de la economía y llegar a esa definición mediante un análisis de las cuatro familias oblicuas de paces. En los momentos iniciales llenos de ingenuidad, esperaba llegar a respuestas concretas a las preguntas de investigación. Si yo hubiera presentado una nueva verdad concreta y cierta, no hubiera aprendido nada sobre la transracionalidad. Solamente es posible conocer y discutir perspectivas transracionales de la economía después de haber desconstruido el concepto y, con referencia al preámbulo, mantengo que se requiere de una disposición descolonizada. De hecho, consideraba hallar una nueva palabra o una nueva manera de expresar perspectivas transracionales que no se refirieran al término economía. Aunque soy crítico del término de orígenes helenísticos, no inventé nada satisfactorio para remplazar «economía» y en caso de que lo hubiera hecho, probablemente habría sido presumido.

Siguiendo los hilos de esta disertación, lo siguiente son los postulados de perspectivas transracionales de la economía y un resumen de la respuesta a la primera pregunta de investigación. El principio fundamental de organización de las perspectivas transracionales de la economía, son las redes de relaciones, lo cual se diferencia del lenguaje de materia y consumidores que conocemos. Las concepciones del tiempo reflejan los facetas de lo eterno y abarca desde una vista multigeneracional de largo plazo hasta el sempiterno momento presente. La justicia, si se puede usar el término, es una satisfacción de necesidades subjetivas y comunales que proviene de la habilidad de cada ser humano y es una extensión de nuestras redes de relaciones. La moneda transracional combina el concepto de esferas de intercambio de perspectivas morales y reconoce que hay momentos distintos para medios

distintos: transacciones en efectivo, favores entre amigos, regalos simbólicos, y el tiempo pasado juntos pueden coexistir en sus propias esferas de lógica, las cuales pueden mantener sistemas de dinero formales donde y cuando resulta apropiado y también pueden aceptar e incluir otros arreglos si se presenta la necesidad. Las cosmovisiones transracionales se identifican como parte del medioambiente lo que implica que no hay separación del mundo natural, que es una sublimación de la dualidad fundamental de sujeto y objeto. Las paces transracionales requieren que las nociones de armonía, verdad, justicia, y seguridad estén presentes y, por la misma lógica, requieren un equilibrio dinámico entre el interno y el externo, el singular y el plural.

La pregunta secundaria se trata de una descripción de la economía desde la perspectiva de cada una de las familias de paces. A continuación resumo los puntos sobresalientes de cada capítulo. El capítulo introductorio presenta conceptos relacionados a las cuatro familias oblicuas de paces que se encontrarán en los siguientes capítulos. En este caso, se presenta una revisión bibliográfica para cada una de las cinco familias de paces. Por lo tanto, se presenta una historia breve y una definición preliminar de economía. Desde luego que se explica el marco filosófico de las familias de paces y la pirámide de conflicto elicitivo, puesto que estas dos estructuras forman la columna vertebral de la disertación.

Las interpretaciones energéticas de economía son aquellas que se diferencian dramáticamente de la comprensión convencional de economía. Por eso requieren de una desconstrucción del concepto de economía y de la mente de un principiante para borrar los presupuestos modernos que llevamos a la investigación. Las perspectivas energéticas se caracterizan por concepciones cíclicas y no-lineales del tiempo, lo que tiene como

consecuencia que la vida es vista como un complejo de ciclos repetitivos y no como un proceso teleológico. El capítulo discute la economía del don con un enfoque a las ceremonias de potlatch de la costa Pacífica norteamericana. Se discuten los conceptos de economías del don y de economías humanas como expresiones de perspectivas energéticas. Un medio de intercambio que caracteriza a las perspectivas energéticas es el acto de dar.

Se explican las perspectivas morales de la economía mediante la idea de una jerarquía divina y pre-establecida. Se plantea que los orígenes de concepciones lineales del tiempo se ramifican desde la Era Axial, cuando los dioses creadores masculinos remplazaron a los cultos de fertilidad en la cuenca del Mediterráneo. Una consecuencia de este cambio es el origen del concepto del préstamo a interés y la condenación moral del potencial de ese concepto para llevar a la deshumanización de los deudores. La humanidad ocupa una posición privilegiada en la jerarquía divina y es imbuida con la responsabilidad de la administración de la tierra y de su abundancia, lo que implica una separación y una subyugación de la naturaleza. En esta cosmovisión, el dinero es el lingote y el abundancia consiste en objetos físicos. El comercio es muchas veces una extensión de la ayuda mutua para la humanidad, o una fraternidad de ella, y así es un ejemplo de justicia divina manifestada en la tierra. En esta vena, paces morales están concebidas como una paz desde la justicia que se logra por el mantenimiento de la jerarquía divina.

La idea que se puede reducir todo a calculaciones económicas es parte de una perspectiva moderna. El capítulo sobre la interpretaciones modernas empieza con una exploración de las definiciones de la modernidad y luego explica la cronosofía vectorial y el paradigma de crecimiento. En virtud de que las paces modernas se basan en los conceptos de

justicia y seguridad, las perspectivas modernas de la economía conciben al estado-nación como el garante de las paces modernas que proporciona seguridad interna contra amenazas externas y justicia para la satisfacción de necesidades materiales a través de una economía nacional. Las perspectivas modernas pueden caracterizarse por una instrumentalización de relaciones, ya sea entre personas, o entre gente y el medioambiente. El dinero moderno se caracteriza por el dinero en papel, lo cual es una extensión de moneda del lingote y un símbolo deíctico. En la forma pura, es el triunfo de la razón contra el divino que creará un paraíso laico sobre la tierra.

Desde las perspectivas posmodernas, la pérdida de la verdad absoluta origina nuestra responsabilidad personal para encontrar la paz y definirla y redefinirla en cada encuentro. Las grandes narrativas de la modernidad ya no son sostenibles y la concepción del tiempo, un proceso teleológico hacia lo mejor, es vista como el camino opuesto. La discusión empieza por definiciones y distinciones entre la posmodernidad, reacciones modernas a la condición posmoderna, y el posmodernismo. En las perspectivas posmodernas, como no hay paz otra que aquella que se define en las relaciones de un momento preciso, también no hay justicia otra que aquella que se vive en los encuentros específicos con los demás. En esta manera las perspectivas posmodernas a la economía son relacionales y redefinidas perpetuamente. Usé el concepto de Brian Rotman de la *xenomoneda* para describir interpretaciones posmodernas de moneda en que el dinero representa un copia exacto de si mismo. Las concepciones posmodernas del medioambiente normalmente apelan a la utilidad racional de conservación y no un valor intrínseco o aspecto divino inmanente de la naturaleza. Por eso, las perspectivas posmodernas de la economía son atadas al paradigma moderno y racional mediante el

lenguaje usado para justificarse y así se encuentran en una jaula de lógica circular.

Una motivación que me llevó a este tema fue que la teoría de las familias de paces me parecía una herramienta útil. Ella me ayudó a entender las diferencias que pueden existir en el campo semántico de una sola palabra y por qué dos paces pueden ser incompatibles, si tienen un objetivo común y superlativo. Al final de cuentas, puedo decir lo mismo acerca del marco de las familias de paces aplicado a la economía. Eso me ayuda tener algún sistema para entender diferencias fundamentales. En los últimos días de en que escribía este texto, escuché una entrevista sobre economía por la radio. Para mi fue claro que los tres invitados representaban cosmovisiones morales, modernas, y posmodernas. El primero usaba argumentos religiosos para condenar la usura (moral); el segundo abogaba más por la regulación gubernamental (moderno); el tercero abogaba por la la desregulación como la expresión más pura de la libertad humana (posmoderno). Para mi fue obvio que jamás estarían de acuerdo porque los tres empezaban desde cosmovisiones distintas.

Esta categorización de ontologías ha sido útil para mi en ambos casos, sea para las familias de paces o para las interpretaciones de economía. Sin embargo, me pregunto sobre los límites de la utilidad de este marco: ¿para cuál y para cuánto es realmente útil? A veces parecía que la analogía de las familias de paces se estiraba bastante fina para cubrir la economía. No significa que encontré inconsistencias gruesas en aplicar la teoría, sino momentos de duda en los cuales me preguntaba si otro marco sería más apropiado.

En lo concerniente a la economía, los dos marcos que utiliza David Graeber (Graeber 2011) me parecen más útiles que las familias de paces. El primero es las categorías del comunismo básico, jerarquía, e intercambio como modos de interacción y el segundo es la

periodicidad de épocas de lingote y de crédito. Sin embargo, para justificar el uso de paces transracionales para explicar la economía, el análisis de Graeber comienza con los paradigmas morales. La ventaja que las perspectivas transracionales de las paces aportan es la inclusión de cosmovisiones energéticas. Graeber cita muchos ejemplos de interpretaciones energéticas de economía, pero mi interpretación de su obra es que entra en la cuestión del punto de la confusión moral de la deuda.

Para terminar el resumen de las conclusiones de la disertación quisiera reflexionar sobre los puntos sobresalientes de las perspectivas transracionales de la economía que han surgido de esta investigación. Es importante recordar que esta obra no pretende proponer soluciones concretas a los problemas económicos del mundo, sin embargo las lecciones de la investigación pueden servir como un guía para orientarse un una tierra sin sendero.

Primero, inspirado por Graeber, el dinero es una manifestación de nuestras relaciones personales. Es una unidad de contabilidad que mide nuestra fe en otros seres humanos. El dinero representa las promesas que nos hacemos el uno al otro. En este sentido, si el dinero no refleja la riqueza de nuestras relaciones, entonces hay algo terriblemente equivocado en la historia colectiva que lo imbuye porque ya no sirve el propósito para que fue creado. Repitiendo las palabras del epígrafe de la introducción del Maestro Ueshiba, fundador de aikido, que las mejores materias de comercio son la sinceridad y el amor, la mejor inversión es invertir en relaciones porque en el fin de las cuentas es lo que representa el dinero.

Los presupuestos de la economía moderna, armados por el autointerés racional, recrean los seres humanos aislados y enajenados que el sistema normativo de la modernidad intenta prevenir. Por eso, invertir en relaciones es una propuesta más radical de lo que parece

en la superficie. El traidor que consume todos los bienes comunes será el miembro de la comunidad que no tiene los vínculos emocionales de relaciones y responsabilidad mutua. Las personas que tienen relaciones que son profundas, íntimas, y sustentadoras con familia, amigos, y comunidad son quienes son los menos probables a consumir más que su porción justa. Aquél que se siente descuidado, que no le importa a nadie, tiene algo a lucrar en siendo el traidor. Si los lazos de la intimidad ya están cortados, la vergüenza colectiva es insuficiente para traer la persona a los rangos de la comunidad de nuevo; la empatía debe crearse desde el fondo. Así, invertir en relaciones es el método universal de hacer cumplir las normas sociales.

Imaginamos la ejecución de una hipoteca para un ejemplo contemporáneo que desafortunadamente ha sido bastante común en América del norte desde 2008. Da la posibilidad de comprar una casa a menos del valor del mercado y revenderla por lucro. Eso es posible por la enajenación y anonimato de una ciudad grande. Si no hay ninguna relación, no hay que enfrentarse ni con los detalles de la situación ni el rostro del dueño previo que fue echado de su hogar. Así es fácil echarles la culpa en ellos como fracasos económicos que están cosechando el destino que han sembrado. Es fácil recurrir a la lógica de que la ejecución es nada más por la falta de pagar la hipoteca, pero este argumento perdona y justifica un sistema que promueve el acumulación de deuda onerosa, que es decir promesas que no se puede cumplir. Entonces se convierte en una forma de colocación de trampas legalizadas. Este escenario es una buena manera de beneficiarse de una depresión en los mercados de bienes raíces pero ¿se puede hacerlo en un pueblo pequeño? ¿Cómo es para mi vecino si el tiene dificultades económicas y yo compro su tierra a menos que le valor del

mercado y la vendo en seguida por lucro mientras el este sin techo en la calle reducido de su gloria anterior como amo de casa y terrateniente? ¿Y qué pasa si solamente hay dos familias en el pueblo? ¿Obtengo placer de mi posición de monopolio al tomar la propiedad de la única persona que está en el juego de comercio? Últimamente, desde una perspectiva transracional, siempre hay una sola persona: si acepto que la separación de individuos es una ilusión temporal producida por mi fisiología, entonces me estoy echando de mi propia casa.

En el sentido de desarrollo como libertad de Amartya Sen, hay una cuestión importante acerca del tipo de promesas que se hace la gente libre entre si. Aunque yo haya llegado por un camino distinto, deseo repetir conclusiones paralelas a aquellas de David Graeber en su análisis de la deuda: ¿cuáles son las promesas que que la gente hace cuando la culpabilidad interna de la deuda no le estorba? Si hubiera una sociedad de relaciones fuertes y seres humanos actualizados, una sociedad de perspectivas transracionales de nuestro *oikonomos* en el sentido de ocuparse de una casa, ¿qué valoraría? Por tonto que parezca frente a la racionalidad bulliciosa de realpolitik, me recuerda a las palabras del profeta Bahá'u'lláh (Bahá'u'lláh 1857): «Mi primer consejo es éste: Posee un corazón puro, bondadoso y radiante». La gente libre trata a los demás con la bondad.

La lente de la bondad puede ayudarnos a ver un principio energético en un contexto transracional. La vida es un don. Desde una perspectiva transracional, la vida no es una deuda que hay que pagar, sino es un don que hay que dar libremente. Este principio energético se encuentra en todas partes, y es el motivo por el cual los momentos de umbral son celebrados con regalos, y la razón por la que la educación primaria es pública en tantos países. Sin embargo, en mi país nativo, Canadá, desde la perspectiva moderna se asume el



control a la edad de dieciocho años: la educación básica es un don de nuestros ancianos administrado por el estado, pero la educación universitaria cuesta una pequeña fortuna (mientras que las universidades reciben apoyo público). En Canadá, la perspectiva de la vida como un don existe adentro de límites y más allá el principio se pierde, considerando que muchos otras naciones eligen a extender el don a incluir la educación universitaria. No estoy diciendo que todo debe ser un don, o una vida gratuita como algunos lo viera; afirmo que algunas cosas deberían ser arregladas por intercambio. La cuestión es ¿dónde debería situarse el don de la vida? Segundo las ideas de Eisenstein, el don de la vida podría ser extendido más ampliamente. Los padres normalmente no le presentan a sus hijos una factura cuando cumplen dieciocho años, y si lo hicieran, probablemente asegurarían que jamás se hablarán, lo que es una expectativa normal de un intercambio calculado así: se puede salir de la interacción sin responsabilidad y sin obligaciones. Es claro con un ejemplo familiar, y además me atrevo sugerir que hay muchos más ejemplos así que son avalados por la lógica del mercado.

Este ejemplo, tonto y juguetón como es, llega a la cuestión fundamental de perspectivas transracionales: ¿cómo integrar nuestras experiencias internas y externas? Es bastante fácil acceder a las perspectivas energéticas de la paz porque hay varios ejemplos preservados en la estructura de lenguas indoeuropeas. Mantengo que hay una comprensión inherente de la paz como una experiencia humana subjetiva, que quiere decir que todo el mundo puede imaginarse como sería sentir la paz. Hay un paralelo con economía porque creo que la mayoría de gente puede apreciar el valor de dar sin expectativa de recibir y en la gratitud como motivación. Sin embargo, parece que hay un cisma entre experiencias internas

y externas. Es como si mi paz interna no tiene nada a ver con las guerras sobre el escenario geopolítico; experiencias energéticas de la paz son válidas para el mundo interior, pero el mundo exterior, el mundo real, necesita tratos de paz. En toda verdad, integrar ese cisma y todos los cuadrantes de las paces transracionales con todos los niveles, el interior y el exterior, de la Pirámide Elicitiva de Conflictos es el desafío central de la transición a cosmovisiones transracionales. Mi experiencia como facilitador de seminario a la Cátedra UNESCO para Estudios de Paz en Innsbruck fue que incluso los estudiantes más orientados a las perspectivas energéticas empiezan a abogar la a favor de la política de Hobbes cuando discuten la paz en la esfera geopolítica. En conversación con mi colega y coordinador del programa, Norbert Koppensteiner, mencionó que eso es bastante común entre alumnos del programa: Shiva y Shakti son separados. Es difícil ver como el nivel macro-político puede ser relacional, y conversamente, cómo las macro-estructuras influyen las experiencias intrapersonales (Koppensteiner 2016).

La misma desconexión parece ser frecuente cuando se discute la economía desde una perspectiva transracional. Después de haber investigado, discutido, y debatido este tema durante cinco años, y de haber citado varios ejemplos de la economía del don y de sociedades sin estado, hay una presuposición persistente que esas ideas pueden funcionar para gente viviendo sobre una montaña aislada en la Melanesia pero jamás funcionarán en el mundo real. Se supone que no se puede llevar Shakti a Shiva. Esto parece una falta de imaginación, pero desafortunadamente, es más que eso. Las perspectivas energéticas no pueden ser integradas fácilmente debido a la lógica violenta del estado-nación. Como la Hansa fue excluida de la Paz de Westfalia, así formas de organización social que que no conforman

categorías predeterminadas son excluidas violentamente. Esto no es un lamento derrotista, que reclama que las perspectivas transraciales nunca serán realizadas. Sin embargo, dentro de la lógica del estado-nación, siempre chocarán con el monopolio de la violencia. Para los estudios de paz, esta parte es de interés particular porque pregunta ¿qué se hace entonces?

En esto se halla la belleza de las perspectivas transraciales: siempre hay otro as bajo la manga. Las perspectivas transraciales son más que un choque de civilizaciones entre cosmovisiones modernas y energéticas, puesto que incluyen lecciones de perspectivas posmodernas: La torcedura perpetua de ideas, las verdades incompletas y el mosaico en movimiento constante muestran cómo estos opuestos ostensibles pueden encontrarse. Es precisamente en la tensión de este dilema que se encuentra la torcedura perpetuamente permutable. Las perspectivas energéticas pueden ser proscritas por la violencia de exclusión del estado-nación, pero la gente que vive en una manera transracional no es traumatizada por tal cisma: Cuando Shakti y Shiva se unen, la mente, el corazón y la boca, a través de la palabra, están alineados. Así, aquéllos problemas que parecen insuperables desde afuera tienen alguna posibilidad desde adentro de cada ser humano.

La respuesta ¿cómo lograrlo? Esa es otra historia, y tal vez yo tenga el placer de reinterpretarla. Por ahora, hay tres lecciones que he aprendido en este gran proceso: invertir en las relaciones, practicar la bondad, y andar por la vida con gratitud.



# 1 Introduction

*Economy is the basis of society. When the economy is stable, society develops. The ideal economy combines the spiritual and material, and the best commodities to trade in are sincerity and love.*

Morihei Ueshiba 2007:69

## **Preamble**

The title of this dissertation, *Economics as Seen by the Many Peaces*, reflects that it is an ontological survey of peace and economics. The following chapters are neatly arranged to correspond to the five families of peaces, as laid out by Wolfgang Dietrich (2012), and each one explains as thoroughly and succinctly as I was able how that family of peaces interprets “economics.” This is the form and the objective of this dissertation. However, as the investigation and writing unfolded, an underlying theme emerged. This dissertation is also about the decolonization of economics. The process of shifting the gaze from a modern perspective to the diverse perspectives of the four other families of peaces is a door-opener, even just attempting to see the world from someone else’s doorstep, for decolonizing “economics.”

I wrote the word *economics* in quotation marks in the previous paragraph because one cannot even speak of economics without invoking the spectre of modernity. This is a key theme of this work and will be reiterated in different guises throughout this text. Economics is a uniquely modern concept; equally, “work,” as a sphere of human activity separated from everything else, is a modern concept. The infamous cliché of modern prosperity, having a good work/life balance, implies that work is not my life as if work is somehow separate from

life itself. Furthermore, this entire investigation is postmodern in nature: I cannot consider discussing “economics-es” without accepting Lyotard’s *condition postmoderne* (Lyotard 1979), doubting the validity of one absolute truth and accepting the possibility of many contradictory truths.

Thus, this investigation cannot go too far before it bumps up against the walls of its own ontological assumptions. I, as author, researcher, and creator of this work, am challenged from the outset to assess my own assumptions and prejudices. How can I talk about non-modern manifestations of economies when the very word itself implies modernity? How can I be true to non-modern traditions and practices when my investigation starts from and is steeped in a postmodern perspective? I may not be able to avoid these biases, however, I will attempt to make these biases and shortcomings explicit rather than tacit.

### ***Introduction to the Chapters***

This journey begins with this first introductory chapter. I start by rooting myself as an author and offering some explanation as to how this work has emerged from me, my soul, and my particular circumstances. From there, it will outline the objective and specific research question of this dissertation. That will be followed by a section on the methods I have chosen for this work and then by a review of the state of the art. I offer a review of some of the key literature, which is later complemented by more supporting sources throughout the dissertation. The final section of the introductory chapter is to define some key terms that form the basis of this work. Working definitions of the theory of the many peaces, of

economics, and of transrationality will be given.

The body of this dissertation is arranged in an expository matrix. I have chosen six concepts, which I refer to as threads, and those six threads are overlaid with the five peace families from Wolfgang Dietrich's work (Dietrich 2012). The six threads are time, justice, relationality, currency, environment, and peace; the five families of peaces are the energetic, moral, modern, postmodern, and transrational. I use this framework to explain how each family interprets all of the six threads. This gives (at least) two simultaneous lines of comparison. It shows how one family of peaces interprets all of the concepts of the six threads, and it shows how the interpretations of a concept such as justice change from family to family.

The second chapter introduces the first of the five families of peaces: energetic perspectives. It begins by outlining what energetic perspectives are and what, in general terms, an energetic approach to economics is. This leads to an argument against barter as a mythical pre-monetary form of trade, which then segues into a discussion of gift economies that includes a description of potlatch with a personal connection. The chapter then turns to the first of the threads with a discussion of non-linear conceptions of time. The next section is about energetic interpretations of justice that begins with a discussion on David Graeber's term "human economies." This flows into the next section on relationality, positing the primacy of relationships over individuals. A discussion on energetic interpretations of currency follows, which looks at the specific case of wampum. The energetic interpretation of environment is that human beings are an integral part of the natural world. The final section summarizes energetic peaces as peace out of harmony and the sublation of duality.

The third chapter is on moral perspectives. After briefly outlining some of the salient characteristics of moral perspectives, the chapter moves into discussing the origins of linear time and their implications for usury. The section on justice, building on the concept of linear time, outlines the conceptual origins of justice and links it to debt and restitution, which further continue in a deeper discussion on debt and usury. Relationality is explored through hierarchy, personal relations, and mutual aid and deepens some of the ideas presented with justice. The section on currency discusses bullion and the physical interpretations of money, venturing into the topics of demurrage and spheres of exchange. The environment is discussed through the notions of separation, stewardship, and subduction. There is a summary of moral approaches to peace followed by some concluding remarks.

Modern economics is the subject of the fourth chapter. It begins with a discussion of what modernity is and further outlines the contours of modern economics. The discussion moves to the conceptualization of time as both linear and quantifiable, which transitions into scarcity and the growth paradigm. The section on justice deals with modern interpretations of a secular material justice mediated by the economy. The section on relationality deals with the nation-state, which is further divided into discussions on the definition of the nation-state, political economy, and the psychology of relations that these arrangements foster. Next is the thread of currency which focuses on paper money as a deictic symbol. A dissociation from the natural world is covered briefly in the next section on environment. Peace out of security is reviewed and some concluding reflections are offered that bring the chapter to a close and open up new avenues for postmodern approaches.

Postmodern perspectives make up the fifth chapter. After an introduction that clarifies



what is meant by postmodern and outlines postmodern approaches to economics, the chapter gets back into the six threads with a discussion of space-time. This is followed by postmodern interpretations of justice, which renegotiate justice in our concrete relationships. The section on relationality discusses the break down of the nation-state and critiques of development. That is followed by xenomoney, which is a postmodern interpretation of money. The environment is fleshed out with discussions of the commons and deep ecology. The chapter ends with a review of postmodern approaches to peace and a brief conclusion.

Chapter six, on transrational perspectives, contains the same six threads as the previous four chapters. It begins by reviewing definitions of transrationality. The chapter then proceeds to outline transrational approaches to time, which offers a moment to contrast the here and now with the long present. This is followed by a section on justice, which contrasts the positions of Dietrich and Lederach, and furthermore discusses subjective well-being. Next, the text turns to relationality and the concept of the contact boundary is discussed. The section on currency argues that forms of money are representations of human relationships. The section on environment briefly revisits the notion of human interconnectedness with nature. Transrational approaches to peace are addressed specifically and there is a brief conclusion to the chapter.

The final chapter is a conclusion of the dissertation. It offers a recap of the material covered and delves into some lessons learned and key insights that have emerged from this process. The conclusion does not offer any specific policy guidelines, rather some philosophical orientations. This is because a transrational approach is not a set of rules rather a philosophical orientation towards life.

## ***Personal Perspective***

The exposition of my personal perspective will be sub-divided into three parts. Firstly, I will reflect on my motivation to write, and more specifically, to write this specific dissertation. Who I am as a person, as a member of my community, and as an author will course into my motivation and ultimately frame my personal perspective. I will round out this section on my personal perspective with some words on the justification for this project for myself personally and as an academic endeavour.

## **Who Am I?**

I grew up in Nanaimo, a small city on the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw Nation on Vancouver Island, on the Pacific Coast of Canada. My parents were professionals: my mother a physiotherapist and my father a machinist, millwright, and teacher. Consequently, I was reared in an environment that valued education and clever conversation as well pragmatism and hands-on skill. By contrast, I was not in a family of capitalists: business owners, landlords, or living off of rents. There is a tension here that defines me: I am at once an educated, soft-handed, international academic polyglot and I am also a pragmatic man from a working class town who is more comfortable running a chainsaw than eating a Sachertorte. For many of my formative years, I saw these two facets of myself as in opposition and irreconcilable: either I showered before work or after work, but not both. I had to be one or the other because they are like oil and water. This view of myself is a bit like a cleft in the rock from which water springs: the cleft is a wound and the spring taps in to the well of my

soul and pours out this dissertation. The journey of research and writing has acted as an emulsifying agent, binding the oil and water together in one whole — me.

Rosemarie Anderson asserts that it is precisely the wounds that we carry, the burning questions of our own existence, that motivate our research questions. Often when this truth is revealed, it is embarrassing or distressing that such a deep personal motive was behind a career path (Anderson & Braud 2011:26). I can clearly see how my personal wounds have motivated my career path in general and this dissertation specifically. Rather than it being obscured from me and embarrassing as my cloak of academic objectivity is stripped away, I open and embrace that tender part of myself as my greatest inspiration.

The single biggest formative event of my childhood was the death of my father when I was eleven. It thrust me into a world of responsibility and of guilt. As a boy, my father seemed immensely capable at making things and fixing things — he and my grandfather built my family home. A consequence of his death was that I mourned not having learned more from his wealth of skills and experience. I felt cut off from ancestral lineage and set adrift in a postmodern world. I felt that by not being able to learn directly from my father I had lost my heritage. I tried to compensate for this perceived loss by learning as much as I could and applying maximum effort in all my undertakings. To make up for my wound, I endeavoured to be the best I could be. This presented a problem because it was not clear what that meant. As it was fundamentally a quest of reconnecting to my ancestral lineage, it could not be just about how to get a decent job, but had to have spiritual and moral gravity as well. When I came across peace studies, I felt I had an answer that satisfied my ego with the social status of education, appeased my moral compass for doing good, met my dreams of a well paying

career, and quenched my thirst for a spiritual home.

## **Motivation**

Discussing my personal wounds is a process of grounding myself as an author and addressing the core motivations of my actions — to write. I was in part inspired by Robert Romanyshyn's *The Wounded Researcher*, the thesis of which is that it is our deepest wounds that compel us to action — the research topic that I have chosen has also chosen me because it is a reflection of my history and my wounds. It should not be, as Romanyshyn warns, “merely a confession about the wound” (Romanyshyn 2007:111). It is a way of touching the wound and drawing the dissertation out, as it is spun out of my flesh (Romanyshyn 2007:157), as its own entity — connected yet distinct. It is furthermore an exercise of addressing my biases.

I began with the question of what is worth doing. What was worth my time? As Giddens (1991:70) puts it, “What to do? How to act? Who to be?” are precisely the questions of (post)modern times; I felt forced to answer these questions myself, since I could not rely on a tradition to provide them for me. These questions compelled me towards an academic career in peace studies. As this academic process wore on, yet another year of tuition payments and under-employment, I began to doubt my decision to embark on an academic path. My self-doubt was compounded by witnessing my contemporaries starting families, a project that felt so distant due to the financial and time restrictions that my scholarship imposed on me. In my moments of deepest despair, I began to wish that I had taken an apprenticeship in a trade or gone into something practical; by this time in my life I could be making money, have a mortgage, and have the white picket fence that is the epitome of

bourgeois values. Ultimately, I believe I was driven to pursue my passions over a quick career because of the feelings of loss around my father, wanting to prove that I could choose a noble path. I felt that, having the intellectual capacity and financial resources to study what I wanted, it was my duty, a debt I owed to my ancestors, to choose a career that would potentially benefit all sentient beings.

The interest in economics is an attempt to answer the question of what activity is worth investing my human creative energies. The answer of what brought me the greatest and quickest financial rewards was clearly insufficient, but then I was at a loss as to what standard to use to judge. Add to that existential imbroglio the fact that my lifetime has already seen a financial crisis in Argentina, collapse in Iceland, the 2008 global financial crisis, Occupy Wall Street, insolvency in European countries, and economics is not just a burning question for the struggles of my personal life path, but seemed to be a defining question for peace for a generation in many parts of the world. I wanted an answer about what to do: I wanted certainty in the face of such rampant uncertainty.

A family friend, one who worked a lifetime as an investment consultant, would rail on, citing Jared Diamond or Milton Friedman, on how it was inconceivable for him that people could still be poor in the world when we (perhaps referring to the Western world, perhaps referring to humanity, but more likely in his mind they were one and the same) had figured out the formula for being rich. Why do they not all just adopt a liberalized market economy and then they could all just be fat and happy like us? Something always felt wrong about this question, although I lacked the discernment to put my finger on it. Years later, after two master's degrees in peace studies, the answer seemed obvious: adopting a modern

economy requires sacrifices to identity, culture, tradition, and worldview that the majority of the world is not willing to make because they are simply not worth it. Yet this apparent confusion is prevalent and persistent and motivated me to dig into it.

These questions and situations led me to wonder whether a transrational approach to economics would provide the answers for which I sought. The initial problem with that was that I did not know what a transrational approach to economics entailed. Therefore, I endeavoured to find out.

## **Justification**

As I am compelled to discover the unique facets of transrational approaches to economics, I must make the case that it is worthwhile to do so. While my motivation sets up reasons why the question is of interest to me, the investigation has to be able to reveal something of value. There are three streams by which I justify this dissertation.

Firstly, employing the lens of peace studies and more specifically the framework of the theory of the many peaces to economics is, by its very nature, invoking multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches. Transrational approaches are explicitly holistic approaches. I follow the premise, espoused by Manfred Max-Neef and others, that economics touches all aspects of society and is thus the concern of all. “If economics policies designed by economists, affect, which they do, the whole of society, economists can no longer claim that they are solely concerned with the economics field. Such a stance would be unethical, since it would mean avoiding the moral responsibility for the consequences of an action” (Max-Neef, Elizalde & Hopenhayn 1991:16). Following this logic, transrational approaches, holistic approaches, are what is needed to step beyond the limiting logic of disciplinary

segregation. It is based uniquely on a way of thinking that perceives markets as natural and separated from the rest of human activity in a distinct sphere known as the economy that can be measured with purely objective mathematical means. As this text will make clear, these assumptions cannot be universally true.

As an author, I have a unique perspective, which is my second point of justification. My personal search for a right livelihood does make me uniquely positioned for this project. As I mentioned, the tension I experienced between being a soft-handed scholar while being from a resource extraction town where real men do hard-handed work has led me to be able to embrace both viewpoints. I believe that this gives me a breadth of experience that is fodder for insight from which to undertake this investigation. I have worked in UN offices and I have dug ditches and now I can write a philosophical disquisition about my experiences.

Finally, stepping outside of the uniquely rational arena invites new perspectives. Therefore, inviting transrational perspectives to come and take a look at economics is opening up to innovation. To bolster the argument, I turn to Kenneth Boulding (1946:237).

Indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the ultimate answer to every economic problem lies in some other field. Economics is the skeleton of social science; the backbone and framework without which it degenerates into an amorphous jellyfish of casual observation and speculation. But skeletons need flesh and blood; and the flesh and blood of economic problems can only be found in the broader fields.

Boulding continues, saying, “Economics of itself is too rational a science to be realistic, for reality in the human sphere is very far from rational” (Boulding 1946:237). Venturing beyond the sands of the rational arena is thus what Boulding argues is necessary. Taking that step in my own work has enabled me to open to new dimensions of the question of economics: the debt that I felt I owed to my ancestors for my middle-class privilege became a gift from

them. The shift came from releasing the fretting about how my actions could honour their gift, and moved to trusting that I did in fact have the skills and the gift would be honoured by passing it on. This reflects part of my own journey from modern to transrational epistemologies.

## **Objective**

The prime objective of this dissertation is to describe a transrational approach to economics. Additionally, the intention is to open new ground in the field of transrational studies and deepen the knowledge of the families of peaces. I aim to expand on the work of Wolfgang Dietrich by creating a text that can be a companion to his Many Peaces Trilogy. It is particularly a complement to the first volume that outlines and explains the theory of the families of peaces.

## **Research Question**

This dissertation is based on the following research question and secondary question:

1. What is a transrational approach to economics?
2. How do the modes and means of livelihood of each of the five families of peaces reinforce the corresponding understandings of peace?

The first research question is answered in chapter 6 on transrational perspectives and in the conclusion. The secondary question is answered in chapters 2 through 5 as the interpretations of livelihood are explained through the four constituent families of peaces.



## ***Methodology***

My methodology for this dissertation is derived from my ontology, my epistemology, and my ethics. As this investigation is an ontological survey of economics and peace, each chapter has its own ontology and epistemology. My overall framework is a transrational approach which attempts to hold each chapter in its place and provides a way of understanding how each perspective fits into a greater whole. The single most important methodological consideration is that I have begun from assuming a transrational perspective.

This dissertation is conceptual and philosophical in nature and the research is wholly bibliographical. Because of this, there was no field research other than navigating the noospheric world of ideas and my own internal geography of sensation and preconceived notions. I view it largely as a conversation between myself and Wolfgang Dietrich's Theory of the Many Peaces. In this conversation I am asking the theory whether it fits, whether it can be applied to this idea of economics. As part of that conversation, I include and enter into dialogue with renowned authors and in many cases I draw upon my own experiences as evidence.

My first framework of analysis was to consider the interpretations of economics of the four constituent families of peaces in order to get at the fifth family: transrational approaches to peace. This began with an informal discussion over coffee with my advisor, Wolfgang Dietrich, in 2011. It was my first method of analysis and it morphed into the skeletal structure of this dissertation. The second methodological framework was the six threads that are compared in each chapter: time, justice, relationality, currency, environment, and peace. I came up with the six threads in 2013 after much reading, reflecting, and

contemplating on the subject. I had been looking for patterns in the approaches that could be useful ways of comparing and contrasting the families of peaces that furthermore could be a consistent touchstone throughout the work. The third framework was to overlay the families of peaces with David Graeber's theory of ages of credit versus bullion currency.

I took compassion towards my subject matter as a method. It became an active practice in my writing and word choice neither to laud nor bash the proponents of any of the given approaches. My intention was to present them and their ideas in the best light possible in order both to appreciate their strengths and to shine light on their weaknesses. I will leave it to the judgment of my readers whether I succeeded in conveying such empathy, nevertheless, this was present in every moment of writing.

The scope and the supporting works qualify this dissertation as trans-disciplinary. I specify trans-disciplinary rather than multi- or inter- because it truly *transcends* the conventional frontiers that distinguish one discipline from another.

Transdisciplinarity is an approach that, in an attempt to gain greater understanding, reaches beyond the fields outlined by strict disciplines. While the language of one discipline may suffice to *describe* something (an isolated element, for instance), an interdisciplinary effort may be necessary to *explain* something (a relation between elements). By the same token, to *understand* something (a system as interpreted from another system of higher complexity) requires a personal involvement that surpasses disciplinary frontiers, thus making it a transdisciplinary experience. (Max-Neef, Elizalde & Hopenhayn 1991:15)

This dissertation is transdisciplinary by dint of it being in International Peace, Conflict and Development Studies. I draw on, but am not limited to, anthropology, economics, philosophy, physics, psychology, and sociology. Truly, as a methodological consideration, it was important how an author related to the topic at hand much more than with which academic

discipline they are formally affiliated.

A large part of the shape of this dissertation comes from living life while writing. It may be on the edge of what could be called a formal method because it is not a controlled structure yet it does include things that I actively chose to do because of my research interest. The experiences I had briefly running my own business, working as a wage labourer, and joining a cooperative, provided invaluable insight into the subject matter. Reading Marx while working a low paying labour job was particularly surreal and a visceral experience of both the alienation from the means of production and the literature. Such experiences were instrumental in bringing me to a new level of understanding.

Stating that I am orienting myself with a transrational approach does not mean that I am always completely balanced in all aspects of my being. It does mean that I strive to acknowledge all aspects of my being and do not identify one as truly me to the detriment of others. As much as I have tried to keep this perspective consistent throughout this text, I am human. There have been moments in which I have been moral in my thinking and times, often when angry, when I have been extremely rational in spite of my heart. This gentleness is important to me as this dissertation is nothing more than a reflection of my thoughts and feelings flowing out onto the page.

### ***State of the Art***

I have chosen to organize the state of the art by the families of peaces in the reverse order that they appear as chapters of this dissertation. This is because the academic literature is heavier on one side than the other. For example, there is such a surfeit of postmodern voices

that my task as researcher is particularly onerous in sifting through and choosing the most cunning and appropriate critiques to present, whereas the dearth of material written explicitly about energetic interpretations of economics is difficult by the inverse logic. In the latter case I searched many sources, panned many streams, to find flakes of gold that I collected and, through some kind of academic alchemy, formed my own nugget in this text. It is also true that the logical place to begin this discussion is with the work of Wolfgang Dietrich and transrational approaches to peace.

## **Transrational**

This dissertation is so obviously inspired by Dietrich and his work on transrationality that it barely needs to be stated. As I mentioned in the objective, I see this project as a complement and an extension of his work. Transrationality roots its inspiration in the historical precedents of tantric Buddhism and yogic philosophy. Therefore, as a way of interpreting the world, it is neither unique nor novel, yet it repositions the tenets of the currently reigning ontology. I have found other proposals such as Sardar's transmodernity (2007) and Latour's compositionism (2012) to be similar in spirit and different solely in name. Transrational understandings have a long history and several contemporary iterations and interpretations. For this dissertation, I follow explicitly Wolfgang Dietrich's approach to transrationality.

Elicitive Conflict Transformation is the approach to peace and conflict that is the logical extension of transrational interpretations of peace. Although the term was coined by John Paul Lederach, he and Wolfgang Dietrich have travelled similar and parallel trajectories that led them both to conceptualize approaches to peace that are transrational. There are

essentially three points of debate in the state of the art in Elicitive Conflict Transformation: time, justice, and evolution. Dietrich argues that conflict transformation can only occur in the unique present moment, whereas Lederach advocates a longterm perspective that extends to the 200-year present. My tendency is to favour the long present while advocating a balance amongst short, middle, and longterm visions. Lederach roots his conception of peace in justice, whereas Dietrich sees the discussion of justice as imposing a teleological condition on peace. Here, I align myself with Dietrich, maintaining that any interpretation of justice must be local, contained, and relational and any promise of justice bringing peace in the future draws the perceiving human subjective out of the present moment. Finally, there is debate whether we human beings are evolving to more and more complex and pluperfect states of being or are we simply changing from one state to another with no possible hierarchical or dualistic values. Dietrich posits the former, whereas Ken Wilber advocates an evolutionary perspective, which is often present in contemporary discourse. I cannot deny, firstly, the appeal of belief in modern exceptionalism, and secondly, the effects of established theories of evolution. The archaeological record shows that life has evolved from single cells to forms of increasing complexity and we must be at some midpoint on a scale that extends into the future. Nevertheless, especially through the course of this investigation, I have come to a greater respect and understanding of bygone generations and I cannot maintain that I am in any way more advanced than a human being that lived five or ten thousand years ago — I am, however, shaped by my environment and I should therefore not confuse opportunity with capacity. For these reasons I position myself in a non-evolutionary perspective that is embedded within an acceptance of larger evolution of periods of time that for my short

lifespan are unimaginable and best described as astronomical. These bifurcations will be revisited in chapter six on transrational interpretations of economics.

Two authors whose work supports transrational interpretations of economics are David Graeber and Charles Eisenstein. They provided the most substantial contribution to support this investigation and additionally, they provided triangulation points for my work as they are both outside of peace studies and outside of the Innsbruck School. I am however reluctant to classify their positions and their works as specifically transrational. They most definitely inhabit the cusp of postmodern perspectives; equally, to call them postmodern would be to ignore some of the vital energy that they bring to their work.

Eisenstein's book *Sacred Economics* (2011) was useful for inspiration and was exactly the kind of book I was looking for. I will admit that at times I was jealous that I had not written it and that Eisenstein had beaten me to the punch; at other times, it gives me ample room to add to the discussion. He and I approach similar questions from different ends. Eisenstein (Eisenstein 2011:11) mentions that one of his orienting questions is "What new scientific, religious, or psychological paradigms might arise in the context of a different kind of money?" I started looking at the question the other way around, taking the families of peaces as different paradigms and analyzing the different kinds of money that each one has. From this perspective, our respective works are perhaps in a way complementary.

The thesis of Eisenstein's book is transrational. The premise of sacred economics is the re-insertion of energetic principles into the existing (post)modern framework, which is the definition of transrational approaches. The tone is often moralistic, which moors the book's thesis to a postmodern framework. I do not share the same prophetic attitude that

Eisenstein seems to take, that sacred economics is the good and necessary paradigm shift. It is a reiteration of dualistic thinking, that there are good and bad paths and that we are currently on the bad path and need to be saved from ourselves, which approaches the sacred from a rational and modern perspective.

For many people in the world, the idea of the paradigm shift itself may not make any sense. The world is, of course, not homogeneous and monolithic. Not everyone uses money, swaps things, or has the same assumptions of value, gifts, and money that Eisenstein seems to take as a starting point. Granted, *Sacred Economics* was written and published for a specific audience, and the fact that it was released online assumes a stratum of the world population with access to computers.

As it fits into the state of the art, I see Eisenstein's chapter "The Turning of the Age" (2011:141-158) as describing a shift from postmodernity to postmodernism. This parallels the difference between the postmodern condition and the postmodern cognition. The language that Eisenstein uses sounds similar to Dietrich's transrational shift, however, the content is different. The big shift Eisenstein describes here is the realization that money is a series of agreements, which is an argument that can be made rationally.

He does however enter transrational territory. Eisenstein draws the roots of the 2008 financial crisis to what he calls the *Ascent of Humanity* (which is the title of Eisenstein's 2007 book). In the terms that I am using, and following the families of peaces, Eisenstein's ascent of humanity has some overlap with modernity. However, I differ from Eisenstein's approach in that I perceive a Eurocentric and evolutionist bias in his perspective. I would argue that his case of the ascent of humanity only makes sense in the context of European

modernity. I do not agree that the separation of man and nature, the Cartesian separation of modernity, was a *necessary* step. I therefore perceive a difference between Eisenstein and me in our approach to the debate around a teleological evolutionary trajectory. The world is abound with peoples that were never thrown out of Eden.

Eisenstein introduces the transpersonal aspects in this chapter outlining that the way to transform the seemingly intractable destiny of the ascent of humanity is through a ritual transformation from child to adult. That way one can learn to give without fear of not receiving. I fully agree with with this premise. I would add that in a truly holistic transrational perspective, this is only one example of what it takes to become a full human being — it is only one small part of a multi-layered pyramid.

Of David Graeber's work, I reference several publications, but two books predominantly: *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (2001) and *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (2011). I find his work to be seemingly under a postmodern umbrella yet from his analysis, he draws conclusions that fit with energetic worldviews. I am reticent to label Graeber as a transrational voice because it takes him so long to warm up to it. Graeber spends the first fifty pages of *False Coin* (Graeber 2001) and about the same in *Debt* (Graeber 2011) eloquently making the case that is my assumed starting point. There are different worldviews amongst the various cultural permutations of humanity, the majority of which are premised on ontological assumptions about the nature of relationships, space, and time that render the tenets of economics absurd. By citing examples from anthropological literature, Graeber's work validates the assumptions of energetic worldviews: relationships are more primary than individuals; people reciprocate



the act of giving; an exchange of goods touches all layers of the human experience, reproducing one's social identity and sexuality as much or more than it is about the exchange of any commodities. Graeber might shirk the label of transrational if I were to apply it to him, but what is clear is that his work has been fundamental, in the literal sense of creating a foundation from which to elaborate my own transrational approach to economics.

## **Postmodern**

As I was researching this topic, postmodern perspectives seemed to be the easiest to come across. I knew where to find the orthodox approaches, but when searching for critical perspectives on economics, what I found fell under the roof of the postmodern family. This is to be expected because a critique of economics is postmodern by its nature. Firstly I will breakdown approaches of postmodernism that are reactions to a modern linear conception of time. Secondly, the other camp of postmodern approaches, is a modern response to the postmodern condition. Whereas the former attempts to twist the truths of modernity, the latter attempts to improve upon modernity because, in the face of postmodern ennui and anomy, the solution is deemed to be found in applying greater rationality.

Postmodern critiques of economics in general all hinge on a critique of a vectoral chronosophy, which is to say the arrow of time and progress. This can take many guises yet three variations of the theme are particularly common. There is the ecological argument, which these days might be better called the climate change argument, which is based on environmental degradation. This is to say that if economic activity stays on its course, then the water, air, and soil will become toxic and no longer support life. This is a viewpoint that is associated with early environmentalism and continues through international instruments

such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change begun in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and includes the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015. A variation of this interpretation is that of the finite planet. This is a critique of the perpetual growth paradigm, which is the driving engine behind free-market capitalism, and argues that perpetual growth cannot continue on a planet with finite limits. We see this kind of argumentation from Kenneth Boulding (1966) with his concept of Earth as a spaceship, from Ernst Friedrich Schumacher (1973) with his idea of natural resources as capital reserves, or from Tim Jackson's call for prosperity without growth (2009). Anyone who criticizes GDP growth rates as a measure of success is appealing to this sentiment. A third iteration of the theme is postdevelopment. This is a current of thought that posits that not only has economic development proven unsuccessful, but any form of thinking that is oriented around a linear teleological progression is inherently violent. We see the beginnings of this in the early twentieth century and further bolstered by the emerging field of post-colonial studies. The works of Arturo Escobar, Gustavo Esteva, and Manfred Max-Neef appeared to me as critical oases in the desert of development discourse.

Postmodern perspectives that are modern responses to postmodernity can be simply characterized as using the wrong methods. Proposals to restructure GDP fall under this logic. The argument is that the failure is not in the application of mathematical formulae to number-crunch the problem, it is that the wrong metrics were used. This kind of thinking leads to adding more variables to the equations, which is colloquial and pejoratively known as building a better mouse trap. Costanza et al.'s (1997) article on the monetary value of "ecosystem services" is a prime example of this, as are proposals to monetize traditionally

unpaid work. Traces of this viewpoint can be found in Amartya Sen's (1999) work in that development is not the problem, but rather the fact that development does not take enough things, namely freedom, into account. This interpretation runs aground on itself with perspectives such as from Raj Patel's *Value of Nothing* (2010), in which he describes profound dissatisfaction with the idea of quantifying externalities and environmental biosphere services, mentions that women do the majority of (unpaid) work, calculates what it would be worth, and seems unsatisfied with that "market-driven solution," and yet stops just after saying that it is possible to imagine something else. The profound shortcoming of postmodern perspectives is just that: dissatisfaction with nowhere to turn.

Many postmodern voices, just as Eisenstein and Graeber, are somewhere on the cusp of transrationality. Kenneth Boulding is a good example of one whose work, although in the postmodern camp here, has strongly influenced the Innsbruck School and transrational approaches to peace. Raj Patel, although definitely not transrational, is right on the cusp since he seems to have exhausted postmodern possibilities. Ernst Friedrich Schumacher's work spans the cusp of structuralism and post-structuralism. *Small Is Beautiful* (1973) is a postmodern book, yet his synopsis of Buddhist Economics fits with a transrational perspective. This discrepancy is not contradictory since Schumacher wrote the book at the time of the emergence of critical theory, which opened pathways to different patterns of thought but was not immersed in them.

## **Modern**

The state of the art within modern economics is oriented around historical cleavages. The fracture points within the discipline that economists currently debate and discuss and some of

the historical distinctions are far more nuanced than this schematic summary will address. The focus of the dissertation as a whole is on the schisms between the peace families rather than the subtle intricacies of the avant-garde of economic policy.

The defining rift in political economy from the late nineteenth until the end of the twentieth century was the between Marxist socialism and capitalism. Although this debate shaped the wars for a century, since about 1990 with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Communist Bloc, it has largely been considered a dead debate. The ideology of free-market capitalism triumphed, the leftist hold outs were relegated to the disenfranchised fringes, and the sphere of legitimate debate shifted sharply to the right. The divide had been overcome, which inspired talk of an end of history, that human civilization had culminated in its most perfect expression. However, this division persists and Marx's fundamental criticisms have not been resolved. Even though there is some postmodern energy in Marx, as his philosophy is entirely framed as a dialectic backlash against the political economy and statecraft of the late-nineteenth century, Marxism, and especially the totalitarian implementation of Marx's ideas by Bolsheviks and Maoists, is an extreme expression of the modern nightmare. At its base, the rift is over whether the needs of the collective are best served by concerted collective action or the sum of self-interested individual action. Strong arguments are on both sides but the political preferences of modernity favour individual autonomy.

Within mainstream economics there are two major sub-disciplines: microeconomics and macroeconomics. Microeconomics is the study of individual human choices, decisions, and behaviours; macroeconomics refers to the patterns of resource flow at the level of the nation-state and internationally. This disciplinary dividing line was a historical frontier for

schools of economic thought. On one side, there is classical economics, as formulated and made famous by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, and neoclassical economics, which was influenced by the trailblazers of the Austrian School. On the other side is the eponymous Keynesian economics, which follows the groundbreaking work of John Maynard Keynes. However, this bifurcation has been largely resolved by the neoclassical synthesis, from John Hicks and Paul Samuelson, which uses neoclassical economics for microeconomics and Keynesian economics for macroeconomics: the neoclassical synthesis is what is now known formally as mainstream economics.<sup>1</sup> Yet despite the unified theory of mainstream economics, the responses to economic recession still fall along these lines: the neoclassicists advocate austerity and the Keynesians favour stimulus spending. Even though the contentions have been theoretically resolved, they arise in the debates over policy decisions.

Though the Austrian School is most often considered a heterodox school, which is outside the scope of mainstream economics, I tend to view it in a continuum as an extension of classical and neoclassical economics. The heterodox economics usually consist of critiques of capitalism; feminists argue that economics is structurally biased against women and ecologists argue that it excludes the true value of the environment. The Austrian School, however, takes capitalism and runs with it to the extreme. Furthermore, marginal utility theory, which is the distinction between classical and neoclassical economics, was introduced by the founders of the Austrian School: Stanley Jevons, Carl Menger, Léon Walras, and Eugen Böhm-Bawerk. Without the significant contributions of the Austrians, there would be no neoclassical “mainstream” economics.

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<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, Post-Keynesians who refute the synthesis on the grounds that it misrepresents Keynes’ theories.

There is a field of peace economics that is a sub-discipline of economics. It is historically based around the work of figures such as Kenneth Boulding, whom I frequently cite, as well as Jan Tinbergen, and John Maynard Keynes. On the surface, the topic of this dissertation might seem to fall under the category of peace economics. However, peace economics is largely a product of modernist idealism and not of particular interest to this investigation. It looks at how to optimize market economies toward peaceful ends. There are many ways of expressing how I differentiate myself from peace economics, and simply put, following the belief that means are ends in the making, I cannot fully subscribe to a peace that is created by means with which I do not fully agree.

I would like to offer a final bifurcation point that sets up the points of debate in modern economics. Smith and Max-Neef outline a set of four key bifurcation points at which there was a choice of two radically different ways of viewing the world (Smith & Max-Neef 2011:14-17); the path that was collectively chosen shaped the discourse of modernity. The first is between St. Francis of Assisi (Giovanni di Bernardone) (1182–1226) and Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527); the saint's affirmation that it is by loving that we are truly loved lost out to Machiavelli's cynical realpolitik that it is safer to be feared than loved. The second comes between Francesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) and Francis Bacon (1561–1626); an approach of multiple truths lost out to the one Truth. The third is between Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) and René Descartes (1596–1650); given the choice that everything is alive or everything is a machine, the Cartesian mechanistic view prevailed. Their final juxtaposition is between Goethe (1749–1832) on the one hand and Galileo (1564–1642) and Newton (1642–1726) on the other hand: it is a choice between aesthetics and mathematics.

What I find particularly useful about this exercise of comparing the worldviews of some notable historical figures has two points. Firstly, it shows that alternatives have always been present throughout history and it is not a uniquely twentieth century phenomenon to challenge the status quo. Secondly, the bricks and mortar of our reality are rebuilt in every moment; at all of these moments in history there were choices and reality was shaped by those choices. By extension, these pivotal choices are not limited to grand moments of history but are available in every moment.

I would like to add to this list Karl Polanyi (1886–1964) and Friedrich von Hayek (1899–1992). Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* and Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* were both published in 1944 and provide drastically different visions at a crucial point in world history. This is also a debate between, using Polanyi's terms, formalism (Hayek) and substantivism (Polanyi)(Pearson 2010:180). Polanyi refuted the assumption of a natural and self-regulating market and was oriented to the social and cultural embeddedness of economic phenomenon. Polanyi makes three key points in his book: economics cannot be separated from the rest of life, society, or culture; the free market requires the state to maintain it; the assumptions of capitalism tend to monopoly and totalitarianism. Hayek, on the other hand, defends libertarian values and equates democracy to the tenets of unregulated laissez-faire capitalism. He argues that governmental intervention in the economy is an impingement on fundamental freedoms. The two views, especially regarding the nature of the role of government in markets, are diametrically opposed. The Western world followed Hayek's vision and he became an influential economist in the Austrian School and the Chicago School. In the introduction to the 2001 edition of Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, Fred

Block suggests that the polarizing nature of the Cold War is precisely why the path of Hayek was chosen, as it was a time for us versus them and not a time for nuanced arguments (Block 2001:xix).

## **Moral**

As Adam Smith is considered the father of the academic discipline of economics, he is also, as I have considered him, a transitional figure from moral to modern worldviews. He stands between the ethicists and the economists. Ricardo and Jevons pioneered the mathematical orientation, which Polanyi called formalism, that defines modern approaches to economics and breaks from the moral tradition of political economy based on philosophical precepts. Prior to Adam Smith, the rules of what we might call the economy were written by the religious doctrines and interpreted by the ethicists of the time. Rather than being the purview of experts calling themselves economists, the questions of economics are fundamentally religious questions about how to live a morally righteous life.

The questions of the moral state of the art on economics are as old as the written word — probably even older. Plato's *Republic* begins with the question of whether paying one's debts is the essence of justice; the answer is yes, but there is more to it than that and it is a question that for millennia has never really been resolved. The state of the art of moral interpretations of economics hinges largely on the ambiguous and ambivalent attitudes towards debt and the same issues continue to be an open and debated question to this day.

Is justice paying your debts? The chapter on moral perspectives addresses this question in a bit more detail, but it is more than a bifurcation point in moral traditions as it seems to be its central paradox. Sin, debt, and guilt are synonymous in most languages and



etymology suggests a previous non-differentiation rather than a conflation. Since sin and debt are basically the same concept, then paying one's debts is the very definition of morality and the cornerstone of justice. This appears unambiguous except that moral traditions preach forgiveness as a core virtue. So which is more moral, forgiving debts or paying debts? This is central to the famous Christian Lord's Prayer, paraphrasing the Wycliffe translation of 1395: forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6:12). I would like my debts to be forgiven, but I am not as likely to forgive the indebtedness of others towards me. Economic morality is caught in an ostensible double-bind, as it is on one hand the very definition of justice and fair dealings to pay one's debts, and on the other hand, it is virtuous to forgive debt. The great moral traditions, from the Bible to the Vedas, seem to have one foot on either side of the ledgers at the same time.

A similar yet variant question is who is the more guilty of the pair? Is it the creditor or the debtor? In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the creditor is clearly the worse of the two and is a nearly universally despised profession, which is given many rather pejorative names.

[...] the very name, "usurer," evokes images of loan sharks, blood money, pounds of flesh, the selling of souls, and behind them all, the Devil, often represented as himself a kind of usurer, an evil accountant with his books and ledgers, or alternately, as the figure looming just behind the usurer, biding his time until he can repossess the soul of a villain who, by his very occupation, has clearly made a compact with Hell. (Graeber 2011:10-11)

Moneylenders, by nature of their profession, are often wealthy and therefore may have opportunity and means to redirect the moral condemnation. They have two expedient options: "either shunt off responsibility onto some third party, or insist that the borrower is even worse" (Graeber 2011:11). In early Roman law it was permissible for a creditor to execute insolvent debtors. The success of such endeavours only adds to the moral confusion. In

mediaeval Hindu law codes it is the debtor who will be reborn as his creditor's slave, horse, or ox and similar stories can be found in Buddhist traditions (Graeber 2011:11). However, even though tolerant attitudes towards moneylending existed in India or Japan, the parables shifted and resemble the European vilification of the creditor when the usurers were thought to have gone too far. No matter which side the question is approached from, whether the creditor or the debtor is assumed more evil, the same logic and the same arguments work in reverse.

Another bifurcation point is mostly a parallel of the previous division between the guilt of creditors and debtors. It is the status of usury. On the one hand is the blanket prohibition of usury of the big three Abrahamic faiths. Even with strong doctrinal opposition, Judaism, Catholicism, and Islam have in practice been lenient with enforcement over the centuries. On the other hand is the containment approach; as in the Hindu Vedas, interest on loans is permitted provided it does not exceed the amount of the initial principle. Doubling my debt is not the price of credit that I would want to pay, but it is far favourable than excommunication, a lifetime of peonage, or summary execution. The division is thus between prohibition and a controlled tolerance. The primarily Judeo-Christian approach has been informed by the Aristotelian doctrine that money cannot be a productive force, and has consequently landed in a limbo of moral ambiguity by saying one thing and doing another. While the Islamic approach is also one of prohibition, it appears more as containment by promoting commerce as an extension of mutual aid to the fellowship of the spiritual community under the strict auspices of religion and the prohibition of usury. In order to paint a simplified picture, we can thus juxtapose Aristotle on one hand and Islamic ethicist Ibn

Khaldun, who advocates commerce as mutual aid, on the other.

A further question of debate is whether money is immutable. The question is does or should money wear out? The bullion precedent that gave rise to the international gold standard unquestionably seeks inspiration and legitimacy in the non-reactive and unoxidizable qualities of gold. Gold is eternal, neither tarnishes nor rusts, and by metonymy or equivalence, so is money. The contrary position is held by theorists such as Silvio Gesell, who advocates demurrage, or negative interest. Just as the immutable theory of money is tied to its representation in gold, Gesell's theory and advocates of negative interest ground their arguments in money's connection to physical objects. All things decay and, as Gesell argues, so too shall money. The principle that money is immutable persists beyond moral paradigms, and with it the fundamental paradox of eternal money in an entropic world.

## **Energetic**

It is the nature of the written word that it codifies ideas. This is a kind of circular logic since 'codify' derives from codex, meaning 'book.' Written words then lend themselves to worldviews based on permanent and immutable laws. The spoken word lasts only a moment after it leaves the orator's lips, lingers in space just long enough to shake the air, and leaves an impression on the memory of the listener; it is a phenomenon that is ephemeral and emerges out of our human relations. The written word, by contrast, attempts to claim immortality, transcending space-time. Moral and modern worldviews thrive with the permanence of the written word, whereas energetic perspectives follow the philosophy of the spoken word, which exists only in the present moment between people.

It is by the very nature of energetic perspectives that they are not written down.

Codification transforms energetic principles into moral norms, and thus, they cease to be energetic. Followers of energetic peaces are more likely to spend hours in quiet contemplation than to write doctoral dissertations about their perspectives. There is, consequently, a dearth of written sources on energetic interpretations of economics.

Following the specific terminology that I am using, energetic perspectives and the families of peaces, there is, I believe it is safe to say, only this dissertation. That is not to say that these are previously un contemplated topics, just that they went under different names. Economic anthropology has concerned itself with livelihoods of peoples who live in and recreate societies, including ones in which formal markets do not exist. The work of economic anthropologists is integral to this dissertation, however, the discipline itself does not seem to have made the waves it deserves.

Nobody, it seems, believes that economic anthropology has reached anything close to its intrinsic potential, and few would quibble with my earlier claim that the field survives as a small ghetto in anthropology, and barely that in economics. Is the problem one of luck, funding, or fundamental intractability? Or is it perhaps simply that methodological scruples have stymied pragmatic cooperation? (Pearson 2010:192)

As the insights drawn from economic anthropology have been so important for this work, and moreover, they have been enlightening for me personally, I can only hope that the field may further approach its intrinsic potential.

Economic anthropology, and this dissertation, draw from a more general pool of ethnography for examples and sources. Under postmodern critiques, the discipline of ethnography has garnered a reputation of recreating a privileged, white, eurocentric, male perspective that is othering and romanticizing the subaltern. While I agree with this assessment, I am also in the predicament of using these same romanticized accounts of an

exotic Other as crucial sources. I try to mitigate these problems in two ways. Firstly, regarding the potlatch, I used two sources, George Clutesi and Umeek, who speak of potlatch from their own experiences of a ceremony that is within their own traditional cultural heritage. Secondly, I have attempted to reduce the idea of historical examples as being curiosities by bringing in contemporary examples that echo the ideas presented in the ethnographic sources. For instance, I compare some aspects of the potlatch to the Christian tradition of Christmas.

The field of economic anthropology has provided the sources on which the energetic chapter is based. In fact, it may be fair to say that this dissertation is an overview of economic anthropology masquerading as peace philosophy. To avoid indicting myself to interdisciplinary anarchy, allow me to add that what this dissertation does is build on the descriptive overview of economic anthropology and shed light on specifically what kinds of understandings of peace and what kinds of economic systems go together. Regardless, economic anthropology forms a metaphorical spinal column that enervates the rest of this thesis.

Economic anthropology suffers from one major schism between formalism and substantivism, both of which can be traced back to Karl Polanyi. Even though David Graeber suggests that the debate between formalism and substantivism is considered by most to have been pointless, he maintains that the basic issues have never really been resolved (Graeber 2001:9). I will therefore attempt to briefly summarize the two approaches. Formalism assumes that there is a basic set of rules that economic activities follow and substantivism assumes that the entirety of society has to be analyzed to put economic activity in its proper

context.

Formalism assumes that economics follows inevitable and universal laws. This thinking forms the basis of classical and neo-classical economics and can be seen in the early classicists such as Smith, Ricardo, and Malthus. Formalist approaches are effective at understanding how people behave *within* a market, however, they are not as helpful when markets do not exist, which is what energetic perspectives are looking at. A formalist would argue that when it seems that economizing (rational self-interest) is not happening, it is just that the person is maximizing something else, something immaterial (prestige, for example, can only exist within a web of social relations, defying the logic of formalism). In that sense, people are always maximizing something and so the economic assumption stands but its power of prediction is lessened. Formalism, especially as it is a micro-economic approach, privileges the existence of an individual, which in turn misses the socio-cultural element of why people desire one thing more than another.

Substantivism, by contrast, starts from the assumption of viewing society as a whole. What that misses, though, is explaining how people are motivated to reproduce society. Substantivism can be seen in the work of George Dalton, Paul Bohannon, and clearly in Karl Polanyi and his concept of embeddedness. Substantive approaches are particularly useful for analyzing stateless societies, as Graeber explains (Graeber 2001:10-11).

But in most societies, such institutions did not exist; one simply cannot talk about an “economy” at all, in the sense of an autonomous sphere of behavior that operates according to its own internal logic. Rather, one has to take what he calls a “substantive” approach and examine the actual process through which the society provides itself with food, shelter, and other material goods, bearing in mind that this process is entirely embedded in society and not a sphere of activity that can be distinguished from, say, politics, kinship, or religion.

The critique of substantivism is that it suffers from Durkheimian functionalism. It may describe the visible mechanisms but fails to “get inside the head” of the people involved. Ultimately, it falls prey to the same criticisms levelled against ethnography that in the end, all we really know is what the economist thinks people are doing and not what the folk themselves think that they are doing. Graeber’s critique in *False Coin* (2001) is levelled at formalists and substantivists alike in that they both illuminate and obscure different aspects. This is where Graeber adopts a transrational perspective and, although I favour a substantivist approach because it is counter to the neo-classical standard, to draw insights from both is compatible with a transrational framework.

Without any doubt, my approach strongly favours a substantivism over formalism. We can use Bourdieu as an example. I refer to him in as much as he follows Polanyi’s argument that economic relations are embedded in social relations but differentiate in his strictly formalist conclusions that gift economies, “archaic” economies as he calls them (Bourdieu 1977) are “governed by the laws of interested calculation, competition, or exploitation” (Bourdieu 1977:171-172). It is firstly this kind of presumed negative ontology of formalism from which I wish to distance myself. Secondly, a substantivist approach, one that focuses on collectivism and relationships rather than a discreet and separate individual is far more compatible with the worldviews of energetic perspectives.

The underpinning for all of the discussion on gift economies stretches back to Marcel Mauss and his classic work on gift exchange “*Essai sur le don*” (1925). Any subsequent discussion on gift economies in the literature (as far as I have encountered) traces back to Mauss’ work, which builds on Franz Boas, Malinowski, and Elsdon Best. It bears mentioning

that Mauss came with an academic pedigree, being the nephew of Émile Durkheim, the progenitor of modern sociology. Mauss uses a concept, “total social phenomenon,” which can be said to be substantivist in that it echoes Polanyi’s embeddedness and some tenets of transrationality. Mauss says that at one end of the spectrum are societies in which objects are indistinguishable from the society, which is a perspective compatible with energetic worldviews as they can be seen as emerging from relationships. It is in this sense that I see Mauss’ work as a manifestation of the energetic principles. However, my main critique of Mauss is that he is too modern: on the other end of the spectrum, people, objects and society are independent of each other, which could be a modern or postmodern worldview. In the final count, Mauss was working as a sociologist and ethnographer in the early twentieth century, which could provide context for his instrumentalized approach to gift exchange. His emphasis on the reciprocation of gifts and the obligations they imply betrays an assumption of exchange. In this sense, Mauss views gifts through modern-tinted lenses, seeing them function similarly to commodity trades, thus neglecting the fundamentally energetic interpretation of the gift, which is to give without expectation of return.

Returning momentarily to the work of Eisenstein, he also describes energetic interpretations of economics. As was mentioned earlier, Eisenstein’s thesis is that the energetic principle, the sacred in sacred economics, is missing, and therefore his work is focused on energetic interpretations. The focus of his book, though, is a reintroduction, a transcendence, rather than a description of energetic philosophies.



## ***Definition of Concepts***

I will offer here a closer look at two key concepts. They are the Theory of the Many Peaces and Economics. This is a kind of second phase to the state of the art that attempts to go a bit deeper and draw some of the lines of connection between the two before the journey into each peace family begins. It is also a chance to establish working definitions and recap a bit of pertinent history.

For the most part I use the term Theory of the Many Peaces interchangeably with the Theory of the Families of Peaces. If there is any distinction it would be that the Families of Peaces refers to the five categories (energetic, moral, modern, postmodern, and transrational) as well as the four aspects (harmony, truth, justice, and security), whereas the Many Peaces refers to any interpretations of peace that do not fall into these neatly defined slots. For example, peace out of pleasure, an energetic interpretation of peace, is not one of the dominant aspects of the quadrants, as we will see.

## **The Theory of the Many Peaces**

The world is neither violent nor peaceful — it just is: the violent storm or the peaceful mountain lake do not know that they are violent or peaceful. They only have those adjectives attributed to them by a perceiving subject. Peace, therefore, exists only in the lived experience of the beholder. Consequently, since peace is a lived experience by a perceiving subject, there must be as many definitions of peace as perceiving subjects. This is the basis of the Theory of the Many Peaces.

From this starting point of a postmodern acceptance of radical plurality, Wolfgang

Dietrich began gathering stories on interpretations of peace. He found that they seemed to fall into some broad categories and common themes began to emerge. Peace as fertility, peace out of adherence to norms, and peace out of justice and security are themes that occur all over the world. This further evolved into the Theory of the Families of Peaces.

It further became clear that these different interpretations of peace, the distinct families, were in some way complementary. They could be seen to correspond to internal and external, singular and plural interpretations of peace. The synthesis of these complementary aspects of peace is a transrational approach.

The term transrational is borrowed from Ken Wilber (1995), whose philosophy is one of many inspirations but not a guideline for us. The Innsbruck school is not a branch of Wilber's integrative approach. We do not share his evolutionist epistemology. Nonetheless we took Wilber's well-known matrix of internal and external, respectively individual and collective aspects of human orientation, as a blueprint for our model of the interrelatedness of the peace families and their combination to the dynamic equilibrium that we call Transrational Peaces. (Dietrich 2014:49)

Transrational Peaces, therefore, hold that peace has internal and external and individual and collective aspects that simultaneously co-exist, even if one key value is emphasized more than another. Furthermore, the idea of a transrational shift, as the second volume of Dietrich's trilogy carries in its title, is inspired by, but again not necessarily guided by, Fritjof Capra's work *The Turning Point* (1982).

Without a transrational approach, discussions of peace are stuck in their respective quadrants. Rational arguments for peace are confined to the external aspects of the human experience, justice and security, and are unable to integrate the subjective experience of peace that is always tacitly associated with the word. To illustrate this point, I turn to an

example from Phillip Smith and Manfred Max-Neef.

Yes, we can achieve knowledge about almost anything we want. We can, for instance, guided by our beloved scientific method, study everything there is, from theological, anthropological, sociological, psychological and even biochemical perspectives, about a human phenomenon called *love*. The result will be that we will *know* everything that can be known about love. But once we achieve that complete knowledge, we will sooner or later discover that we will never *understand* love unless we fall in love. We will realize that knowledge is not the road that leads to understanding, because the port of understanding is on another shore and requires a different navigation. We will then be aware that we can attempt to understand only that of which we become a part. That understanding is the result of integration, while knowledge has been the result of detachment. That understanding is holistic, while knowledge is fragmented. (Smith & Max-Neef 2011:17)

Not only can this passage be taken as an eloquent endorsement of transrational approaches to peace, but of transrational approaches in general, which further justifies exploring transrational approaches to economics.

The obvious next question is what are the implications of transrational approaches to peace? If peace cannot be engineered and built by peace architects as a scientific knowledge-based paradigm might assume, then what are the prospects for peace? It then became clear that Lederach's *Elicitive Conflict Transformation* was the logical consequence of transrational approaches to peace. Dietrich combined the quadrants of the transrational approaches to peace with Lederach's conflict pyramid, thus adding a third dimension. This expansion of the state of the art in Elicitive Conflict Transformation opened the door for elicitive conflict mapping.

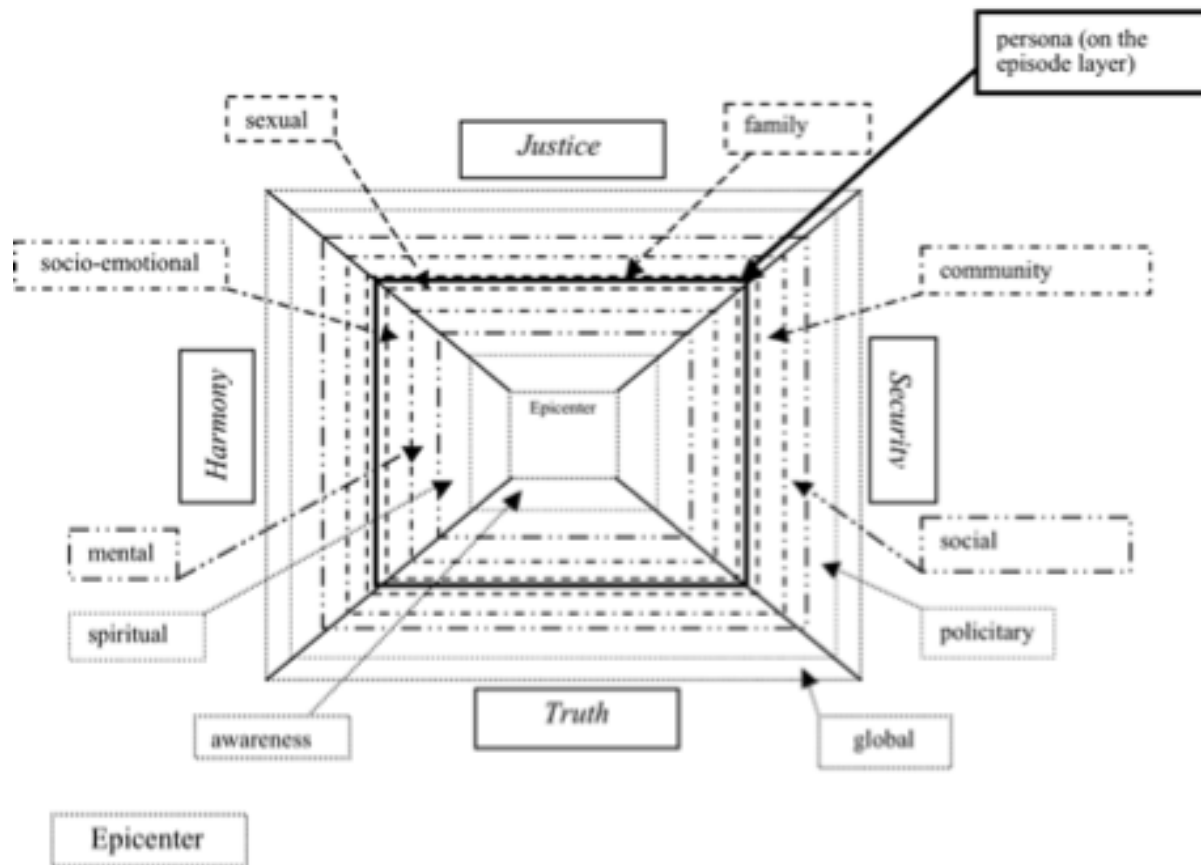


Figure 1: *The Transrational Conflict Pyramid (Dietrich 2013)*

The approach of Elicitive Conflict Transformation, a transrational approach, sees all of the above aspects and layers at once. Any given conflict has a spiritual dimension, as well as sexual, familial, community and social dimensions. However, many of those may be hidden at first glance. What we see is the episode. Lederach explains:

An episode of conflict is the visible expression of conflict rising within the relationship or system, usually within a distinct time frame. It generates attention and energy around a particular set of issues that need response. The epicenter of conflict is the web of relational patterns, often providing a history of lived episodes, from which new episodes and issues emerge. If the episode releases conflict energy in the relationship, the epicenter is where the energy is produced. (Lederach 2003:31)

The episode, which is the layer of the persona, is thus the visible and manifest layer of the

external layers of society and the internal layers of intrapersonal dimensions. Therefore, as Dietrich says (Dietrich 2014:52), “no episode is ever a strictly inter-personal or inter-societal conflict, but always a transpersonal or trans-societal one.”

This dissertation is not about Elicitive Conflict Transformation. This investigation delves into the theory of the families of peaces and into transrational peace philosophy. However, it stops short of discussing methods of conflict transformation — elicitive or otherwise. Nevertheless, because Elicitive Conflict Transformation is the counterpoint to transrational philosophy, it is important to present this orientation and the current state of the art in Elicitive conflict Transformation. Patterns of thinking and vocabulary informed by Elicitive Conflict Transformation inevitably informs this dissertation as they are both cut from the same cloth, or, to use a biblical reference, they are both fruit of the same womb.

## **Economics**

As this dissertation delves into and deconstructs the concept of economics, I must establish the parameters of a working definition of the term. This section will furthermore explain some of the roots of economics as a scientific discipline. This is of key importance because it elucidates the founding epistemological assumptions of economics. To begin with, economics is a modern concept that assumes a separate sphere of human activity in which subsistence needs are mediated by a market based on spot trades and that can be accurately described and predicted by mathematical formalism. Following this delineation, energetic interpretations cannot be described as economics, moral interpretations fall under moral philosophy, and transrational interpretations are best expressed in other terms.

The invention of the “economy,” a separate sphere of human activity, comes when

people engaged in creative endeavours outside of the home. It is then possible to “go to work,” for instance, in a factory, rather than a cottage industry or domestic labour, because one has to physically transport oneself to a place of work. Generally, domestic labour is not considered work because it is primarily associated with the socialization of human beings, which is more often than not done by women, in the home, and unpaid, four factors which keep it out of the formalized economy and mean that it is not work and thus largely invisible. The need to go to work, to transport oneself physically to another location, separates the spheres of the production of commodities from the production of people (Graeber 2006:77-78), and separates production from consumption. Without this physical separation, a need to migrate or make a pilgrimage, from the feminine domestic sphere of consumption and people production, to the masculine economic sphere of commodity production, it is impossible to differentiate one from the other. It may be flippant but nonetheless illustrative to say that more than the economy creates jobs, the act of going to work creates the economy.

Economics was able to establish itself as a distinct academic discipline through the language of mathematics. Sir Isaac Newton established the benchmark for science by perfecting the Galilean doctrine of empirical objectivity and was able to describe the motion of objects with elegantly simple mathematical formulae. By the time *The Wealth of Nations* was published, Newtonian physics was the epitome of science. Moral philosophers of political economy sought legitimacy for their emerging field by emulating the epistemological certainty of Newton’s approach. “Once economists became obsessed with the need to promote their discipline to the category of science,” writes Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef (Max-Neef 1982:47), “they made every possible effort to assimilate it to

patterns pertaining to the physics of the times.” This process started with Ricardo, and Jevons and Menger took it even further until we have the neo-classical formalism that we all know today as mainstream economics.

It is not too hard to pick apart the problems with mathematical formalism. I will list three easy targets. First is the question why cynicism, assuming everything comes down to self-interested calculation, is objective reality and real science and everything else is not? “There is no area of human life, anywhere, where one cannot find self-interested calculation. But neither is there anywhere one cannot find kindness or adherence to idealistic principles: the point is why one, and not the other, is posed as “objective” reality” (Graeber 2001:29). The second, perhaps more esoteric, arises from postmodern critiques: formalism presumes *a priori* that objective rules exist to be discovered in a Platonic (or Parmenidesian) world of pre-given ideas. An example of a postmodern position is that “[...] one can say that mathematical objects are not so much “discovered out there” as “created in here,” where “here” means the cultural circulation, exchange, and interpretation of signs within an historically created and socially constrained discourse” (Rotman 1993:140). Rotman asserts that rather than mathematical laws floating in some kind of noospheric ether waiting to be discovered like a petrified dinosaur bone, “the so-called truths discovered by mathematicians are not pre- or extra-human timeless thoughts, but predictions about the Subject’s future engagement with signs” (Rotman 1993:84). It is thus a postmodern critique of mathematics’ monopolistic claim on the epistemic existence of objective reality. The third is that the entire idea of an economy hinges on the fact that it is a separate space of interaction, and if that assumption falls apart, so does the usefulness of formalism.

The downside of this critique is that it just gets us back into the debate between formalism and substantivism. The critics of an approach to economics based on mathematical formalism inevitably advocate alternatives that resemble substantivism. Interpreting economics as a form of cultural discourse (Gudeman 1986; Escobar 1995) is not fundamentally different from Polanyi's concept of embeddedness. The reason why this debate lingers on is because none of the apparent options are satisfactory, which is precisely the place where David Graeber steps in in *Towards an Anthropological Theory of Value* (2001). If we adopt a formalist perspective, such as the mainstream economists, then it is violently reductionist since economics can be clearly demonstrated to be a cultural discourse. If we say that it is all culture, we cannot help but see that people are still for the most part making rational decisions to maximize something of interest. These examples leave the state of the art in a dilemma.

I will continue to call economics the study of the economy, wherever it can be said to exist, and is governed by formalism. Substantivism is an attempt to see how that economy reconnects with everything else. However, the two are really two sides of the same coin, which is Graeber's final thesis (Graeber 2001). What the debate does point out is the need for a synthesis — a need for a transrational approach.

Formalism makes the most sense in the external side of the elicitive conflict pyramid with moral and modern peaces of justice and security. Substantivism makes the most sense in the internal side of the pyramid with energetic and postmodern peaces of harmony and truth. Transrational approaches to economics thus acknowledge that feeling, intuition, consciousness, and spirituality are valid epistemological access points. Additionally,



transrational approaches acknowledge that mathematics is “a prodigiously useful formalism” (Rotman 1993:139) but is not the only source of truth. With this in mind, we can see that energetic perspectives require a cultural perspective, and moral approaches are usually considered to be studied by philosophers or theologians. Modern perspectives employ the strict mathematical formalism, which also applies to postmodern perspectives. Postmodern perspectives, a blend of which probably make up most people’s current attitudes towards economics, because they simultaneously use the formalist language of modernity, and yet are inclined towards a worldview as described by substantivism.

This still leaves the big question of the limits of economics for this dissertation and for transrational approaches. If economics is limited just to subsistence activities then it is too narrow, but if it is expanded to included all of culture then, is it not too broad to be useful? My method has been to consider economics as means of livelihood, as a normative structure, and as cultural discourse in all of the five families of peaces. Even under modern assumptions, the edges of the economy are fuzzy.



## 2 Energetic Perspectives

*The diverse cultures of the world are not failed attempts  
at modernity, let alone failed attempts to be us.  
On the contrary they are unique answers to a fundamental  
question: what does it mean to be human and alive?*  
Wade Davis

The energetic perspectives are the starting point for our foray into the families of peaces. They are the oldest in that they were the first to appear historically, however, it behooves me to emphasize that I am not postulating an evolutionary trend from archaic and backwards perspectives towards ever more progressive and enlightened ones. I will bring in examples of societies, historical and contemporary, that operate on the basis of energetic understandings, which is a pivotal point in this discussion: energetic understandings are the oldest but they are not dead and have not been relegated to the dustbin of history. In fact, as Dietrich says (2012:53), “hints of an energetic understanding of world and peace can be found everywhere, beneath the surface of a capitalistically commodified world.” The intention of this chapter is to point out some examples of how this is true and to establish signposts so that others may also be able to see the hints of energetic understandings in our collective human past and in our present lives.

I will trace the energetic perspective through six categories: time, justice, relations, currency, environment, and peace. This structure will be repeated in each chapter for each family of peaces. The section on time will elaborate on non-linear experiences of time. This will lead into an explanation of energetic (non-linear) manifestations of justice. The subsequent discussion will be on the quality of relationships that can be found in energetic

economic relations, which will be followed by an investigation of what kind of media are used in energetic exchanges. The energetic understanding of environment will finish up the enquiry. The section on peace is meant as a final synthesis of the chapter, drawing together all the threads laid down in the chapter and attempting to weave them together.

Since I am following Wolfgang Dietrich's theory of the families of peaces, I will begin by summarizing the six points that he outlines as defining energetic peaces (Dietrich 2012:53-64). Energetic worldviews are characterized firstly by a belief in a primal energy. This can be contrasted with the belief in a personified creator, such as the Abrahamic God. In energetic traditions, "peace is the harmonious vibration of the All-One" (Dietrich 2012:54). In energetic understandings, "the microcosm of the human body and mind is not only an inseparable part of the universe, but also corresponds to it in all its aspects" (Dietrich 2012:56); there is thus an inherent propensity of the microcosm to resonate with the macrocosm; the alignment of such resonance is an expression of peace. As a result and in contrast to other peace families, there is no objectifiable peace outside of the subjective experience. The third point is the belief in unconditional truths. There is no ultimate "Truth." This does not mean that there is no difference between lies and honesty, rather "truth has to remain beyond that which can be expressed through language" (Dietrich 2012:57). Energetic worldviews are further characterized by the sublation of dualities. Everything was one and will become one again and it is the human being's task to learn to harmonize with the divine primal energy in order for the individual, the society, and the cosmos to flourish. As a fifth point, peace is a personal and subjective experience. "Energetic peaces can thus neither be taught, nor exported, nor "produced" via objective conditions, but it can only be experienced

and put into context” (Dietrich 2012:59). Finally, peace is relational; peace emerges in relationships between people.

### ***What is an energetic approach to economics?***

As this exploration is building on Dietrich’s work, it is justly essential to build on his defining characteristics and thus to outline how I apply his theory of energetic peaces to energetic approaches to economics. I have isolated six threads. The metaphor of the thread and the cloth is conveniently embedded in the English language such that it makes sense to weave these threads into a ‘text’. Each strand, although through meticulous labour can be teased apart from all the others, is inseparable. Each of the six threads that I will follow in this and the coming chapters blends and overlaps with every other thread; the weft and the warp become indistinguishable. It is through the process of weaving the threads together that a larger picture can be seen and how the separate strands all hang together in a ‘context’. The threads in this work are time, justice, relationality, currency, environment, and peace. The remainder of the chapter will explain how non-linear conceptions of time, justice as an immanent expression of relatedness, the primacy of relationships over individuals, objects as expressions of relationships, human interconnectedness with nature, and peace out of harmony and unconditional truth inform energetic approaches to economics. For now, the piercing scrutiny of our gaze shall be cast towards other matters that will set a frame for this enquiry.

Speaking of “energetic economics” is a conceptual contradiction. The word ‘economics’ itself is a concept that is only possible in modernity. How do we talk about

concepts such as debt, value and exchange when our language (English, as well as others) has been so influenced by the market (Shell 1982; Graeber 2011:13)? The creation of a separate sphere of human activity known as the economy will be discussed in more detail later. For now, it may suffice to say that the existence and prevalence of the market system, the concept that there is something called “an economy” that is separate from other parts of human life, make it difficult to discuss or even to imagine what life might be like without it. The falsehood of the assumption that it is possible to extricate a sphere of activity such as an economy from other aspects such as sexuality, identity, child-rearing, spirituality, cultural ritual, and so on, has been reiterated in virtually all of the critical economic literature.<sup>2</sup> In energetic perspectives, there is no formal economy; people do what people do.

This point cannot be overstated. It strikes to the core of this dissertation that starts from a position of looking at economics, as the title denotes, as seen by the many peaces. The concept of economics does not hold up under the scrutiny of the lenses of the families of peaces and terms like ‘economics’ and ‘the economy’ no longer hold any meaning. To further the argument, I turn to the words of David Graeber (2001:17-18):

[...] according to Dumont, the last three hundred years or so of European history have been something of an aberration. Other societies (“one is almost tempted to say, ‘normal ones’”) are “holistic,” holistic societies are always hierarchical, ranked in a series of more and more inclusive domains. Our society is the great exception because for us, the supreme value is the individual: each person being assumed to have a unique individuality, which goes back to the notion of an immortal soul, which are by definition incomparable. Each individual is a value unto themselves, and none can be treated as intrinsically superior to any other. In most of his more recent work in fact (Dumont 1971, 1977, 1986) Dumont has been effectively expanding on Polanyi’s arguments in *The Great Transformation*, arguing that it was precisely this principle of individualism that made possible the emergence of “the economy.”

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2 Notably Polanyi (1944), as this is what is meant by his substantivist approach to economic anthropology.

Although this citation is specifically referencing Louis Dumont's use of hierarchy and Classical Structuralism, the point that the European model of a modern and separate economic sphere is an aberration, deviating from the historical and cultural norm, is well taken. It is thus a constant danger to describe the rule by contrast to the exception. Because (post)modern economics is so ubiquitous and pervasive, it is tempting and dangerous to define the energetic, moral, and transrational perspectives in contrast to (post)modern perspectives. In such a case, rather than being defined by their own merits and characteristics, they are defined only by negation against the hegemony. Stylistically, I will attempt to strike a balance between contrasting the perspectives and characterizing each family for itself.

What I have been classifying as an energetic approach, using Dietrich's families, is correlative to what is called in anthropological literature "gift economies." The term stretches back to the ethnographic works of Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) and Marcel Mauss (1925) in the early twentieth century and is an oft repeated concept in the relevant literature.<sup>3</sup> I classify gift economies as an energetic approach to economics and peace, however, I maintain that they are not synonymous. Firstly, I am hesitant to use the term fully because of the modern weight and implications of the term 'economy.' The word itself carries, in my mind, such loaded assumptions of modernity that its use as a descriptor of 'gift economies' is liable to be at least misleading, if not anachronistic and inaccurate. I therefore have chosen not to use 'energetic perspectives' and 'gift economies' interchangeably. Secondly, I contend that it could be possible to conduct a gift economy in a very modern way. The families of

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<sup>3</sup> See Graeber 2001; Graeber 2011; Eisenstein 2011, which are cited extensively in this dissertation. In addition, in the anthropological literature see, among others, Bataille 1949; Godelier 1996; Gregory 1982; Sahlins 1972; Strathern 1988; Weiner 1992. This list is of key texts and is not exhaustive.

peaces refer to worldviews (states of mind) rather than solely media or social structures of exchange. As such, a gift economy that is highly quantified and regulated by a central authority of giving could be more modern than a contemporary business organized along the lines of moral or transrational principles. Therefore, I use the adjective ‘energetic’ to denote the paradigm and ‘gift economies’ to describe some expressions of that paradigm.

Using Christopher Gregory’s juxtaposition (1982), gift economies can be contrasted against commodity economies. An example of a commodity economy is what we know as modern economics, in which commodities are exchanged by free, independent, and rational actors, with money itself being another commodity, following the interpretation of Graeber (2011) money is simultaneously both a commodity and debt.<sup>4</sup> However, no uniquely gift or commodity economy exists. Life is not as pure as the realm of abstract thought experiments and the reality is that all real life societies fall somewhere on a continuum, as Sahlins (1972) proposed. I mention this point because it strikes me as a fundamental difference between the energetic and modern paradigms: energetic worldviews accept life as impure, whereas the modern worldview will assume that a pure commodity economy can exist but depends on its nonexistence to function. To clarify, a modern economy pushes towards the commodification of everything, on the one hand, and yet requires unpaid labour, benevolence, and volunteerism to function. In other words, the former embraces the paradox as the mystery of life and the latter rejects the paradox even when it can no longer be denied.

Another phenomenon that needs to be placed in relation to the families of peaces is that of barter. Barter can be an energetic exchange when the objects are not quantified; as such they are tokens of the friendship and respect between the parties. I give you a car and you

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<sup>4</sup> Money as commodity reflects a neo-classical perspective and as debt is the credit theory of money.



give me a drum and we are both satisfied because the exchange was symbolic of our mutual respect — one node of the universe recognizing its reflection in another node of the universe — and the question of which is worth more or which took more man-hours to produce does not even come up. Barter is modern when it is quantified: when so many chickens equal a cow. It may be argued that the former example resembles an exchange of gifts rather than barter, with barter implying negotiation and haggling. The case of the former will be discussed in this chapter, however, this point does require some clarification. The conventional explanation for the justification of money (as a medium of exchange) works backwards from the contemporary model. It presupposes that in the fictitious past there was a time and place in which everything was pretty much how it is now, except with no money, and that in that pre-money time, barter exchange was the means of commerce that preceded money. Following that (erroneous) logic, barter could be understood as a pre-modern form of exchange. However, evidence indicates that despite what the economics textbooks and conventional wisdom might say, societies based on barter exchange never existed.

## **De-bunking Barter**

For this argument, I am recapping the case laid out by David Graeber (2011:21-41). To sum it up, barter never existed. Caroline Humphrey, who, in the words of Graeber (2011:29), wrote the “definitive anthropological work on barter,” sets it in no uncertain terms: “No example of a barter economy, pure and simple, has ever been described, let alone the emergence from it money; all available ethnography suggests that there never has been such a thing” (Humphrey 1985:48). George Dalton (1982:185) came to the same conclusions, writing: “Barter, in the strict sense of moneyless exchange, has never been a quantitatively important

or dominant model or transaction in any past or present economic system about which we have hard information.” These assertions are further bolstered by Anne Chapman (1980) who maintains that barter in the pure sense of swapping things, dissociated from the reification of social relations, has never existed. The work of Patrick Heady (2005) has also contributed to disproving the myth of barter.

I must admit that in my innocence in the beginning of this project, I expected to find cases of people swapping things in a pre-monetary barter system, much like Adam Smith envisioned and eighteenth century missionaries predicted.<sup>5</sup> I make note here of my own ignorance to emphasize just how deeply ingrained this originary myth is. The idea that there was an evolutionary progression from barter to money to credit was first proposed by Italian “merchant-banker, translator, and man of letters” (Waswo 1996:18), Bernardo Davanzati (1529-1606)(Waswo 1996:20), taken up by Bruno Hildebrand (1864), and later Karl Bücher (1907), and also appears in the works of Marx and Simmel (Graeber 2011:394-395). David Graeber (2011) argues that this distorted version of history is perpetuated for two reasons: firstly, it is the logical conclusion when working backwards from the principles of a modern market economy; secondly, anthropologists have been unable to propose an alternative theory to the origin of money. The myth of barter is required to imagine that people act like a *homo oeconomicus*, a discreet individual rationally seeking his greatest advantage at the least effort and that a market will naturally and organically emerge without any state creating and maintaining its structure. To the second point, the origins of money have a long and complex history all over the world and it cannot be said that there is any

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5 Jean-Michel Servet relates in *La fable du troc* (1994) that colonial explorers expected to find barter economies but never did.

single moment or reason for its invention.

This does not mean that barter does not happen. There are countless examples of people bartering one item for another and swapping like or dissimilar objects. Dalton (1982:185) says that barter occurs and has occurred widely in past and present cultures, “as a minor, infrequent, petty, or emergency transaction,” and is compatible with any economic system. However, barter is most common under two criteria. Firstly, barter is most common with people who are accustomed to money but, for one reason or another, no longer have it around. Famous examples are prisons, POW camps (Radford 1945), post-perestroika Russia, and in Argentina in the wake of the financial crisis of 2001 (Graeber 2011:37). Secondly, and most importantly for the further discussions of this work, barter is most common among people who have no enduring relationship; they are effectively strangers. Graeber (2011) makes the case that, if the objective is advantage over the other, barter between strangers is a logical preference because one is likely to deal with kith and kin fairly and it is difficult to redress a grievance with a stranger who has skipped town. In his words (Graeber 2011:32): “What all such cases of trade through barter have in common is that they are meetings with strangers who will, likely as not, never meet again, and with whom one certainly will not enter into any ongoing relations.”

What we already see here is a difference between how one is likely to treat a member of one’s own tribe as compared to an outsider. This assumption, and the resulting stripping of relationality are the hallmarks of what I call the modern framework. The energetic principle that is contained in the spirit of a gift economy is that a gift begets another gift; it is a reciprocal and perpetual cycle of giving and receiving, ebbing and flowing. The relationship

is primary and the flux of gifts recreate and nurture the relationship that already exists. By contrast, the moral interpretations, and especially the modern interpretations, have elementary assumptions that one must be able to *quit* the relationship. It is possible to be no longer obligated to one's partner by immediately and concurrently reciprocating, being out of debt and being even: this is known in the contemporary vernacular as paying.<sup>6</sup> This point will be revisited and expanded in the section on relationality. For this discussion on the myth of barter, it is relevant because a barter transaction, swapping one thing for another, is most likely to occur under an energetic paradigm between people who are effectively strangers, who have no ties of family or allegiance to each other, who live far apart, and for whom returning the favour is unlikely or deemed implausible. They are thus people who are outside of the fundamental assumption of relationality. As a result, they resemble the separate and self-interested individuals of Adam Smith's Scottish village, that is to say the actors in a modern economy.

For a moment I would like to take a brief etymological detour into where the term barter comes from. According to Servet (2001:20), the term barter came into the English language around the mid-fifteenth century from the French *barater* 'to deceive.' It is reasonable to surmise that a term meaning 'to deceive' cannot be the basis of a theory of social cohesion, wealth, and peace. Turning once again to Graeber, he deconstructs the logical consequences of Adam Smith's famous edict (Smith 1776) on the propensity of mankind to truck and barter.

[...] in the century or two before Smith's time, the English words "truck and barter," like their equivalents in French, Spanish, German, Dutch, and Portuguese, literally meant "to trick,

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6 'to pay' comes to English, via French, from Latin *pacare* 'to pacify' meaning to make peaceful, in the sense of to pacify one's creditors.

bamboozle, or rip off.” Swapping one thing directly for another while trying to get the best deal one can out of the transaction is, ordinarily, how one deals with people one doesn’t care about and doesn’t expect to see again. What reason is there *not* to try to take advantage of such a person? If, on the other hand, one cares enough about someone—a neighbor, a friend—to wish to deal with her fairly and honestly, one will inevitably also care about her enough to take her individual needs, desires, and situation into account. Even if you do swap one thing for another, you are likely to frame the matter as a gift. (Graeber 2011:34)

This passage stresses three main points. Firstly, it points to the incongruence of the assumption of an economic system, namely barter, based on deception. Secondly, as we shall see in greater detail later, it outlines the basis for gift economies. Thirdly, it posits that no society could be based on barter, thus refuting the claims of economics textbooks that claim that there was a time of pre-monetary barter exchange.

In imagining a society based on barter, Graeber paints a picture that is reminiscent of the perils of modernity. “Such a society could only be one in which everybody was an inch away from everybody else’s throat; but nonetheless hovering there, poised to strike but never actually striking, forever” (Graeber 2011:33). This strikes me as an acute expression of *homo homini lupus*, the famous dictum of Thomas Hobbes, which is a modern response to insecurity brought up by the belief that everyone is out to take the most advantage of everyone else in the most expedient way. “Direct barter also dispenses with the need for payment,” says Humphrey (1985:67), “i.e. it will be used when there is little information about the credit-standing of purchasers, or when there is a lack of trust.” What Humphrey is saying here echoes Graeber’s analysis, which was previously stated: people about whom little information on credit-standing is available are, in other words, strangers. In Graeber’s words (2011:33): “True, barter does sometimes occur between people who do not consider each

other strangers, but they're usually people who might as well be strangers—that is, who feel no sense of mutual responsibility or trust, or the desire to develop ongoing relations.” It is with strangers that there is a lack of trust and that this hypothetical state of everyone hovering an inch from everyone else’s jugular makes any sense. The segue to the importance of gift economies should by now be apparent. If you care about someone, you are not going to try to take advantage of them; once again, to revisit Graeber’s words, if you do trade one thing for another, you are likely to consider it a gift.

The classic argument used to extoll the superiority of a monetary system over the backwards barter system is that of the double coincidence of wants. For example, if Henry wants shoes and has potatoes, he can only trade with Joshua if Joshua has shoes and wants potatoes. Graeber (2011:34) uses an American example to show that this assumption is not a universal law. “For example, if Henry was living in a Seneca longhouse, and needed shoes, Joshua would not even enter into it; he’d simply mention it to his wife, who’d bring up the matter with the other matrons, fetch materials from the longhouse’s collective storehouse, and sew him some.” My argument here is that the double coincidence of wants is a limiting factor only under the societal constraints of a modern economic system under which it is already assumed that the two people involved, Joshua and Henry, are private individuals, strangers, unrelated, have no stake in each other’s lives or their well-being and have no incentive of extending any kind of credit or goodwill to one another. That, to me, is a lot of ifs and, in a small town, impossible.

Graeber’s case continues by transferring the example of the Seneca longhouse to one more befitting an imaginary economics textbook, such as a small Scottish village or a

colonial settlement in New England (2011:35). The short version of the scenario is that Henry's wife would talk to Joshua's wife and Joshua would drop off the shoes as a gift to Henry. The potatoes do not come into the picture because Joshua knows that Henry owes him a favour and he can call on him some time in the future for a sack of potatoes, a pig, for help mending a fence, or whatever neighbourly gesture may be bidden. This of course leads to a question of central importance to the five families of peaces:

How do you quantify a favor? On what basis do you say that this many potatoes, or this big a pig, seems more or less equivalent to a pair of shoes? Because even if these things remain rough-and-ready approximations, there must be *some* way to establish that X is roughly equivalent to Y, or slightly worse or slightly better. Doesn't this imply that something like money, at least in the sense of a unit of accounts by which one can compare the value of different objects, already has to exist? (Graeber 2011:36)

The quantification of favours is the road by which modern economics subsumes everything. In the categorization that I am presenting, no quantification is necessary in the energetic understanding because it is impossible and even unthinkable. It is difficult to know what a gift means to someone at some time — the act can have a symbolic value that trumps modern notions of comparative value or hours of labour. The quantification is not important but rather the spirit of the gift. Spheres of exchange, or as Graeber puts it “rough-and-ready approximations” are examples of the moral paradigm. The case of the Mae-Enga people in the Mt. Hagen area of Papua New Guinea is paradigmatic of spheres of exchange; there are six categories of exchangeable things with live pigs and cassowary birds in the highest category followed by pearl-shell pendants, plume headdresses, and stone axes in the next category, however, they can never cross categories; no amount of axes can get you a cassowary bird (Meggitt 1971; Graeber 2001:41). There is a structure of equivalencies

outside of which new comparisons cannot be made. The modern paradigm is when favours can be fully quantified and thus reduced to linear numerical comparisons. To continue this comparison, the postmodern paradigm argues that the wrong things are being quantified (GDP rather than an index of well-being) or not enough is being quantified (externalized social and environmental costs), and finally a transrational perspective attempts to hold them all in a dynamic equilibrium. There is a time and a place for gifts and favours and another for paying the piper.

In sum, following the arguments of Humphrey, Dalton, and Graeber, a pre-monetary barter economy has never existed. The questions necessary to determine where a particular barter transaction fits into the categories of families of peaces is whether the items, objects, or ideas are compared to an external standard of value or they are apparently arbitrary rates established in the moment. The former would tend towards the moral or modern families and the latter would tend towards the energetic, postmodern, and transrational families. What cannot be denied is that innumerable factors come to bear in the webs of family, political, and clan allegiances and social obligations and debts, not just external standards of comparison. In this current categorization, a barter exchange is in the energetic family if an energetic principle determines that the exchange of these two things are equivalent because of the symbolic value which they represent. An entire economy could never exist based solely on barter because it would require the comparison of every thing in abstract terms, the divorcing of things from their context being part of a modern worldview, and in which case, why not just use money, which only further stresses the fact that barter is most noted in cases of people familiar with money who no longer have it at hand.



## Gift Economies

In firstly defining in broad strokes what an energetic approach to economics is, it bears taking a closer look at gift economies. Picking up on what I previously mentioned, gift economies are the most common expression of the energetic principle. They are thus subsumed under the category of the energetic family rather than being synonymous with it. Gift economies embody the spirit of the energetic perspective by being physical manifestations of the harmonic pulsing of the originary primal energy; giving and receiving gifts are as much an expression of the divine nature of existence as is the ebb and flow of the tides or the rising and falling of my chest with each sacred breath I draw. The essence of the energetic perspective is that because my relationship with you is so elemental, what I reciprocate is not the value of a gift but the value of the act of giving. Thus, gifts have special qualities to them; in gift economies, in which everything is a gift, everything has special qualities.

The term “gift economy” was made famous by Marcel Mauss who wrote the classic work on gift exchange, *Essai sur le don* (1925). Christopher Gregory’s juxtaposition of gifts versus commodities (1982) can be used to see how a gift economy differs from the conventional assumptions of a commodity economy.<sup>7</sup> Despite the easy target that such a binary categorization makes, and the valid critiques that were levied, an important distinction remains relevant for this discussion: commodities establish equivalencies of value amongst objects, whereas gifts mediate relations amongst people. The underlying ontological

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<sup>7</sup> Gregory’s categories have been critiqued by Appadurai (1986) in a neo-liberal perspective saying that everything can be conflated to commodity exchange, Strathern (1988) who continues in the Maussian tradition and adds her post-Marxist feminist perspective, Thomas (1991) who argues that objects are “entangled” rather than simply dichotomized, and Graeber (2001) who admits that, although useful, such pure categories are an abstraction.

assumption here is that relations come first and objects, if they can be said to exist at all, exist as a manifestation or an emergence (a “product,” to use the terminology of modernity) of the pre-existing relationship. In postmodern perspectives, this same point of view, that relationships and patterns are more elemental than objects and things, has been reached through systems theory<sup>8</sup>. The moral and modern families, by contrast, see the universe as being made up of objects, “blokes and things” (Gilbert Ryle in Graeber 2001:39). This is a central point of the energetic perspective and it will return throughout discussions and again in the section on relationality.

Gregory also makes the distinction that commodity transactions must be immediate whereas gift exchanges often involve a time lapse between the initial incident and the reciprocation. Graeber (2001:27-28), summarizing Bourdieu (1977), says that “all that makes gift exchange different from simple barter is the lapse of time between gift and counter-gift.”<sup>9</sup> This is one of the key distinctions separating energetic exchanges from modern exchanges: in the modern understanding, I must pay the indicated price at once or in a negotiated and binding timeframe, or else I may be punished by my business partner or the state; in the energetic understanding, there is some flexibility in the discreet timeframe I should wait and perhaps with what, how, and under what circumstances I will reciprocate. The energetic understanding imbues the participant with agency, trust, respect, and options (beyond the choice of cash or credit), but also fetters him with responsibility, obligation, and acumen.

It is not to say that gift economies are benign. On the contrary, in the Maussian analysis, gifts can incur great obligations to reciprocate and even to improve upon the

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<sup>8</sup> This is a key conclusion of Gregory Bateson (1972) and Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1975).

<sup>9</sup> Truly, what he is also saying here, to put it in line with what he would write a decade later, is that what makes gift exchange different from barter is the trust and credit-worthiness that allows for the lapse of time.

previous gift. This can lead to perilous cycles of one-upmanship (Graeber 2001:27; 2001:43; 2001:220). My favourite example is that of Egill Skallagrímsson<sup>10</sup>, whose friend Einar skálaglam went to his house in Iceland to give him a gift, an ornate, engraved, gilded, and bejewelled shield, which he left in Egill's hall for him. On Egill's return, seeing the shield hanging there, he became enraged and said, in W. C. Green's translation (Green 1893), "The wretched man, to give it! He means that I should bide awake and compose poetry about his shield. Now, bring my horse. I must ride after him and slay him." He was so humiliated by the opulence of the gift and the servitude that the indebtedness of such a lavish gift might imply that he was motivated to kill his friend rather than have his independence undermined. Luckily for Einar, Egill vented his indignation by composing a poem, and in the typical understated fashion of the Icelandic sagas, it goes on to say that, "Egill and Einar remained friends so long as they both lived." The episode of Egill and the shield may be an extreme example, but it illustrates a fine point: gift economies are ongoing conversations. There is never a final gift; every action demands a reaction. Gift economies imply ever further gifts, which create an on-going cyclical exchange and a perpetual twisting.

Lewis Hyde, in his work on gifts and creativity (*The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World*), states that "a work of art is a gift" (Hyde 1979:xvi). I would hazard turning the formulation around as well; a gift is a work of art. It is this intertwined characteristic of being a work of art that gives gifts a special quality in modern life. Switching to the terminology of this work, it is the fact that gifts will continue to embody energetic principles in a commodified modern context that gives them a unique status, seen through modern eyes. Gifts can thus be seen as an area of exile of energetic principles in

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<sup>10</sup> This episode is also recounted in Graeber 2011:118.

modernity.

Hyde (1979:52-53), summarizing the work of Van Gennep (1960), asserts that gifts mark the rites of separation, transition, and incorporation.

They are with us at every station of life, from the shower for the coming baby to the birthday parties of youth, from graduation gifts (and the social puberty rites of earlier times) to marriage gifts, from the food offered newcomers and the sick to the flowers placed upon the coffin. Once in my reading I came across an obscure society that even gave gifts to celebrate the arrival of a child's second teeth—only to realize later that of course the writer meant the tooth fairy!

Threshold moments, as outlined by Hyde (1979) and Van Gennep (1960), the moments of transition, separation, and incorporation, are pockets (areas of exile) of energetic exchange, which can be found in modernity, in which the assumptions of modernity (such as the ineluctable market force to profit or Keynes' animal spirits) are inappropriate, unwelcome, and regarded with suspicion. Hyde cites a joke that US American comedian, Woody Allen, used about his watch: "My grandfather sold it to me on his deathbed." "The joke works," says Hyde (1979:56), "because market exchange will always seem inappropriate on the threshold." It seems natural that at the final threshold of life, on one's deathbed, the incentive to make a buck would no longer seem very pressing. The joke illustrates that, under modern conditions, there are moments in life, such as threshold moments, in which the rules of modernity are suspended and can be clearly seen as belonging to another paradigm.

Hyde further argues that the gift can be seen as protecting the threshold moment. This is parallel to saying that gifts safeguard the energetic bubbles, the areas of exile, in the modern (moral or postmodern) world. Gifts in threshold moments ensure that the passage takes place in the right spirit and they provide fluidity in creative energies. Since a

grandfather on his deathbed selling a watch to his grandson seems inappropriate, uncouth, and distasteful, there are ritual gifts that form a kind of vessel to ward the sanctity of the moment and to encourage that the transition passes in a good way. This may be the flowers laid on the coffin of the deceased, previously cited from Hyde (1979:52-53), or bequeathing an heirloom to a scion. There is a quality in gifts that they are imbued with some energy of their previous owner. Something of the giver stays with the gift; it is inalienable in Maussian terms (1925) or in Graeber's terms (2001), they have an ability to accumulate a history. This quality aids the flow of the transition. If the gift is imbued with some ineffable quality or sentimental reminiscence of the giver, the passing down of an heirloom or a watch ensures that the ebb and flow of life, the yin and yang, are in proper balance and that the next generation holds in its hands something of the previous generations, their legacy and cultural inheritance, and it lives on, symbolized by the gift.

This final point is of recurring importance to energetic perspectives and it will be the focus of the section on relationality. If I accept that there is something of the giver in every gift I receive, it is easy to conclude that gifts I exchange, give and receive, are embedded in my relationships. James Carrier (1995:25) sums it up rather succinctly:

The second element of the Maussian model of gift relations is that the things transacted are inalienable—that they are in important ways bound to people (Mauss 1990:14). The gift is inalienably linked to the giver, and therefore it is important for regenerating the relationship between giver and recipient. The Christmas present that my mother gives me continues to bear her identity after I receive it, and so continues to affirm that she and I are linked as mother and son. At a more mundane level, the many everyday objects that my wife and I buy for each other as part of the routine of keeping house continually remind each of us of the other, and so affirm and recreate the relationship that links us.

Carrier also argues that gifts, in the context of modernity, have the ability to transform the

sameness and homogeneity of modern mass production. Gifts are able to reinsert an energetic quality in the form of a personal relationship-bound connection into objects that were otherwise alienable and fungible commodities.

While many see shopping as a sign of a distasteful commercialism that has been imposed on the genuine, familial core of the season, I argue that the shopping and the distaste are central parts of Christmas. They express and strengthen people's sense of the distinction between the family and commercial world. Further, they transcend that distinction by allowing people to demonstrate that they can take recalcitrant commodities at this most social time of the year, transform them and use them to recreate enduring personal relations. (Carrier 1995:16)

Gifts are carriers of the energetic principle and even under the secular, scientific, and sceptical conditions of modernity, they have the ability to transform a mass-produced commodity into a sentimental keepsake, a symbol of an enduring and continually recreated relationship.

I do not wish to paint the picture of gift economies being some kind of Utopian dream. It is not all benevolent. Beidelman (1989) and Bourdieu (1997) have documented instances in Mediterranean societies of people using gift exchange to humiliate the other by giving them such a lavish gift that it can never be reciprocated, just like in the example of Egill Skallagrímsson and the shield. Flattering another person with gifts that would be difficult (or impossible) to reciprocate is a way to secure retainers and ensure their loyalty (Polanyi 1944:53; Graeber 2011:117). It is not that different from IMF loans and Structural Adjustment Programs that provide a lavish gift in the form of a loan than can never be reciprocated and hence the retained country is now in a form of debt peonage.

## Potlatch

In this regard I would like to bring in the example of the potlatch. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, along with the Kula exchange of the Trobriand Islands, the potlatch of the Pacific Northwest of North America has become a staple example of gift economies. Secondly, I am from and currently reside in the area where these traditions originate, so it is a matter of local and personal significance. However, I should be clear that I have never attended a potlatch and observations that I relate here are copied from bibliographical research and do not reflect my personal experiences or first-hand knowledge. I will be intentionally schematic and will leave anything further to the real experts.

The Potlatch of the Pacific Northwest of the Americas has been well documented in anthropological and ethnographic literature. Franz Boas (1858–1942) was the pioneer for the Western academic tradition. He lived amongst the Kwakiutl in 1886, arriving at Tsaxis, more commonly referred to in the ethnographic literature as Fort Rupert, which is beside the present-day municipality of Port Hardy. Marcel Mauss (1925) draws heavily on Boas' ethnographic work in his *Essai sur le don*. The critical political economist Karl Polanyi mentions the Kwakiutl potlatch while discussing redistribution of resources in *The Great Transformation* (1944:53). David Graeber dedicates a significant section to the potlatch in reviewing the significance of Mauss' work (2001:188-210).

To pin down exactly what potlatch is and what it means may prove as difficult as gripping a slippery salmon. Much has been written on the fact that the legal term potlatch, as used in the 1884 amendment to the Canadian Indian Act, did not refer to any practice in reality and was uselessly ambiguous (Bracken 1997). However, the word exists because it

refers to something, even if the precise contours of the referent are subject to interpretation and debate.

Potlatch is a gift ceremony performed by the aristocracy of the First Nations of the northwest coast of North America. The chief or nobleman who calls the potlatch gives gifts, vast amounts of wealth, to all in attendance. The visiting chiefs and noblemen are the first to receive and get the gifts of highest value. The order is determined by an elaborate ranking system of social hierarchy. Food is shared and typical gifts are blankets, coppers (the ultimate symbol of wealth), or rights to a song including the regalia necessary for performing the song. The practice ranges from northern California to Alaska with different cultural inflections and nuances in every place; no two potlatches are alike. The famous example studied by Franz Boas was the Kwakiutl, which is a band on the northern tip of Vancouver Island belonging to the Kwakwaka'wakw, which means speakers of the Kwak'wala language, and for this reason the anthropological literature often refers to the Kwakiutl potlatch. Finally, although there are definite aspects of distribution and redistribution of resources in potlatch ceremonies, it is primarily a mechanism of creating social identity.

The reasons for the emergence of potlatch ceremonies are not fully known, however, several theories exist. Codere characterizes the emergence of the potlatch to take place in a time of fantastic surplus economy (Codere 1950:63), however Stuart Piddocke (Suttles 1960; Vayda 1961; Piddocke 1965) argues that salmon runs and yields were unpredictable and physical abundance alone does not explain the potlatch. Suttles posited the food redistribution model (Suttles 1960) and Piddocke used Suttles' model to suggest that the potlatch was a mechanism to redistribute surplus to areas of scarcity. According to Ridsdale



(1997:10), “Suttles feels that the potlatch was an institutional outgrowth of an adaptation to an environment which had unpredictable fluctuations from year to year and, in doing so, accentuated intercommunity cooperation and sharing (Suttles 1960:303).” Codere (1950), alternatively, favours an aggression outlet model to explain the role of the potlatch.

The term potlatch has become part of the English vernacular, coming from Chinook trade jargon, a pidgin language used for trade in my home province of British Columbia. Chinook trade jargon incorporated English words from colonial contact, however, it is said to have been used as a trading language for centuries before European contact. The direction of influence has gone both ways and Chinook jargon has also inserted words into common parlance such as skookum, saltchuck, and potlatch. The usage of the term potlatch has most likely spread due to the Canadian government’s prohibition on potlatching, however, the work of Boas and Mauss undoubtedly broadened the international exposure to the term. George Clutesi<sup>11</sup> (1969) says that the word potlatch comes from a misunderstanding of the Nootka verb *Pa-chitle* meaning ‘to give,’ or *Pa-chuck*, ‘a gift.’ Nootka was the common term at the time for the linguistic group on the west coast of Vancouver Island, but the name Nuu-chah-nulth has been preferred since 1979 when it was adopted as the name for the unified tribal council for the majority of bands on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. The Kwak’wala and the Nuu-chah-nulth languages are related and both belong to the Wakashan linguistic family. Clutesi specifies that “both words were used only when the articles were given in public such as at a feast” (Clutesi 1969:9-10), and refers to the potlatch by the Nuu-chah-nulth word, *Tloo-qwah-nah*, written  $\lambda uuk^w aana$  in the standardized orthography.

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11 George C. Clutesi (1905-1988), was a member of the Tseshaht First Nation near Port Alberni, British Columbia, which is a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. The language is similar to that of other Nuu-chah-nulth tribes.

Clutesi, recalling his own familial experiences in potlatches, asserts that the potlatch ceremony means a connected *Erlebnis* or lived experience for he says that “the word Tloo-qwah-nah meant when one stopped acting or emoting and began *living* the part” (Clutesi 1969:127). This reflects an appreciation that aspects of resource redistribution and even rearranging of social relations are mundane and superficial aspects of the entire potlatch ceremony which is a profound lived experience.

Umeeek (E. Richard Atleo) of the Ahousaht First Nation writes that λuuk<sup>w</sup>aana (Tloo-qwah-nah) means “‘We remember reality’” (Umeeek 2011:105). A name that means ‘we remember reality’ hardly seems to fit a business transaction. In this way, the λuuk<sup>w</sup>aana seems to refer to a ceremony that reenacts the very essence of reality. Christopher Bracken cites a passage from Charles Nowell (1941) of the Kwakiutl and offers his commentary on the disconnect between an outsider’s perspective on the potlatch and that of a practitioner’s perspective.

Says Nowell: “When one of the Indian agents first came to Alert Bay, he came to visit us at Fort Rupert [Kwakiutl] , and he begin to talk to us about the potlatch and say he is going to stop it, for it is no good. I ask him how he knows. He says: ‘I know all about it. I know more than you do.’ I says: ‘You must be older than I am, because I have lived all my life amongst them, and I still don’t know everything about it.’ He says: ‘I’ve been told.’ And when I ask him who tells him, it is always another white man” (1941, 106). The “potlatch” invariably posed itself as a problem of “knowing,” of “understanding,” but at the same time it marked an impasse in the theory of knowledge. What whites understood when they said or wrote “potlatch” does not correspond with what Nowell understood by the same word. Indeed, the white “potlatch” missed the Fort Rupert [Kwakiutl] “potlatch” altogether and, because it missed it, gave itself something else to refer to. (Bracken 1997:87)

Nowell’s description of the potlatch reflects an “art of living” about which one can never know everything, which resonates with Clutesi’s account of “living the part” and Umeeek’s

definition of remembering reality. ‘Potlatch’ seems to refer to an outlook on life, an orientation from the inside out, rather than a ceremony that people do. Bracken points this out by emphasizing that since what whites and Indians understand as potlatch pass each other in the proverbial night, the word was empty to take on new meaning in the white lexicon.

The term potlatch first appears in print in 1875 in a letter from Israel Wood Powell, Indian superintendent in Victoria, in correspondence with the federal government in Ottawa (Bracken 1997:38). In 1884 the Indian Act was amended to include a prohibition on potlatching and the official ban came into effect January first, 1885 (Bracken 1997:1). Christopher Bracken put forward the thesis in his book *The Potlatch Papers* (1997) that the government banned a practice that never existed. Bracken says they banned a word rather than any real practice because the contradictions did not correspond to anything in reality (Bracken 1997:77). Furthermore, Bracken says that the adoption of ‘potlatch’ into the Anglo-Canadian vocabulary referred to a homogenized and idealized interpretation of non-whiteness rather than to real practices.

While “potlatch” and “tamanawas” belong to a jargon belonging to no one in particular, the dictionaries define them as practices common to all of the coastal First Nations. When the law borrows these Chinook terms to name acts that have different names and take different forms in different communities, it reduces the diversity of the coastal First Nations to an unbroken sameness. It is as if, to the Euro-Canadian gaze, aboriginal societies were all in the last analysis the same—despite the differences that separate them from each other and divide them within themselves. (Bracken 1997:111-112)

Bracken is describing how the term potlatch came to mean something very different than λuuk<sup>w</sup>aana, the former becoming an ambiguous legal term of a central government and the latter referring to an art of living, of remembering reality. Potlatch is really a synecdoche,

coming from a verb ‘to give in a public ceremony’ (Clutesi 1969), or simply ‘to give’ (Umeeek 2004:39), that stands in for the *łuuk<sup>w</sup>aana*. “Potlatch,” in its “white” sense, likely came from the “white purveyors of blankets and clothes” (Bracken 1997) who profited from their sale, and who did not engage in the periodic cyclical exchange of gifts, to describe “something” that they did not understand, because even Charles Nowell, living his whole life among potlatches, could not know everything about them. I emphasize this point to highlight the tension that is in fact the centre of this dissertation: differing ontological assumptions on the nature of reality, the good life, peace, and economics. Colonization is the meeting of primarily modern/moral worldviews colliding with primarily energetic worldviews and Bracken’s work is an articulate postmodern analysis of the contradictions of the collision.

At this point I should say a little more about the potlatch ban and my personal orientation to this history. I was surprised in my research to find a reference to my own relative while reading about the potlatch. Cornelius Bryant was my first relative in Canada to bear my family name. He is not a direct forefather, my great great great great uncle, or rather, the brother of my great great great grandfather, however, he is a significant player in the story of my family’s arrival on the western strand. Cornelius Bryant came to Nanaimo, British Columbia as a teacher and became later a Methodist missionary. He was in favour of abolishing potlatches, which he characterized as “improvident” behaviours (Bracken 1997:82) expressing empty expenditure and waste (Bracken 1997:81-83). In 1884, he wrote, “Individuals in accordance with the well-known custom of giving away absolutely all they happen to possess reduce themselves to beggery [sic] and distress” (Loo 1992:140). He furthermore saw the potlatch as an obstacle and antithetical to his missionary work (Bracken

1997:81). In February 1884, Cornelius Bryant's written testimony was read to the senate by the minister of justice in support of the legislative amendment to ban the potlatch (Bracken 1997:83).

In light of this family connection it is even more important to attempt to lay bare my motivations. All throughout the process of researching and writing I felt drawn to the idea of writing about the potlatch, yet I never was sure why and was sceptical of whether I could do it justice. The idea of the intrepid ethnographer, writing authoritatively on the practices of some exotic *other* on the peripheries of the modern world, in this case where the last bastion of the British Empire folds back on itself, has fallen out of favour, and moreover is seen as an acute expression of oppression and ignorance. I am not an Indigenous person and although I have had some eye-opening experiences as an international peace scholar, living on an Indian Reserve is not among them and it is inappropriate and a misrepresentation to pretend that "I know" about the potlatch because I have been told (invariably by another white man) just as in Nowell's tale. I am not trying to make claims to be something, an expert, that I am not, however, it does seem that at some subtle transgenerational level, I am trying to redeem my ancestor. I believe that I, five generations later, have come full circle in my approach: Cornelius proselytized to have the potlatch banned; I, although between the lines, if anything, advocate the potlatch as a subversive alternative to the dominant modern free-market capitalist thinking.

It is perhaps telling, though, that I chose to transition into the section on the potlatch in connection to dispelling Utopian naïveté surrounding gift economies, by using potlatches as an example of how gifts can be used to fight with property, as Codere names it (1950). My

initial intention was to show that gift economies are their own complex world with their own logical workings and propensities for human vice (just as communism or capitalism) and not simply the musings of a naïf and idealistic peace scholar who became infatuated with the idea of abolishing money and just giving everybody gifts in hopes that the problems of Realpolitik would simply go away. However, the implicit connection was already there in my thoughts before I became aware of it that I was setting up the potlatch in the overall structure of my dissertation to be a cautionary tale of the perils of excess even while I would actively deny saying that. Perhaps the apple does not fall as far from the ancestral tree as I would like to believe. It seems to me that the structure of my argumentation conceals a hint of residual scepticism towards the practicality of the tradition.

The fundamental fear that I carry is that I am no different from my relative Cornelius. While claiming that I have come full circle and am defending a practice that he fought to abolish, am I not still warning of its potential vices? The fear lies in recognizing in myself a similar attitude of arrogance, of claiming to know what is best for those around me, that must have been present in Cornelius. I tend to count myself superior, having grown up in enlightened times with the privileges of education and travel, of open minds and multiculturalism, yet if I had lived in the Nanaimo of the 1860s and 1870s, a man of letters and temperance, in a village little more than a trading post, built to serve the collieries, industrialization at the behest of the Empire, surrounded by the coal miners and loggers on one side and the “savages” on the other, would I not turn to the certainty of a moral religious perspective as a beacon to guide me on my righteous path away from the drunkenness and toward a moral life? The truth of such a hypothetical can never be known because I live in

very different times, and yet if I do reflect on it, there is a nagging feeling that he and I are not as different as the stories I tell myself. So, too, this research project brings me to a crossroads of spiritual life. Through a story of a long dead forefather, I have gently been invited to look in a mirror through the mists of history at the bearded face of my lineage and see a shadow part of myself that I did not want to see. It has allowed me to recognize a bias, that of yearning to know better, that has driven my own work in peace studies. And so I have a choice and I am choosing to let go of the past and to allow myself to come full circle and this dissertation is a vehicle that is helping to carry me on that process.

So what was it about the potlatch that Cornelius Bryant and his contemporaries found so abhorrent? I would summarize by saying that the potlatch appeared antithetical to the white settlers's Protestant work ethic and contravened the basic assumption of economics (Loo 1992:143): it appeared wasteful and contrary to the accumulation of surplus capital. Looking just at the language that Cornelius Bryant used in the quoted correspondence, he says that giving away all of one's property reduces one to "beggary," that it is a "wasteful" practice, likely directly in reference to the destruction of property, and that it is "improvident," insinuating that the Salish natives lack the capacity to foresee the consequences of their behaviour. These allegations are clearly unfounded, however, they did seem to offend the Euro-Canadian sensibilities of the time. In short, I believe what white settlers found so offensive was their own discomfort at the conflict of modern and energetic worldviews. In response to what Cornelius Bryant found abhorrent about the potlatch, I will reply with what I find attractive about it. The single most interesting aspect for me is that it turns the assumption of accumulation on its head: accumulation, under the assumptions of a

potlatch, is only useful in that it can be given away. Yes, a modern economist might argue that a Kwakiutl chief is maximizing or accumulating status, position, reputation, magnanimity, name, fame, or some other such non-material, yet still very real, quality, but that to me is a stretch that is not big enough to cover the gap in the universal story of the maximizing individual of modern lore. The potlatch is proof that societies can be based around very different initial assumptions than those of market society and that is the assumption of applying the families of peaces to economics.

To characterize the debate over the legal status of the potlatch as settlers for the ban and natives against it is obviously an unfair and inaccurate simplification. Neither group was monolithic: there were natives who stood to gain from the prohibition and settlers, particularly the merchants who sold blankets, boats, and Singer sewing machines that were distributed at potlatches, who were against the ban. The argument that the potlatch was similar to Christmas resonated with non-natives who protested enforcement of the potlatch law (Loo 1992:160) since “both were social and spiritual ceremonies that linked the present with the past and marked that link with gift-giving. So why was one illegal and the other not?” (Loo 1992:159). A comparison with Christmas acknowledges the common energetic elements.

The ban on the potlatch of 1885 was, on the one hand difficult to enforce, and on the other, had very real effects. Loo notes (1992:144), following Codere (1950), that Kwakiutl potlatches expanded after the ban, likely due their successful participation in the formal resource extraction economy of the province. The literature (Codere 1950) suggests that the availability of mass-produced consumer goods, such as the iconic piece of Canadiana, the



Hudson's Bay blanket, increased access to copper, and contact with a market economy and the unfettered exploitation of natural resources, forever changed the potlatch. This means that the anthropological literature is always caught in a discursive relationship of looking back on itself, always observing the potlatch as something other than whiteness yet never being able to see it without the blanchified influence of colonization and settlement (Bracken 1997). The ban was difficult to enforce due to jurisdictional disputes and few staff for a large area and the difficulty of knowing what behaviour was in fact banned and what was not (Bracken 1997), however, as Umeek relates, the ban still had disastrous repercussions.

I lived under this ban with my extended family and witnessed its destructive powers as I moved from the stability of my early years to the terrifying instability of a community whose laws had been displaced. The potlatch ban helped to erode the great teachings of Nuu-chah-nulth, which were based on *iis?ak'* — respect for all life forms. (Umeek 2011:108)

The prohibition of potlatching, legislation that my relation played a role in ushering in, was instrumental in eroding a way of life, many ways of lives, here on the Pacific Coast of Canada. Banning the potlatch was tantamount to banning the economy. The ban on the potlatch was not in accordance with respect for all life — *iis?ak'*.

A potlatch is a ceremony in which food and wealth is given away and sometimes destroyed. However, that analysis is only one level of interpretation and there is much more to it. Potlatches and the ensuing movement of property are more about the recreation of social identity than they are about production and consumption. “Potlatches may be described,” say Rohner & Rohner (1970:95), “[...] as a congregation of people who are invited to publicly witness and later validate a host's claims to or transmission of hereditary privileges and to receive in return, each according to his rank, differential amounts of

wealth.” Even though potlatches appear to be mechanisms for giving away food, wealth, and other resources, they are primarily an opportunity for a noble to state a claim to a hereditary ranked position by giving away property to guests, especially to those who are also of high status and who will be able, in turn, to recognize this claim to a hereditary rank at a future potlatch (Ridsdale 1997:8; Drucker 1967:481-482; Codere 1950:63). David Graeber extends his analysis to say that the role of constructing social identity that potlatches play goes as far as *becoming* a new person. “At least in the case of titles and their associated treasures, on taking possession of them, one literally became someone else” (Graeber 2001:195).

Energetic perspectives tend to focus on the symbolic meaning behind things rather than its physical manifestation. This is in fact what “energetic” refers to. The gifts in a potlatch that roll down the mountainous chief are “not in themselves constitutive of wealth, and for that reason nobles would make a point of speaking of them with disdain, referring to them as trifles,” (Graeber 2001:202); the gifts themselves were trifles and the the real value is the act of giving and the status that one could fasten on to oneself from having given them away. Clutesi supports the perspective that the things are less important than their energetic weight. “The most important gift one could give was the bestowal of a song together with its dance and the ornate paraphernalia needed to show any subsequent ceremonial presentations” (Clutesi, 1969:10). The most valuable gift is the ineffable; it is not an object so much as a transfer as what might be called today copyright of intellectual property. Again, Graeber explains that the things themselves are not as important as the energetic link.

Similarly, transfer of a dance-name would give its recipient the right to play a certain part in the dramas of the Winter Ceremonial; it would be accompanied by a great wood box containing the actual costumes and paraphernalia, though here again the physical objects

might well be destroyed and replaced in the process. (Graeber 2011:193)

The physical objects could be destroyed and rebuilt, which could easily appear wasteful and improvident in the eyes of a hardworking Protestant settler, but the energetic gift, the transfer of the “intellectual property,” or of the “rights” to perform the dance, or of the social identity of a name are the real gift.

In the case of the Kwakiutl potlatch, Graeber challenges Mauss’ theory of obligatory reciprocity in gift economies. He argues that there is no obligation of reciprocity since “[...] obviously only a fraction of the guests were likely to hold potlatches of their own at any time in the foreseeable future, and anyway, no one was keeping precise accounts” (Graeber 2001:209). Graeber claims that the idea of reciprocity in potlatches came about because both Boas and Mauss overstated the obligation to pay back double. Graeber argues (Graeber 2001:210) that the gift counter-gift reciprocal exchange described by Mauss is really only visible in the cases of fighting with property, competitive oneupmanship that occurs when two men are contesting claim to a hereditary position or trying to humiliate the other. However, I do not believe that it contradicts my theoretical framework. In a larger sense, a potlatch still begets another potlatch. After I have given a potlatch in order to fasten on a name or title, I must attend one for my title to be recognized. In this sense reciprocity is crucial: it is only when another potlatch is held and the the new host publicly recognizes the new title that it is possible to judge whether the potlatch was successful.

In addition to stating a claim to a hereditary title, a potlatch can also be called to redeem dignity. Drucker outlines how chiefs use “face-saving” potlatches to clear the air after any perceived offences and preserve their honour.

When some misadventure befell a chief, or the heir to a chieftaincy—for example, if he

stumbled and fell on some public occasion, or suffered any other public indignity—the damage to his honor could be repaired only by the formal distribution of gifts and the reaffirmation of his honorable status. The elaborateness of this performance depended to a large extent on the nature of the accident. If it was considered to have been a true accident and not the result of malicious human intent to demean him, a few small gifts sufficed to erase the damage to his dignity. If, however, there was any reason to believe that the affront had been deliberate, either through physical or magical means, a large and elaborate potlatch was called for. (Drucker 1955:126-127)

This appears to be the opposite of the Irish honour price (face-price) that Graeber outlines (2011:171-176). An offended Irish king would *receive* money and wealth if he was publicly humiliated, whereas an offended Kwakwaka'wakw chief would *give* money and wealth if he was publicly humiliated. We see here, in the Irish and Kwakwaka'wakw examples, goods travelling in opposite directions but dignity flowing in the same direction; both chieftains redeem dignity and yet material wealth moves in opposite directions. I classify Irish honour price as an example of a moral perspective and a face-saving potlatch as an energetic perspective.

Through the example of a face-saving potlatch, it is possible to see how a conflict could escalate and the process could get out of hand. I turn to the descriptions laid out by Drucker in which he explains that two chiefs could be in disagreement over who could assert their claim over a position in the hierarchical ranking system that was previously alluded to. Such behaviour could lead to a spiral of shame and humiliation. Each potlatch could require yet another potlatch to try to save face since it is in having one's rank in the hierarchy acknowledged and respected by others in another potlatch that shows whether the magnanimous gesture of potlatching was indeed successful in redeeming or maintaining the chief's dignity.

When two chiefs claimed the same place, the first one would give a potlatch, stating his claim; then the second would try to outdo him. Finally, one or the other gave away or destroyed more property than his opponent could possibly equal. The one who had been surpassed had no recourse. He could no longer contest his claim, for, in the native mind, it came to be regarded as ridiculous that an individual of few resources (and of course this involved not only the man, but his entire local group) should attempt to make a claim against someone who had demonstrated power and wealth. (Drucker 1955:128)

Such occurrences have been named competitive potlatches and have arguably received a disproportionate amount of attention in ethnography making them appear more common than they have ever been.

Competitive potlatches have received considerable attention in ethnographic literature because of their very spectacular nature. Two powerful rivals might give away and destroy thousands of dollars' worth of trade goods and money in the course of the contest. The destruction of property, of course, was to demonstrate that the chief was so powerful and so rich that the blankets or money he threw on the fire, or the “coppers” he broke, were of no moment at all to him. While such contests were held occasionally among many of the northern groups, they reached their highest development—or perhaps one should say their peak of bitterest rivalry—in two places: Fort Rupert and Port Simpson. (Drucker 1955:127)

An autobiographical note which may be inconsequential and irrelevant but is at least synchronistically intriguing in light of a broad historical approach is that the village of Lax Kw'alaams (Port Simpson) mentioned by Drucker as the site of one of two of the bitterest competitive potlatches is where my parents lived when I was born and where I spent the first eight months of my life.

I do not see the extremes of competitive potlatches as substantially different than the extremes of capitalist accumulation. Both cases are examples of taking to pathological extremes a facet of a social system that unto itself and under its own internal logic is neither good nor bad, but a functioning part of a cohesive worldview. Just as the Wall Street Crash of

1929 for modern economics, the dot-com bubble of 2000 for postmodern interpretations, and zombie myths of slavery as a kind of living death (Graeber 2011:169-170) for moral perspectives, competitive potlatches can be a cautionary tale for gift economies. If it says anything, it is that peace, in any paradigm, requires emotional maturity to heed the stories warning of the latent propensities for decadence in our economic lives.

### ***Cyclical Time***

Time, in energetic perspectives, is a net of wheel upon wheel, gyrating, scribing arcs, and curving through yet unimagined dimensions. However, such conceptions of time can be hard to fully grasp for people who grew up with the concept of the timeline ubiquitous in textbooks and in common parlance. It may be difficult for someone, such as myself or the dear reader, exposed to the philosophical consequences of linear time characteristic of (post)modern perspectives, to even begin to consider what it must feel like to be immersed in an energetic perception of time. Even as I write these words I am constantly reminded by the countless mechanisms used to quantify time that it is slipping away. There is never enough time in my life. The numbers in the corner of my computer screen blink away the hours, my phone beeps at me, my next meeting or appointment looms in my agenda; they are all continual reminders of where I must be going and how little time I have to do it all.

What must it be like to live with different metaphors about time? The imperative that follows modern economy, that time is money and the clock is ticking, is not a thought that crosses the mind of someone living in a purely energetic worldview. This is not to suggest sloth on the part of energetically focused human beings, as energetics are often labelled as

backward, primitive, and illogical by moderns; rather, the point is that time is not a line in space. Days still turn to months and seasons change; they must be made while the sun shines and food must be collected and preserved before winter. The difference is that those changes and deadlines are layer upon layer of circles, spirals and cycles.

Energetic worldviews include a transgenerational perspective. There is always enough time because the view of time is not confined to the lifespan of an individual. It must be clearly affirmed that the idea of an individual is a modern concept and does not exist in energetic worldviews, which can be described by the principle of ubuntu: *I am because we are*. Therefore, time can be seen from a transgenerational perspective. The idea that children carry on their parents' work is generally accepted. I mean work here, firstly, in the sense of a trade, vocation or a family business, and secondly in the sense of working on pushing the edges of the established social and behavioural patterns inherited from one's parents, often known as "personal work." Assuming that such patterns or trends may require several generations to be transformed or for any change to occur consequently never enters into the angst and desperation that can come from believing that time is running out. Belief in reincarnation is an expression of this principle. Reincarnation is the acknowledgment that time is not limited to one single human lifespan.

In the Buddhist tradition, it is accepted that it can take many lifetimes to achieve nirvana. Despite the apparent teleological implications of this position, it also describes potentially infinite iterations as the wheel of samsara is in *constant motion*. The cycle of death and rebirth, arising and passing away, continues as long we are attached to it, until we are fully liberated. In this formulation, time is clearly a transpersonal phenomenon.

Examples of non-linear chronosophy<sup>12</sup> can be found around the world and at all times historically. We will look at a few brief examples from the Maya, Hinduism, Buddhism and from the Greek tradition, although these are but a scant few salient and well documented cases. Non-linear conceptions of time usually have elements of cyclical and repeating ages. Such cycles will repeat, bringing familiar patterns that are never quite the same; repeating cycles are the same but different. Every spring can be warm, average temperatures around 20°C, with migratory birds returning around the same time, yet never exactly the same. Such phenomena evoke an image of a spiral: seen from the perspective of two dimensions, it may appear to return to the same place, but seen from the third dimension, it is in a slightly different place. These cycles or ages can be small, such as days, moons, or years, and large like ones that encompass the astronomical, bordering on the inconceivable.

The sacred texts of Hinduism contain many units of time that cover a vast range of time. Amongst the smallest units is the *truti*, which is calculated at about 0.031 microseconds ( $3.1 \times 10^{-8}$  s) according to the Surya-Siddhanta (Sastri & Wilkinson 1861:2). On the other end of the spectrum, a Cycle of Brahma is approximately 311 trillion ( $3.11 \times 10^{14}$ ) years. Furthermore, time is divided into a cycle of four *yuga*, which are comprised of *charaṇas*, in turn equalling 432 000 years (Burgess 1860:9).

Satya Yuga	4 <i>Charaṇas</i>	1 728 000 years
Treta Yuga	3 <i>Charaṇas</i>	1 296 000 years
Dvapara Yuga	2 <i>Charaṇas</i>	864 000 years
Kali Yuga	1 <i>Charaṇas</i>	432 000 years

*Figure 2: Cycle of the Yugas*

A full cycle of *yugas*, the *mahayuga* lasting 4 320 000 years, is one full day and night for  
 12 *Chronosophy* comes from the work of Julius T. Fraser, *The Voices of Time* (1966).



Brahma, during which the universe is created and destroyed. The Cycle of Brahma is the entire lifetime of Brahma. On the one hand, it is difficult to imagine how these astronomically large and infinitesimally small figures could be calculated or why they would even be necessary. On the other hand, they describe a worldview that does not seem to judge human hubris, yet places it in a context that makes it utterly empty.

The Mayans also have a complex system of measuring time. They have a day-count called the *Haab'*, which is comprised of eighteen months of twenty days plus a period of five nameless days, known as *Wayeb'*, at the end of the year ( $18 \times 20 + 5 = 365$ ). The *Haab'*, corresponding to the solar year, is paired with the *Tzolk'in*, a 260-day calendar that combines the twenty days of each month with the numbers one through thirteen (which are transcribed in a base-20, vigesimal, system). Combining the two gives a period of 52 *Haab'* years or 18 980 days, which is known as a Calendar Round. This system is perhaps similar to the Chinese Zodiac (or *Shēngxiào* 生肖) that cycles through twelve animals and ten heavenly stems (the five Chinese elements, or *Wǔ Xíng* 五行, in both yin and yang forms), creating a system of sixty-year cycles, known as a sexagenary cycle. In both the Mayan and the Chinese systems, the combination of the spiral cycles has the effect that each day, in the case of Mesoamerica, and each year, in the case of China, has a specific character due to the combination of positions in the various cycles, making some auspicious for some tasks or events and others not.

Parallel to the Mayan system just described is the Long Count calendar that was a linear construct that tallied passage of time from creation in a calculable and comparable timeline. The Maya also apparently observed the periods of other geophysical cycles such as

the orbital period of Venus as is mentioned in the Dresden Codex (Faulseit 2006). The result is a system that allows for precise transcriptions of dates in the passage of time alongside continuously repeating cycles in the infinite periodicity of time. Although this chapter is discussing energetic approaches, I must point out that the Mayan parallel system fits with a transrational paradigm. I hazard to speculate that the Long Count calendar may have been introduced to solve the logical problem of identifying specific dates in a system that repeats every 52 years. Thus it would have meant the introduction of linear thinking to a society that previously conceived of cyclical patterns. The archaeological evidence seems to corroborate this as Bricker (1982) dates the *Haab'* at 550 BCE whereas the Long Count can only be definitively dated to 292 CE (Coe & Koontz 2002:87), although it may have been in use long before (Diehl 2004).<sup>13</sup> By solving a logical problem by rational means and then not abandoning rather integrating a pre-existing energetic system, it is by definition a transrational approach.

Another figuration of time is the *kalacakra*. The term, used in Vajrayana Buddhism and in Jain cosmology, means 'wheel of time,' from the Sanskrit, *kāla*, 'time,' and *cakra*, 'wheel.' It should be pointed out that *cakra* is also the common term to denote the system of energy nodes in the subtle body, most often written in English as chakra. In Vajrayana Buddhism, *kalacakra* refers to a body of teachings and texts (the *Kalacakra Tantra*) on the nature of time and also to practices that harmonize the practitioner with the cycles (chakra) of life. Notably, His Holiness the XIV<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama of Tibet has given many *kalacakra* initiations outside of the subcontinent, beginning in 1981 in Madison, Wisconsin, USA. The

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<sup>13</sup> Diehl (2004) asserts that the Long Count is much older and in fact predates Mayan civilization, possibly originating with the Olmecs. If Diehl is correct, it could refute my theory of the cyclical calendar predating the linear calendar.

most well known practice of the kalacakra tradition is that of the sand mandala, in which monks create a large visual representation of the *Kalacakra Tantra* entirely of coloured sand. When the sand mandala is completed, the oeuvre is destroyed as a practice of impermanence. The centrality of impermanence in Buddhism, rather than the embodiment of time as in the form of a deity, prompted South Asian art specialist Corinna Wessels-Mevissen to maintain that Buddhism has “a philosophical approach towards Time that tends to dissolve it into its units and ultimately negate it” (Wessels-Mevissen in Boschung & Wessels-Mevissen 2012:11). Not only are there strong cyclical patterns suggesting non-linear chronosophy, such as the importance of the kalacakra and the manifestations of Avalokiteśvara in the *tulku* lineages of the Dalai Lamas and the Karmapas, but the primacy of impermanence seems to evoke a conception of time that goes beyond any conventional way of perceiving time.

Even the world standard calendar system shows evidence of its energetic beginnings. The system of the Gregorian calendar, the one used during the time that saw the emergence and dominance of a vectoral chronosophy, can be viewed as a perception of linear time grafted onto an underlying framework of non-linear understanding. The prevalence of cycles is obvious in days and years, combined with phases of the moon, and all embedded within a 25 772-year precession of the equinoxes. The Western traditions also have notions of cycles and repeating ages. One example echoing the Mayan Calendar Round is the Metonic cycle, known since Babylonian times (approximately 500 BCE), which is a 19-year period in which solar and lunar calendars line up.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the precession of the equinoxes breaks down into different ages, each one corresponding to a sign of the Greek Zodiac. The Ages of Aries was the time of the Old Testament of the Bible (approximately 2000 BCE until the birth of

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<sup>14</sup> The Metonic cycle is not an exact alignment. 19 years and 235 months differ by about 2 hours.

Jesus Christ), the Age of Pisces was the time of the New Testament of the Bible (approximately 1 CE until 2000 CE), and contemporary times are somewhere on the cusp of the fabled dawn of the Age of Aquarius. It should be added, though, that astrologers disagree on whether the Age of Aquarius has already begun or not or whether we will have to wait another millennium before love will steer the stars.

In the contemporary world, the most common calendar system is based on the solar calendar. Lunar calendars are in use, for example the Islamic calendar, which determines Islamic holidays, however it is often used in parallel with the Gregorian calendar for the sake of clarity and standardization. Using a Nietzschean analysis, this can be seen as yet another example of the triumph of Apollonian values over Dionysian values, Apollo being the Roman version of Helios, and Dionysius being equated to the feminine and the unclean. It is a short step to connect dots from moon to feminine to negative and scary. Nevertheless, lunar calendars persist, grafted on, or as a kind of after-thought, a vague memory of a dream. The most basic structure of the Gregorian calendar is the division into months, which were originally cycles of the moon. Since, using a lunar calendar one will always be too short or too long for a solar year, a formal system, rather than adaptive system, was fixed. Although solar calendars are the norm, important holidays such as Diwali, Easter, Ramadan, or the Chinese New Year are lunar events. Even the calendar system most associated with modernity is at its core a complex and hybridized system of embedded cycles and imperfect approximations imbued with the energetic principle of non-linearity.

Returning to the tension between Apollo and Dionysius, I would like to introduce a Hellenistic precedent: that is the concept of *kairos*. In much the same way as the Apollonian

values have dominated and been moulded into the foundations of modernity and Dionysus was swept under the carpet of history, the concept of Chronos, of quantitative sequential time, has perdured (enshrined in English words such as chronicle, chronometer, chronological, anachronism), whereas Kairos, an eternal opportune moment, has all but disappeared from Western philosophical traditions, which are built on Greek bedrock. I would like furthermore to propose the following table of juxtapositions.

<u>Chronos</u>	<u>Kairos</u>
space	place
quantitative	qualitative
linear	non-linear

*Figure 3: Chronos and Kairos*

My purpose in this elementary exploration is to posit that kairos is an energetic concept of time and that it has been brushed aside, all but forgotten, in favour of empirical conceptions of time. Furthermore, I suggest that the idea of the opportune moment is reminiscent of the energetic proclivities of a day or moment that are predicted in astrological systems such as the examples that we have seen of the Mayan *Tzolk'in-Haab'* combinations, the Chinese Zodiac, or reading our horoscope in the newspaper. In so saying, I am arguing that the energetic principles, such as kairos, are not dead, eradicated, or lost from the world, just contained, over-looked, and labeled superstitious.

The main characteristic of peace that comes as a consequence of energetic chronosophy is that peace is always immanent. Peace cannot be projected off into some future date; peace always only exists here and now (Dietrich 2012). We are not progressing to greater and greater prosperity and happiness; we just are. At risk of further complicating

matters, I will say too that since energetic perceptions of time are cyclical and moments or ages carry with them a certain propensity or flavour, it can be imagined that certain times will be seen as a time of great conflict or a time of war, and that the coming age, year, or day may be the resolution of that tension — a time of peace coming in the future. This is not antithetical to the *hic et nunc* energetic peace philosophy. This is because the focus in the energetic perspectives is always on the interior. The character of the time is an external structure just as wind or rain; the action for peace is taken internally for relations between people in the given moment.

Astrologically determined phenomena correspond to energetic principles. It is an energetic concept that a day has a certain flavour or personality that makes it more conducive to one kind of activity over another. This is the idea behind the sabbath. The energetic interpretation that a given time period, let us say five years, will be a time of war followed by a time of peace is simply another cycle in the cosmic ballet, like a storm or a season. People generally do not like rain but it is absurd to argue that rain is inherently bad. It is the essence of Peace Studies as a postmodern discipline that transposes a moral judgment on to war. The entire premise of writing a dissertation in Peace Studies presupposes the assumption that war is bad and it must be prevented, preempted, and mitigated. As an author, once I have embarked on this journey, I take it upon myself to question my assumptions and contemplate the consequences of my initial stance. The generalization of energetic perspectives on peace is that they do not have moral judgments of war being good or bad; the focus is on how to be in alignment, at peace, with myself in the context of this time of war and turmoil. The danger, in reading this is to transpose a moral frame onto the energetic perspective. This can happen

in the case of kings and chieftains trying to manipulate the proclivities brought forth by astrological phenomena. An example of an energetic concept interpreted morally is that of seeing the concept of karma as a moral judgment; even many contemporary Buddhists see karma as a moral commandment, that is to say, “I have to do the right thing or else bad things will happen to me.”

The implications of non-linear perceptions of time for energetic approaches to economics are basically that everything must be recycled. Time ebbs and flows in cyclical patterns and in the energetic perspective so to shall the material objects of our human existence. We give and take and everything stays in balance. Graeber (2011:104-105) cites Laura Bohannon’s (1964:47) description of the Tiv in Nigeria in which the women travel great distances returning handfuls of okra or money. The essential factor is never to return exactly as much as was initially given. It must be a little bit more or a little bit less, thus ensuring that the cycle continues. No one is even and square; the repayments must continue in a perpetual dance. The same is true in my family: I was told never to return an empty plate. If someone brings a dish over for dinner, the appropriate thing to do would be to put some baking on it before I give it back. This is a custom of courtesy and not the basis of a socio-economic system, however, the principle is the same.

Expanding again on Bourdieu’s observation (1977), gift economies can be seen to be slow-motion trade economies. Energetic perspectives on time allow this relativistic time-dilation (from the viewpoint of modern eyes). The time between one gift and a reciprocal gift can be a long time since the modern imperative to pay on the spot is not there. It is as if long-term interest-free credit has been granted. So, it begs the question, is there really any

difference between a gift and a commodity other than the length of time?

In sum, the differences are essentially three. Firstly, a cyclical, long-term perspective on time means that waiting is possible. A cosmivision that believes that everything comes around will assume that a gift will eventually and inevitably be reciprocated. This is part of the fabric of an energetic understanding. Secondly, the time lapse is not about paying back as much as it is about recreating the relationships between people. Gift economies have all of the rites and customs embedded into the larger social tapestry. The potlatch, for example, is about dances and re-enactments and sacred songs and teaching and sharing wisdom and tying bonds between people; to see it solely as a mechanism to move goods around or to contract retainers is to miss the point.

Finally, yet reservedly, I admit that there may very well be a beautiful freedom in the time-lapse of gift exchange. Rather than simply paying the retail price for an object, I have time to carefully considered how when, by what means, and under what terms I want to reciprocate and honour my benevolent donor. I can consider what he or she really needs or values. As in the maxim from Charles Dudley Warner (1872:247), “the excellence of a gift lies in its appropriateness rather than in its value.” It is the appropriateness that makes our relationships truly special.

### ***Energetic Interpretations of Justice***

It is the nature of this kind of broad analysis that the individual factors are intimately interconnected. However, as an author writing a text that will be read in a linear fashion, I must make key editorial decisions. I have chosen to follow threads of currency and justice



through the five families of peaces in order to cast light on the interpretations of economics in each family. The threads that this work traces through the families of peaces can end up being inconsistent since justice requires a moral understanding to be conceived. The underlying principles of justice express themselves in ways that are not easily recognizable. For this chapter, I will combine the discussions of justice and currency in order to highlight this point, however, we will return to a discussion of currency later.

The history of money is more often than not the history of numismatics, the history of coinage (Graeber 2011). It is easy to see why. Coins and even paper bills are things that can persist in the archaeological record, they can be traded, shipped, buried, dug up, and displayed in a museum; verbal agreements between neighbours are lost the moment the words are spoken. The question of what kind of money represents an energetic principle might be going about it in the wrong way. I wish to start this line of reasoning by looking at energetic exchange as credit.

For all of the discussion on currency in all of the five families of peaces, I am adopting a framework proposed by David Graeber (Graeber 2011). By following a broad analysis of economic systems over the past 5000 years, Graeber separates money systems into two categories: bullion or credit. The term “credit” here can also be understood as a unit-of-account while payments are in kind. The survey notes that historical ages seem to oscillate from one to the other.

If we look at Eurasian history over the course of the last five thousand years, what we see is a broad alternation between periods dominated by credit money and periods in which gold and silver come to dominate—that is, those during which at least a large share of transactions were conducted with pieces of valuable metal being passed from hand to hand. (Graeber 2011:213)

Graeber marks out the distinction that bullion systems dominate “in periods of generalized violence,” and credit systems generally require social stability or institutions. This division can be explained since credit requires (and literally means) trust and bullion has the unique characteristic of being lootable, that is that it can be stolen. There are many examples of financial instruments that are tied to persons, a personal cheque is a common example; a cheque is a promise from one particular person to pay another specified person an indicated amount of something. That promissory note can be endorsed over to a third person (or theoretically, and in some cases in practice, to any number of people), however, it never loses its indexicality, meaning that it represents agreements between specific people. We will cast our critical gaze back on to this difference later; for now it is the fungibility of money that is of interest. It is that cash is a slave that is divorced from its context and origins and obeys the whims of its new master with nary a murmur or complaint. It is this characteristic that allows Graeber to assert that bullion dominates in times of unpeace. To complete the theory, Graeber outlines dates of the alternating historical ages of credit or bullion money systems.

The cycle begins with the Age of the First Agrarian Empires (3500-800 BC), dominated by virtual credit money. This is followed by the Axial Age (800 BC-600 AD), [...] which saw the rise of coinage and a general shift to metal bullion. The Middle Ages (600-1450 AD), which saw a return to virtual credit money [...]; [...] the Age of Capitalist Empires, which began around 1450 with a massive planetary switch back to gold and silver bullion, and which could only really be said to have ended in 1971, when Richard Nixon announced that the U.S. Dollar would no longer be redeemable in gold. This marked the beginning of yet another phase of virtual money, one which has only just begun, and whose ultimate contours are, necessarily, invisible. (Graeber 2011:214)

This creates a framework of five alternating ages that have some striking similarities with the families of peaces and yet are not a perfect match. Before proceeding any further, I will

briefly explain how I see their overlap. I will stress that I am being careful not to force reality into my model or stretch definitions to allow the two models to overlay when they are perhaps incompatible.

The energetic family of peaces is compatible with Graeber's Age of First Agrarian Empires as a time frame. However, energetic approaches to peace are far older than just the fourth millennium BCE and, since the families of peaces reflect states of mind rather than time periods, they are also contemporary and not old or dead worldviews. Furthermore, the very idea of an empire already shows signs of a moralistic worldview and the elaborate taxation system of Sumerian temples fits with a modern worldview. Ancient empires do not necessarily represent examples of energetic thinking just because they are old; they also contain examples of other perspectives.

Karl Jasper's concept of the Axial Age (Jaspers 1949), which Graeber elaborates here, corresponds to a moral perspective. This pairing is consistent as Dietrich also uses Jasper's Axial Age as a template to discuss the emergence of patriarchy, monotheism, institutionally imposed norms, and the shift from energetic perspectives to moral perspectives (Dietrich 2012:65-115). Regarding economics, I see moral perspectives as the time of the rise of coinage and creation of formalized institutions normalizing its use. As the pendulum of Graeber's model swings back to credit in the Middle Ages, my orientation is that Eurasia is still a place dominated by patriarchy, monotheism, and dualistic philosophy and therefore best described as dominated by moral interpretations of peaces rather than marking any shift.

The modern family of peaces coincides precisely with the Age of Capitalist Empires and I have also taken the date of Nixon's abolishment of the gold standard as the seminal

turning point into postmodern interpretations of economics. All of these ages span centuries and, as Graeber points out, it is too soon to tell what trend is really forming. It may be that what I am describing as a transrational approach to economics turns out to be another turn on the wheel of credit and cash, and we are entering another age dominated by credit money and social stability as Graeber's cyclical model seems to predict. Or it may turn out that the postmodern ennui around the meeting of the second and third millennia was not a turning point at all but just a temporary blip in a longer age of bullion. The point is that I see the postmodern, and transrational perspectives (as well as the energetic, moral, and modern, but with the emphasis in this case on the other two) as being contemporaneous, competing, and often conflicting worldviews that are both valid descriptions of reality at the time of writing.

In combining the five families of peaces with Graeber's division of bullion and credit, we get a useful pattern. The moral and modern paradigms correspond to the times of bullion currencies and the energetic and postmodern paradigms correspond to the times of credit currencies. We can adapt Dietrich's original simplified model of transrational peaces to visualize this matrix (Dietrich 2013:155), which was influenced by Ken Wilber's quadrants (Wilber 1995). Here we can see that credit systems fall on interior side of the matrix and bullion systems correspond to the exterior. This division makes intuitive sense: bullion is an externalized representation of value and credit is a relationship of trust. A transrational perspective incorporates all of these aspects and acts on them when applicable. If the question is posed of whether a transrational approach to economics is predominantly a credit or bullion system, the answer is that it is simultaneously both and neither. The transrational perspective goes beyond the duality and includes them both where appropriate.

<b>Interior</b> Energetic and Postmodern <b>CREDIT</b>	<b>Exterior</b> Moral and Modern <b>BULLION</b>	
I intentional harmony	IT behavioural security	<b>Singular</b> (individual)
WE cultural truth	THEY social justice	<b>Plural</b> (collective)

*Figure 4: Transrational Peaces with Credit and Bullion*

Returning to the discussion at hand, in this formulation energetic perspectives correspond to credit systems. This is not to say that energetic perspectives never use anything resembling currency or media of exchange. On the contrary, there are countless examples within primarily energetic perspectives of things being traded and of people swapping things or using certain commodities as exchange media or units of account. All money is a symbolic language and the question comes down to, symbolic of what? In the case of the energetic perspective, trades are symbolic of relationships.

Graeber (2011) talks extensively about what are referred to in the anthropological literature as primitive currencies. He says that they are often dismissed by economists because they are not used to buy the essentials of everyday life. They are not used to buy eggs, okra, a loaf of bread, or smoked salmon and for this reason are systematically disregarded by economists. This is presumably where the epithet “primitive” comes from. Instead of being used to acquire the victuals of daily life, they are used for weddings, funerals, and other rituals. Basically, they are used to reorganize and recreate human relationships. The material forms of such media fall along two lines: they are the substances that are used for adornment (Graeber 2011:159) and they are what is best suited as gifts for

the gods (Graeber 2011:59). Sometimes the object in question serves the role of both as in gold. The Kula shells of the Trobriand Islands famously described by Malinowski (1922) are a form of jewellery, the camwood bars of the Lele of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are a cosmetic for men and women (Graeber 2011:144), the brass rods of the Tiv of Nigeria are sometimes made into jewellery (Graeber 2011:145), and gold, the standard for money, is also the material *par excellence* for jewellery.

David Graeber (2011) uses the term “human economies” to describe such economic systems that primarily occupy themselves with the rearrangement of human relationships. He uses “social currency” to denote the media, the cowrie shells, brass rods, or pigs that are physically exchanged, and “human economy” to refer to the larger system of exchange that redefines human relationships. I will refer to these terms, however, in the main, I am reluctant to adopt completely this nomenclature because I think that using the term “economy” facilitates the possible conflation with a modern economy. In this work I wish to highlight the differences rather than reproduce the hegemonic power of “the economy” by describing yet another vernacular variant in those terms. The key difference between a human economy and a modern economy is that the former is about relationships and how to form, break, nourish or rearrange them, and the latter is about stuff. I see Graeber’s human economies as expressions of energetic perspectives, however, I contend that they could also express moral perspectives.

It may be furthermore worthwhile to summarize Philippe Rospabé’s hypothesis that money begins “as a substitute for life” (Rospabé 1993:35 in Graeber 2011:133). Rospabé’s theory comes in handy when contemplating how social currencies might emerge in the

context of human economies. According to Rospabé, social currency stands in as a representative of debts that cannot ever be paid. An example is bridewealth. If I am taking a woman as my wife, she can never be paid for since a woman is unique; I cannot buy a wife. The closest I could come to an equitable exchange would be to offer a woman in return. Following the example of the Tiv of Nigeria that Graeber uses (Graeber 2011:132-133; Graeber 2011:161), I could offer my sister to my newfound brother-in-law. We then would have an example of sister exchange. The point is not to go out into all the intricacies and complications of how the Tiv system acts in practice; we can see easily that there have to be mechanisms to contend with the possibility that my sister and my brother-in-law do not wish to marry. Offering something of value, a bridewealth, is a way to assuage any concerns that the number of women in the community might be unbalanced. A social currency emerges then as a place-holder for the impossibility of complete fungibility. A social currency is not equal to a human being since no human being can be equal to any other let alone to any object; it is rather similar to a bank note in that it is a kind of IOU. “It is the peculiar quality of such social currencies that they are never quite equivalent to people. If anything, they are a constant reminder that human beings can never be equivalent to anything—even, ultimately, to one another” (Graeber 2011:158). Seen in this light, the physical objects of social currencies, be they feathers, shells, or raffia cloth, represent the solemnity of one’s highest obligations to the social fabric. As in the words of Rospabé, social currencies represent an obligation to life itself.

This brings our discussion to the fundamental question of currency in the energetic perspective. What Rospabé’s theory points out is that humans have some medium of currency

to honour the sacred fact that one thing cannot be equivalent to another; all things, and especially human beings, are unique, irreplaceable, and non-fungible. This brings it back to the recurring theme of this section, that energetic interpretations of currency are concerned with relationships rather than things. When things are exchanged, what is being exchanged is the act of giving rather than the gift. As Graeber says (Graeber 2001:45), paraphrasing the work of Nancy Munn on Kula exchange in the Trobriand Islands, “If one gives another person food and receives a shell in return, it is not the value of the food that returns to one in the form of the shell, but rather the value of the act of giving it. The food is simply the medium.” This is the summation of the energetic approach to currency. The medium is only a representation of an act; the thing is less important than the relationship.

This brings us to the question of what is just. If what is reciprocated is the act of giving then there are no objective measures of value because the act cannot be negated. Any squabbles over the content in an exchange of gifts are instantly seen as petty and empty. If I give you a car and then in return you give me a stone, and it is performed in ritual in front of our communities, there is no way to deny that you reciprocated the gift; you reciprocated an *act of giving*. I might be miffed that the new car took me longer to acquire than the stone that you just picked up off the beach, but I witnessed your act of giving. What is more, this example of an energetic perspective lacks any formalized system to determine objectively that one thing is worth more than the other. If we see the things as hollow media, then the real value is witnessing each other trading the act of giving. However, if I continue to give you cars and you continue to give me stones, I might end up perceiving an unequal relationship. The question of material justice becomes quickly murky.



Now let us go back to David Graeber's scenarios between our fictitious friends Joshua and Henry who were trying to trade potatoes for shoes. Joshua gave Henry a pair of shoes and insisted that they are a gift, they do not fit him properly. Henry's potatoes do not immediately come into the equation. Henry waits a discreet interval and drops off a sack of potatoes just before Joshua is about to have a feast, insisting it is a gift, just a neighbourly gesture. Then maybe Joshua needs help building a barn and so calls on Henry to give him a hand since Henry has been such a good neighbour. Joshua knows that a few days of labour is a lot to ask of anyone and so is observant of his neighbour. He hears Henry complaining that his axe is too dull to split wood, so after a discreet interval, Joshua drops off a new axe, insisting that it is a neighbourly gesture and that Henry would do the same. This fatuous example could go on forever. However, it is reminiscent of the example of the Tiv women returning a few coins, a dozen eggs, or a handful of okra, but never exactly as much as was the previous gift, ensuring a perpetual cycle of gift and debt amongst neighbours.

I argue that the discreet time interval between gifts and the observation of the other's needs is an energetic interpretation of justice. The idea or principle that resembles justice is expressed in the care and nurturance of our relationships. If my friend gives me a stone in exchange for a car, it may seem unfair by modern standards, but if next time he knows that I already have a stone and he gives me a canoe knowing that I need one, I will notice that he has taken my situation into account. Justice is expressed through the assumption that people genuinely care about the wellbeing of one another and are actively observant of each others' needs and our own personal ability to meet some of those needs. Justice is expressed by being a member of the community, a link in the chain, a thread in the social fabric: *I am*

*because we are.*

The example of the car and the stone was preposterous on purpose. It was meant as an extreme case to create a thought experiment and emphasize a point. But what if the car were a Honda Civic with no add-ons (meaning an economy car at the bottom of the market) and the stone had been on my friend's family altar for eight generations and had been prayed over by all of his ancestors and relatives? In that case, the car might seem to be a cheap deal and an inadequate offer. I mention this to reiterate the point that there is no objective standard of value in an energetic framework. However, there does need to be trust. It is through trust, through the reproduction of a relationship, that an energetic interpretation of justice can be perceived.

The energetic principle can be manifested in the sentiment that the best way to give is without expectation of return. This aphorism can be seen in moral traditions, such as the maxim in English that it is better to give than to receive. In my mind, these are instances of moral robes draped over an energetic body. It is this surrender to the unknown that allows the other person to reciprocate your gift freely. Your revenue is what has freely come back to you from your initial generosity. There is no need for a formalized system of exchange media because the energetic principle trusts in the reciprocating law of the universe, the Tao, the pulsating originary energy: that which is put out into the universe with a pure heart will come back to you in a good way.

A human being is out walking in the Serengeti and comes across another human being. I might expect that their conversation would go something like this:

P1: "Wow! A human being!"

P2: "Wow! You are a human being too!"  
P1: "Here is a friendly gesture."  
P2: "I see your friendly gesture. You are indeed a human being. Here is my friendly gesture."  
P1: "Wow! Let us do friendly gestures together!"

For a modern anthropologist from the outside looking in, it may seem like an example of simple intertribal commerce. Two humans meet unexpectedly on the Serengeti. They are surprised by each others' presence and decide to exchange goods, let us say a pelt for some dried strips of flesh. It could be said that this was an encounter in which a pelt and some jerky were exchanged. We could come up with theories of equivalencies between pelts and jerky. It would be missing the point of the interaction. From an energetic perspective each person did a friendly gesture without expectation of return and reciprocated because it felt good. It is the same as the line from the famous Christian prayer, "*for it is in giving that we receive,*" often attributed, perhaps erroneously, to St. Francis of Assisi. However, it was not directed by a moral imperative, there was no voice saying that this is what you must do. If there is something exchanged it is the act of generosity, the act of giving, that is reciprocated rather than one object for another object. What I am trying to illustrate in this comical simplification is that the energetic perspective pivots on the fundamental transpersonal human experience of recognizing the divine light of oneself in another being. The two human beings are two nodes of the universe looking back at each other, two manifestations of atman recognizing each other, two jewels in the Net of Indra reflecting each other.

Modern economists might have us believe that everyone is always trying inexorably to maximize her personal interest. I contend that there is no reason to assume that encounters between two people, two tribes, will be hostile any more than to assume any other outcome.

If one is to assume or predict that encounters will be hostile, one must present evidence and reasons why. It cannot be blindly assumed that an expedient self-interested accumulation of material objects is the universal goal.

The Baining people of the interior mountains of East New Britain, Papua New Guinea have some ritual exchanges that further illustrate this point.

While the Baining lack elaborate, ceremonial forms of exchange like moka, people are in the constant habit of exchanging food, betel nut, and the like on a less formal basis. If two men meet each other on the road, for example, they will almost invariably both offer each other betel nut to chew, each then taking some of the others'. Families often exchange food, here too almost always in egalitarian same-for-same transactions; for example, two neighbors will exchange equal amounts of taro with which to prepare their dinner. (Graeber 2001:70)

David Ricardo might ask where the competitive advantage is in exchanging equal amounts of the same root, however, this example that blatantly defies the common logic draws attention to the difference in paradigm. These examples typify my categorization of energetic exchange; the act of giving is reciprocated and in these examples, the media being like for like only further emphasizes that it is the the content of the gesture that is reciprocated and not the form of the medium, since nothing material is gained or lost. The reciprocal and symbolic exchange is a token of gratitude and *seeing* the other, “wowing,” and exchanging friendly gestures.

The principle of justice in energetic perspectives emerges out of a unique nexus of relations (Graeber 2011:158-159). Graeber cites the example of the Nambikwara of Brazil (Levi-Strauss 1943; Servet 1982). Two bands, which are often separate, meet and trade things as part of an elaborate ritual that includes dance that “mimics military confrontation”

(Graeber 2011:30).

Barter, then, for all the festive elements, was carried out between people who might otherwise be enemies and hovered about an inch away from outright warfare—and, if the ethnographer is to be believed—if one side later decided they had been taken advantage of, it could very easily lead to actual wars. (Graeber 2011:30)

This underscores the importance of treating one another fairly. In this case it is treating as family people who might as well be enemies. The consequences of treating them as enemies would likely lead to war. The relationship, treating others as kin, is how justice is expressed because it is how one treats someone about whom one truly cares.

Recalling the examples of Joshua and Henry, doing each other favours endlessly, or the Tiv women, returning a gift of a similar but always unequal amount, one should consider what happens when one breaks the cycle. In the case of the Tiv, paying back exactly a dozen eggs for a dozen eggs received sends the message that I do not want to have anything to do with you (Graeber 2011:105). The cycle of favours and small debts continues forever until someone pays it all back, settles accounts and then is even and square. To be *quitt*, as is said in German, is to quit the relationship. We no longer want to have anything to do with each other since we no longer owe anything to each other. As the common expression in English goes, acting like you do not owe anything to anybody, is not a flattering statement.

### ***Relationality: I am what others perceive***

The principle of Ubuntu, *I am because we are*, has been used by Dietrich as an indicative description of how relationships are seen in energetic conceptions of peace. Although this term has gained in popularity to the point of being a cliché, from a documentary film

produced by Madonna (*I Am Because We Are*, 2008) to an Ubuntuism clothing line, its ease in transmitting the sense of energetic perspectives is useful. The energetic and postmodern families of peaces see relationships as primary; the modern families of peaces see the individual as primary; the transrational approach uses the concept of a contact boundary. Although I will primarily use the concept in regards to a transrational perspective, I think it can be a useful tool in conceptualizing a worldview in which patterns are in a sense more real than physical substance. Dietrich takes the term contact boundary from Gestalt therapy (Dietrich 2013:33-34) where it is used to describe the semi-permeable limitations to our individuality where we are also necessarily open to the throughput of outside energy and matter. Dietrich outlines the ontological parallels that have been imported to transrational peace studies from humanistic psychology.

Further important basic methodological assumptions shared by humanistic psychology and transrational peace studies include a belief that human beings are more than a sum of their parts, that they live in relationships — in fact, that they are their relationships — and thus perception is relational. It is assumed that they do so in a conscious manner and that they can therefore enhance perception and make autonomous decisions. (Dietrich 2013:38)

Even though Dietrich writes this passage about transrational approaches and this chapter refers to energetic approaches, the commonality is the idea that we *are* our relationships. The relationship precedes the individual; we are not as much individuals in relationships as we are networks of relationships that coalesce into temporary bodies. Who we are ultimately emerges from our relationships. Therefore, when contact boundaries meet, there are infinite possible outcomes; a fight is just one of them.

The most important element of how relationships are defined in the worldviews of energetic peaces is that they are based on patterns of relating. This is the foremost argument

of this section: there is no individual. In addition to this point, I will also go in to explaining the concept of interconnectedness in energetic perspectives and pick up and interpret Mauss' concept of inalienability, although these two are hardly anything more than subtle variants of the first idea. In terms of comparing this vision of relationships to anything that can in broad terms be called "economic activity" or "production," any exchange of goods cannot be extricated from the web of social relations. We will not see examples of someone walking into a shop, plunking down a collection of woodpecker scalps and say, "I'd like a hammer please," and promptly leaving with no further obligations without knowing who these two people are, how they are related, and what are the intricacies of their shared history. As far as any "exchange" will take place, the relationship is the exchange and relationship is the reason for the interaction. Exchange can create new relationships, however, work goes to reinforcing existing ones (Graeber 2001:27).

It is clear in the work of Graeber (2001), Dalton (1982), and Strathern (1988) that this idea has found some traction. Graeber references the work of Daniel de Coppet (Barraud et al. 1994) with the 'Aru'Aru people who live in the Solomon Islands as such an example (Graeber 2001:19): "In societies such as these ['Aru'Aru], the authors argue, it is utterly absurd to talk about individuals maximizing goods. There are no individuals. Any person is himself made up of the very stuff he exchanges, which are in turn the basic constituents of the universe." I assume that the positions of anthropologists like Strathern and Graeber are tenable when dealing with some oriental Other, but are considered radical in the main. I will take this as a point of departure or operating assumption: I take it for granted that individuals do not have to exist and that many examples of societies organized around those principles

can be found.

Dalton also comes to the point of recognizing that relationships are more important than individuals. He comes at it from an angle of gift exchange. In a gift economy, gifts can be seen as a mechanism to redistribute resources. However, in contemporary anglo-north-American culture, gifts are not a significant form of resource redistribution. Sure, there are charities, food banks, foundations whose sole purpose is to give money away to worthy causes, but mainly people buy and sell the necessities of everyday life and reserve gifts for people with whom we have special relations. “Such reciprocal gift-giving is a material expression of an enduring social relationship. Exchanging Christmas gifts celebrates kinship and friendship” (Dalton 1982:182). Dalton furthermore comes to a similar conclusion as Christopher Gregory did in saying that commodity exchanges make goods and terms of trade of central importance whereas gift economies make the relationship between the parties the most important (Dalton 1982:181).

Strathern’s work takes the operating assumptions and draws out their logical consequences. The things that people do reify their existing relationships. If I build a canoe with my father, as much as it may be a family business or trade, a refined level of carpentry, it is a physical manifestation of our relationship and the joint effort that we both put into it. If, then, an object such as the canoe in question can be the outcome of relationships, then I have no natural right to own the object. Who owns the canoe? Me or my father? As an outcome of a relationship rather than the fruit of my labour it cannot be said to *belong* to anyone or that I could even *own* it. It makes John Locke’s reasoning on the natural right of private property appear quaint in its narrow scope of initial assumptions. Furthermore, the



Marxist argument that individuals have a natural right to what they produce makes no sense. The institution of private property requires individuals in order to make sense.

Strathern studied the Melpa-speaking peoples on Mount Hagen, found in Papua New Guinea. Graeber's summary of her perspective is that "we are, before we are anything else, what we are perceived to be by others" (Graeber 2001:39). It is not to say that we have no personality or no characteristics of individuality, it is to say that the emphasis, the set of assumptions that we begin with, is on relationships. We are defined by are relationships and we are all connected.

A perspective of interconnectedness has the consequence that everything is immanent — there is no off-stage in life. As Dietrich puts it (Dietrich 2012:53): "Nothing remains without consequence, nothing disappears without leaving its trace in history; everything is twisted and preserved in one way or another." This puts a responsibility on people to act accordingly; this is equally true whether choosing peace or economy as a lens. If our relationships come before our individuality, the worst thing that a person could do is not relate. Banishment from the collective, from the tribe, is a fate worse than death. Mauss states this explicitly (Mauss 1925:18-19): "To refuse to give. To fail to invite, just as to refuse to accept, is tantamount to declaring war; it is to reject the bond of alliance and commonality." Eisenstein repeats this sentiment in his advocacy of gift economies (Eisenstein 2011:353): "To refuse a gift is to spurn relationship." In an energetic perspective, our fates are tied together; we must define and redefine our relations with every interaction every time. This is also the key correlation between economics and peace: stay engaged and relate. Anything else is an insult that goes against the perceived laws of nature.

I keep returning to the idea of a quittance, because it strikes me as the antithesis to the interconnectedness of energetic perspectives. The word in English means a release from the obligations of debt. It comes from the French *quitter* ‘to release’ which takes its derivation from Latin *quietus*. Quittance has a direct cognate in contemporary French for a sales receipt, as is its equivalent in German *Quittung* and other European languages. When debt is seen from a moral duality, then release from the evil bondage of debt to freedom, to be able to return home to mother, is obviously a good thing. However, from an energetic perspective, to receive a quittance, to be able to walk away without owing anything to anyone and not have anyone owe you any favours is equivalent to no longer existing as a human being. All of the ties of relationship have just been severed and if I am what others perceive, if I am my relationships, I have just become an outsider with whom no one wants to relate. Leaving the relationship is an expression of unpeace.

It has already been pointed out from Hyde (1979) and Dalton (1982) that gifts have a special energetic role in the backdrop of modernity in which they are symbols of our relationships that strengthen the bonds between people. Nevertheless, sometimes gifts can feel like an awkward obligation. In my own experience, I have fretted over choosing Christmas gifts for relatives that I have hardly seen over the year or a present for an uncle who seems to have everything already. In my cultural surroundings, gifts are an entrenched custom most obviously on birthdays and Christmas, but also for confirmation, weddings, anniversaries, or, as Hyde put it (1979), threshold moments.

While living in Germany, I came across the term *Geschenkideen*: gift ideas. The concept exists in English-speaking places too, some shops or advertising campaigns might

attract potential customers with having great “gift ideas,” and every museum has a gift shop, but it was my German experience that drew my attention to the peculiarity of this word and concept for my studies. The fact that I need a gift and that I do not know what to give and therefore I need “gift ideas,” suggestions of what to give, comes about because form has taken precedence over the relationship. The convention (the form) is that I must give a gift to my uncle on his birthday, but since he lives in a different city and maybe I see him once a year or once every two years, I have little knowledge of his intimate tastes and the struggles of his daily life. I am not there to know if he got a hole in his favourite shirt or his coffeemaker is on the fritz or something that would make an appropriate, thoughtful, and useful gift — one that is based on and emerges out of an existing relationship. Rather, I have only a cursory relationship, have no idea what he likes and therefore I need “gift ideas.” For my partner on the other hand, with whom I spend much more time, I have a rich and deep relationship and I am present to hear passing comments such as wanting a special kind of coffeemaker or that her favourite shirt got a hole in it. I have no shortage of “gift ideas” for her since, being my primary attachment relationship, I am in a constant process of giving her the deepest parts of my self. Even much more importantly than this focus on material necessities (or desires) is an appreciation for the other’s tastes, style, and tribulations.

Gifts arise as a manifestation and expression of a relationship. Putting a ritual form ahead of the relationship from which that form arises necessitates a “gift idea” because the relationship is non-existent or not strong enough to produce the gift-manifestation. The concept is also discursively telling members of society what kinds of gifts are appropriate rather than having what is appropriate be a function of the relationship. Being obliged to buy

a gift that is implanted as some kind of “gift idea” is also stripping the agency from the nature of the relationship. Personally, I would rather receive sincere gratitude than a material object. Sincere gratitude would be a heartfelt and human experience of feeling and sensation that brings us both closer to each other.

Another particular characteristic of the importance of relationships in the energetic paradigm is that of inalienability. Energetic perspectives tend to see relationships perdure in objects. Gift economies, as an expression of energetic perspectives, tend to personify objects. “Commodity economies, like our own,” as Graeber points out (Graeber 2001:36), “do the opposite: they tend to treat human beings, or at least, aspects of human beings, like objects.” The classic case of this is Polanyi’s objection to the commodification of human labour (Polanyi 1944). When objects are personified, as in gift economies, the “persona” of the object is influenced by its previous relationships, which gives the object its inalienable nature. “The term “inalienable,”” Graeber explains (Graeber 2001:33-34), “is derived from Mauss’ essay on the gift: in it, Mauss suggested that gifts are in a certain sense “inalienable” (*immeuble*), because even after they have been given away, they are still felt in some sense to belong the giver. If nothing else, they continue to carry with them something of his or her personality.” The immanent nature of energetic cosmovisions makes this true. We imbue things with our energy; there is always some of the giver in the gift and part of the producer in the product.

Graeber also outlines that anthropologist Annette Weiner (1992) poses the question of what a theory of value would look like if it were to take Mauss’ inalienable objects as a starting point (Graeber 2001:34). What can be seen in energetic perspectives is precisely a

theory that is predicated on at least one such assumption. Energetic perspectives generally see the entire world as being alive or as a manifestation of an originary spirit and that includes gifts and day-to-day objects. Everything is alive and interconnected and responds to its interactions with other elements of divine manifestation. My spiritual teacher, J. C. Lucas, once said to me that he would not use fish for a ceremonial feast if he knew that the man was in a bad mood when he caught it. The fish would be energetically contaminated by negative vibes and inappropriate for consumption at a sacred event. Everything thus can have a kind of personality or character.

In this mode of perception, an object's value is in its ability to accumulate history — its ability to soak up the energies of the past. This can be seen in contemporary society with collectables, as Graeber illustrates (2001:34). A drumstick is a mundane artifact, but one having belonged to the drummer of a famous rock band is priceless; the pedigree of previous owners changes its value. Seen from this angle, heirlooms are at odds with currency in a theory of value. The neo-classical theory is that currency is valuable precisely because of its ability to circulate quickly, whereas items such as John Lennon's piano or the Crown Jewels of England are valuable because they did not circulate but have been in the possession of an elite and renowned few. "In other words," as Graeber says it (Graeber 2001:35), "everyone is actually trying to ensure their most valuable heirlooms *do not* circulate. This might seem about as far as one can go from Simmel's position, that value is a product of exchange." Whereas cash is the expression of liquidity, heirlooms are the last to be made liquid or rather that will be kept at any cost because of their symbolic value. Graeber reconciles these positions by calling them not at odds, rather they are a "mirror image" of the same

conception of value (Graeber 2001:35).

Objects in energetic traditions are handed down, inherited, bestowed and bequeathed, rather than circulated. The fantasy world created by J.R.R. Tolkein in his corpus of work on *The Lord of the Rings* provides examples of this kind of opposition. The elves, who are the moralistic good guys, have armour and weapons that have names and lineages and are unique works of art, whereas the orcs, who are the industrialists, have generic mass produced weapons of low quality. It is a quality of an energetic perspective to believe that a sword once wielded by a great king will be a better sword than one carried by a foot soldier.

The inalienability of gifts in energetic perspectives, taken to its extreme consequence, becomes equivalent with identity. An object that has accumulated a significant history comes to define its possessor. Now clearly this is not always the case; there is a famous tale of anthropologists John and Lorna Marshall giving a knife to one of their informants amongst the Kalahari Bushmen and returning a year later to find that everyone in the village had been in possession of that knife for some time (Graeber 2011:35). It was an item of status that was passed around and that status became communally shared. However, often the best examples of inalienable objects are those that confer a particular status, social role, or identity to the possessor. It may seek its legitimacy in a mythologically founded origin. If I steal the Crown Jewels of England, I will not be the king, but the inverse is also true, that only the King of England could be said to own them and owning them is part of the foundational myth of the monarchy. Being a legitimate owner of the regalia is tantamount to being the head of state. In the Iroquois Confederacy a person's name would change depending on their social role and rank in society. The Iroquois "saw their societies not as a collection of living individuals but

as a collection of eternal names, which over the course of time passed from one individual holder to another” (Graeber 2001:120). This rite of resurrection was accomplished by hanging a wampum belt around the neck of the person in question. In this way the person in possession of that belt was the incarnation of the eternal name (Graeber 2001:121). A crude analogy could be if in the military you were promoted in rank to colonel, then you would be called colonel and not as a title or an honorific but as who you now are.

The personification of objects can extend to the afterlife. Although nowadays it is a common adage on money that “you can’t take it with you,” that has not always been the case. Across the world and throughout history people have been buried with their possessions for their spiritual aid in the next life. This touches on three key characteristics of energetic perspectives: they see things as being alive, even an inanimate object such as a rock has a spirit and is in some sense of living entity; the things that are mine, that I touch, pray over, or use become imbued with my personal mark; my energy in a system will persist even if I am gone. Things can be seen as an extension of oneself, however, what differentiates energetic perspectives from the spirit of unrestrained acquisition that we may know better is that they also see all things as transitory and illusory, therefore attaching to some thing as an extension of my Self is a delusion.

The idea that something of the giver stays with the gift is an experience to which I believe every person can relate. It is to this point that Charles Eisenstein writes a tidy explanation juxtaposing it against modern economics. It further illustrates that the sacred in Eisenstein’s *Sacred Economics* (2011) are the energetic elements.

Unlike a modern money transaction, which is closed and leaves no obligation, a gift transaction is open-ended, creating an ongoing tie between the participants. Another way of

looking at it is that the gift partakes of the giver, and that when we give a gift, we give something of ourselves. This is the opposite of a modern commodity transaction, in which goods sold are mere property, separate from the one who sells them. We all can feel the difference. You probably have some treasured items that were given you, that are perhaps objectively indistinguishable from something you might buy, but that are unique and special because of who gave them to you. Thus it was that ancient people recognized that a magical quality, a spirit, circulates along with gifts. (Eisenstein 2011:8)

I would like to frame it slightly differently than Eisenstein: I firmly contend that it is not only ancient peoples that recognized a spirit that circulates along with gifts. There are contemporary examples, and some have been provided in this text, of how energetic principles are preserved today, with or without gifts. I believe that even the most jaded modern can relate to the attachment to an object that is, by any other means, indistinguishable from one that can be purchased at a market or bazaar.

Since something of the giver stays with the gift, then rejection of the gift, whatever form that may take, is symbolically equivalent to rejection of the relationship. “People are uncomfortable about getting rid of an unwanted Christmas present,” explains Carrier (Carrier 1995:27), “because rejecting it rejects as well the giver and the giver’s relationship to the recipient.” This shows the existence and perdurance of this energetic principle in a common annual ritual in a modern and commoditized market economy. Despite the prevalence of return policy and gift receipts that hide the price, Christmas gifts are never really fungible. It strikes to Mauss’ key assertion of inalienability, that a gift can never be separated from the giver and it must be reciprocated, because if it is not, it is a rejection of the relationship. There may in fact be cases in which one may *want* to reject a relationship, but as a general rule, that is a rupture of the peace in energetic perspectives. Energetic peaces are the ebb and



flow, the give and take, of relationships.

As this discussion on the interconnections of relationships, economics, and peace begins to draw to a close, there is an important point that deserves some attention. In looking at the social expectations placed on myself, namely to work 40 hours per week, it is logical to assume that “work,” doing stuff, making things, or producing is the the most important human activity and the activity that takes the greatest part of human creative energies. Graeber summarizes arguments from Terence Turner to say that human relationships in the form of socialization are generally far more important, especially in stateless societies.

If we limit ourselves to stateless societies—the ones that have up until now proved the least amenable to Marxist styles of analysis—it quickly becomes obvious that the sort of activities *we* would define as economic, particularly subsistence activity, are by no means that on which they spend the greater part of their time, or “creative energies” however defined (Turner 1979c; 1984). Most dedicate far more to what, broadly speaking, could be called socialization, at least if one defines the latter to include not only primary child care but all those other actions that go into shaping human beings. This would make socialization a continual process that does not simply stop with adolescence, or whatever arbitrary cut off point most people implicitly impose: over the course of one’s life people are almost always engaged in a constant process of changing their social position, roles and statuses, and doing so having to learn how to behave in them. Life is thus a constant educational process.

Myself, I suspect one of the main reason for this neglect is simple sexism. Primary child care is almost everywhere seen as quintessential woman’s work; analysts tend to see socialization on the whole as being too close to nurture and too distant from the kind of strenuous and dramatic muscular activity—burly men hammering away at glowing iron, sparks flying everywhere—the term “production” brings most readily to mind. (Graeber 2001:68)

I like this passage for its summary of a cutting critique of applying modern Marxist critique to stateless societies, but also for its evocative tongue-in-cheek imagery that makes plainly

visible the assumptions of gender division in a mindset shaped by a (post)industrial frame of analysis. It spells out the bias that, despite changes from half a century of feminism, “work” is still understood as an activity that primarily men do. Furthermore, what it lays out is that most people in most stateless societies do not spend the majority of their time slaving away for subsistence but rather in nurturing relationships and becoming full human beings. It is thus a scathing critique of the modern imperative to perpetuate the forty-hour work week in order to keep sinful idleness at bay. Stateless societies provide an example of subsistence activities being only a small part of people’s overall identities and total lifelong undertakings.

As a final note, Munir Fasheh (Fasheh 2011:111) relates an Islamic parable in which the Prophet Mohammed (may peace be upon him) states that religion is how people treat one another.<sup>15</sup> That religion is essentially our relationships and how we treat one another is the expression of an energetic understanding. It also goes more to the point that I believe to be true, that at the heart of all moral traditions lies an energetic core. Dietrich outlines how moral traditions may have emerged from energetic traditions in special cases (Dietrich 2012). This may imply the energetic approach to be a kind of *philosophia perrenis*, a term coined by Aldous Huxley (1946), referring to mystical experience beyond time and language, as Dietrich (2012) argues. I acknowledge that this is a controversial assertion and authors such as Stephen Prothero (2010) would disagree with me judging from his rebuttal to Huston Smith’s (2009) assertion that all world religions contain universal essential elements. Smith’s position may be considered a gross over-simplification of the religions of the world that itself is fuelled by the modern desire to find a solid and definitive core. However, I believe the arguments to be operating on two separate and distinct planes: Smith as well as Huxley and

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<sup>15</sup> *ad-din huwa al-mu’amalah*

Dietrich, refer to the mystic plane, whereas Prothero refers to the mundane and cultural plane. I reconcile the two in that the principles of an energetic paradigm are directly resultant from an ineffable, immanent, yet ephemeral, mystic experience that forms the basis of all religion provided that interpretations of such a *philosophia perennis* is seen through ideas of weak thinking and unconditional truths and is always culturally inflected and dependent on context and relationships.

### ***Energetic Forms of Money***

I propose that money, really in any form, represents a deviation from energetic principles. I do consider Graeber's definition of social currencies and human economies to be expressions of energetic perspectives. Furthermore, I believe that a lot of confusion from anthropological accounts of "primitive money," to use Einzig's term (1966), stems from equating social currencies to modern currencies. I will use the example of wampum to explore this confusion.

In order to outline why a medium is not money, it is necessary to define the term money for our purposes. I will break down this definition into three aspects. Firstly, there are three roles of money that date back to Aristotle:

- medium of exchange
- store of value
- unit of account

Secondly, the nature of money is both a commodity and a debt. I consider money to be first and foremost a debt and to be a commodity only in as much as it needs a physical

manifestation. Thirdly, money is used to buy and sell the common items of daily life, from a croissant to a crescent wrench. The third aspect here is a bit misleading. I have already laid out that for most of human history in most parts of the world, nobody had used cash to acquire the basic necessities of life (Graeber 2011). This makes the distinction between modern economies and Graeber's (2011) human economies. By this definition, human economies and energetic perspectives cannot be money since they are rarely used to buy and sell basic foodstuffs, rather are used for status, social role, and to alter social relations.

When thinking of money from an energetic perspective we must bear in mind the characteristics that have already been discussed in this chapter. We have seen how a gift, an object that is changing hands, is a physical representation of the relationship of the two people (or two groups) involved. Eisenstein, in his attempt to synthesize energetic and (post)modern paradigms, states that money is the connector between gift and need (Eisenstein 2011), which hearkens back to the energetic interpretation of justice we saw earlier. Following the arguments laid out in the previous sections and which will be furthered in the rest of the chapter, the separation between an 'individual,' the environment, and a medium of exchange, are arbitrary, non-existent, and semantically unidentifiable — they are in essence the same thing. As was stated earlier, from a purely energetic perspective, what we are and what we exchange are the basic constituents of the universe. They are us and they are the environment and any separateness is illusion and only a projection of the mind.

Simply put, there are two conditions for money: it has to be accepted and its supply must be limited. People have to have a reason to believe in its value and it should also be rare enough that it cannot be generated willy-nilly, which is precisely the problem with credit

systems, since there is nothing to stop someone from writing cheques that they cannot cash, or rather, making more promises than they could ever keep. Other than that, the medium of money could be anything and the diversity of the world reflects that. Salt has been used for money as it is the basis for the word *salary*, and was used in Ethiopia (Einzig 1966:113-116). Tally sticks are a peculiar example that were used in England from 1100, implemented under King Henry I (1068–1135), and continued until they were officially abolished by statute in 1783 (Shenton 2012:52) and were ultimately all destroyed in the parliamentary fire of 1834, which their very disposal in the furnaces might have caused (Shenton 2012). They were notched sticks that were split in twain to mark a debt with the the debtor retaining the shorter half, called the foil, and the creditor retaining the longer half, called the stock, thus giving rise to the term stockholder. Cocoa beans were used as a currency by the Aztecs in Mexico and also farther south into Mesoamerica (Einzig 1966:175-176). Cowries, a kind of shell, have been used as money for centuries in parts of Africa, the Pacific, and Asia, and famously in China. The Chinese word for shell, bèi 貝, is a pictogram of a cowry shell and forms the radical for buying (mǎi 買) and selling (mài 賣) showing that the principle actions of commerce are linked to the concept of the cowry shell. Furthermore, since the two words are similar in pronunciation and their written form differs only in that ‘to sell’ includes an additional three strokes, it suggests an earlier non-distinction between buying and selling (Eisenstein 2011:8). The Rai stones of the Island of Yap, one of the Federated States of Micronesia, vary from several metres to a few centimetres in diameter. They are quarried on the neighbouring islands of Palau and Guam and shipped to Yap to be used as currency. The small ones change hands frequently whereas the largest ones are generally kept as heirloom

treasures (Einzig 1966:36-40). A final example is that of *tabua*, whale teeth that have been used as a currency in Fiji (Allen 2009:435-436; Einzig 1966:32). The Fijian *tabua* is a perfect example, similar to wampum, of a social currency that becomes monetized. Whale teeth in Fiji are deemed to be highly sacred objects and money, by the working definition is valued for its qualities at the other end of the spectrum: being profane, indiscriminate, and liquid.

Clearly a dollar bill, or even a suitcase full of them, cannot be equated with a Fijian Whale tooth. One is sacred and has a history, the other is profane and is untraceable. The point that I am coming back to here is that social currencies, ones that are primarily concerned with rearranging social relations, should not really be called money at all. When they are not used to buy and sell trinkets and vegetables in the market rather to display status, social role, institutional position.<sup>16</sup> Einzig summarizes that the large rai stones are highly prized but rarely exchanged, and therefore are difficult to define as money (Einzig 1966:36-40). There is a story from Yap that one large rai stone was lost at sea and now (presumably) rests at the bottom of the ocean, and yet someone still owns and it that ownership is periodically transferred.<sup>17</sup> The ownership of a giant rai stone is connected to status and social position more than it is a medium of exchange. This is consistent with Graeber's theory that social currencies are the items that are necessary for marriage, death ritual, naming ceremonies, becoming a chief and so on. These things are not really money at all but are ingredients in the ceremonial undertaking. We use words like money, primitive money, or social currency because the collective cosmivision that the English language reflects has some gaping semantic holes in it, as Dalton clearly points out.

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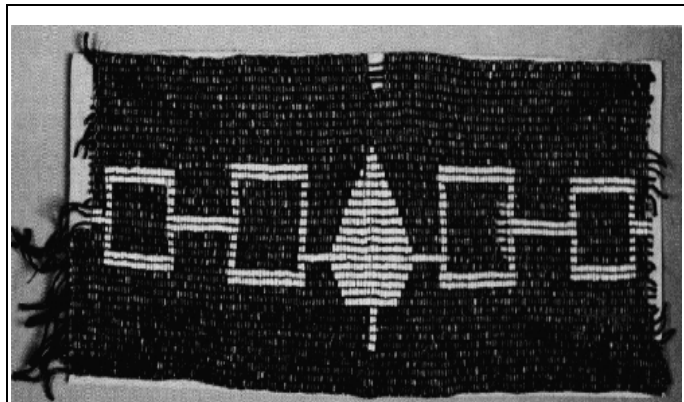
<sup>16</sup> Clearly money also is used as a marker of status and social position, as are ostentatious possessions, lavish gifts, and reckless spending.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2011/02/15/131934618/the-island-of-stone-money>

There are no words in English enabling us to label the usage of such objects precisely: They have been called social money, special-purpose money, non-commercial money, valuables reserved for status purposes, and rationing devices controlling access to status positions. It is far better, I believe, to avoid entirely calling this subset of valuables “money” or “currency” of any sort, because the familiar word money is so inextricably associated with ordinary commercial or market purchases. The primitive objects are regarded as valuables to be used in special ways only; they are necessary means of reciprocal payment in social and political transactions. They are used to create social relationships (marriage), prevent group hostility and warfare (bloodwealth payments), elevate one’s political position (potlatch, moka), and restore peaceful social relationships between persons and groups disrupted by conflict (compensation for adultery, payments to allies who have lost men on our behalf in warfare). (Dalton 1982:185)

As I have previously stated, I agree with Dalton here insofar as referring to “social currencies” as money or even currency is a misnomer and a further imposition of the modernizing (colonial) hegemony

that accompanies the anthropologist in the analysis. I do not readily have a proposal for a new term, however, I am clearly opposed to the descriptor “primitive.” I rest assured that increased discussion of the concept will eventually spawn the



*Figure 5: The Hiawatha Wampum Belt*

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hiawatha.gif>

appropriate nomenclature. I consider the case of wampum as America’s first currency to be an example of this unfortunate and simplistic conflation and will therefore use it as a brief case study to elaborate the point.

Wampum has been called the first currency of North America. Einzig considers it the

“original currency of the Indian tribes of Canada” (Einzig 1966:165), although he later concedes that it can only really be said to have been a currency after European contact (Einzig 1966:170). I want to take a closer look at the case of wampum because of its importance as an American example and because I feel that its characterization as money is a misunderstanding. My research has led me to believe that this is a gross misreading of wampum by an imposing worldview and it is an example of an energetic concept becoming modernized and monetized, stripped of profound cultural-spiritual meaning, and reduced to an abstract means. Of further interest to this enquiry is the potential of wampum to be an instrument of peacemaking.

Graeber (2011:130) points to wampum as an example of a “social currency” in a “human economy.” The use of wampum was primarily to rearrange social relationships and its use as a generalized currency seems to derive from the first use. It appears similar to the case of Fijian *tabua*, which were used ceremonially and was only monetized with foreign traders (Einzig 1966). Wampum was used to trade for goods with settlers but never within Iroquois society. To repeat Einzig’s assertion vis-à-vis wampum: “There is no concrete evidence for their monetary use before contact with Europeans” (Einzig 1966:170).

Graeber dedicates an entire chapter (2001:117-149) to the discussion of wampum as a case in anthropological exchange theory. In it, he explains that wampum had a peculiar double facet: it was both an instigator of marketization and a tool for peacemaking.

Wampum had a peculiar role in all this. It was the principle medium of the fur trade, which had sparked so much of the trouble to begin with—wampum was one of the lures held out by the newcomers to inspire people to attack each other; but at the same time, within the Iroquois confederacy—and the Iroquois were considered by their Indian neighbors a particularly ferocious and terrifying population of warriors—it was valued primarily for its



ability to create peace. (Graeber 2001:118)

I hypothesize that it is its ability to make peace that gave wampum its value in the social psyche which made it able to be monetized and, as Graeber puts it, set out as a lure to inspire people to attack each other.

Although I do not dispute the fact that wampum beads were used in trade with colonial settlers, I would like to present the idea that wampum, rather than money, can be seen as a text. Dale Turner makes the case of wampum belts as a text (Turner 2006). Rather than referring to a text in the sense of the Western philosophical tradition, wampum is a physical manifestation of an agreement. He firstly juxtaposes the oral traditions of the Iroquois, and many other Indigenous philosophical traditions, with the primacy and the legitimacy of the written text in Western philosophy.

Iroquoian peoples in early colonial America were well known for their highly developed rules of diplomacy, which focused on the importance of oratory. An oral account, be it a speech or a narrative, was given in a particular context — for example, a treaty negotiation. Once agreement was reached among the participating parties, wampum belts were exchanged. Wampum are small shells that are bored through the middle and strung into belts or strings. Wampum had many meanings, each depending on the context. The main political significance of wampum was to represent — materially — the morally binding nature of an agreement or promise. This was a way of sanctifying one's words in practice. Wampum belts served as the 'text' in the sense that they materialized the agreement itself. What made the wampum belts valuable was that each had a story attached to it that certain people, called wampum keepers, were responsible for remembering and reciting at various times of the year. The physical act of giving or receiving the wampum belt established the moral significance of the agreement.

Wampum belts were exchanged in the context of reciprocity and renewal — two central concepts in Iroquoian political thought — which meant that the normative terms of a political agreement were renewed in a context of peace, respect and friendship. Issues of interpretation and of determining the meaning of particular treaties, then, were not so much

a philosophical problem as a practical problem. Treaties, such as the early friendship treaties, required constant renewal, and agreements could only be made with the consent of both sides. If one side did not agree, there would be no exchange of wampum belts. If the two sides could not reach an agreement, often they would go to war. Of course, interpreting the meaning of particular wampum belts was not possible without an understanding of the social and political context from which they arose; but this does not mean they were closed to philosophical interpretation. (Turner 2006:47-48)

In theory, anyone who can read ancient Greek (or any of the myriad translations) can read a text by Aristotle, but in the case of a wampum if you were not there, if you do not know the context in which the wampum belts were exchanged, you can not read the text. Secondly, it should make clear that the exchange of wampum belts was not a currency exchange in the modern sense of buying something, but the exchange of commitments to peace, friendship, and an on-going relationship; they were materialized symbols of history and philosophy. Furthermore, as Turner points out, they were valuable because of the stories attached to them, echoing Graeber's assertion (2001:34) that one component of value is an object's ability to collect a history.

Graeber echoes Turner's description of wampum as a text, citing Beauchamp (1901) and Smith (1983:231-232). His analysis further emphasizes the idea of wampum as the essential medium of peace in the Iroquois cosmovision.

The mechanics of peacemaking are especially important because this is what the League was essentially about. The Iroquois term translated "league," in fact, really just means "peace": the entire political apparatus was seen by its creators as a way of resolving murderous disputes. The League was less a government, or even alliance, than a series of treaties establishing amity and providing the institutional means for preventing feuds and maintaining harmony among the five nations that made it up. For all their reputation as predatory warriors, the Iroquois themselves saw the essence of political action to lie in peace.

Wampum was the essential medium of all peacemaking. Every act of diplomacy, both within the League and outside it, had to be carried out through the giving and receiving of wampum. If a message had to be sent, it would be “spoken into” belts or strings of wampum, which the messenger would present to the recipient. Such belts or strings were referred to as “words”; they were often woven into mnemonic patterns bearing on the import of the message. Without them, no message stood a chance of being taken seriously by its recipient. In council, too, speakers would accompany their arguments with belts of wampum—also called “words”—laying them down one after the other as the material embodiments of their arguments. (Graeber 2001:125)

Thus wampum belts, in their role as “words” and as philosophical “texts” are the fundamental medium in maintaining social harmony. This is how we can see that wampum exchange is a system of creating peace out of harmony similar to, however starkly different from, the precepts of a commodity currency. This human economy creates peace by using wampum belts to be the material manifestations of promises and agreements.

Graeber explains (2011:129) that wampum could be seen as essentially mnemonics. Wampum belts as a text were not hieroglyphics or ideograms that could be deciphered, however, they were the expression of an object collecting history. People often say, “if these walls could speak ... ” Well, in this case, they could; the wampum that had been “spoken into” could speak back through someone who had either been there for the collection of history or who had heard it all related. The shell beads of the wampum belt hold those stories in stasis and help, as a mnemonic, the stories come to mind and be spoken out once again.

Wampum is used as a ceremonial gift that can be used for such purposes as clearing grief, which is hardly the role of conventional currency that we outlined at the beginning of this section. However, using Eisenstein’s term of money as a “ritual talisman” (Eisenstein 2011), and one that is capable of representing and bringing desires to fruition, as Graeber

puts it (2001:114), then wampum fulfills this criterion for “money.” Then this is the point where the idea of social currencies come back to touch the concept of money: it is a representation of possibility. In the examples of wampum given here, the possibilities are to make peace, either a peace of transforming a conflict amongst the nations of the confederacy, or an internal peace that comes from clearing one’s grief. Wampum is thus as Graeber writes: “If hidden, generic, or ephemeral wampum was the potential to create peace, heirloom belts were peace in its crystalline form” (Graeber 2011:131).

The Peace of Haudenosaunee (Gayanashagowa), that is to say the Iroquois Confederacy, is said to have been established long before European contact in the twelfth century (Mann & Fields 1997) or even earlier (Graymont 1972). However, the idea of peace as a pact amongst sovereign nations maintaining harmonious relationships through council, treaties, and pageantry hearkens back (or perhaps forth) to the peace envisioned by the United Nations: a modern peace understood as a contract between autonomous actors. This may not be any coincidence and in the order of my analysis, I may have put the proverbial cart before the horse; it has been asserted that the model for the federal system for the United States of America sought its inspiration in the Iroquois Confederacy (Grinde 1977; Johansen 1982; Grinde & Johansen 1991), and the United Nations, although rising from the ashes of the League of Nations, drew heavily on US American sources, such that a genealogical lineage can be traced back to the Iroquois Confederacy.

The conception of peace as a pact is reminiscent of modern peaces, however, I do not believe that the Iroquois Confederacy is a modern interpretation of peace. Firstly, the principles that Turner mentioned, reciprocity and renewal, are key energetic concepts. Peace

is thus not a final state rather exists in a context of continual give and take and perpetual renegotiation. Secondly, Eric Wolf points out that the five nations were by no means a unified entity and did not even take the same side in any major conflict (Wolf 1982:168-170). In his words:

The confederacy was thus never a monolithic political instrument. It functioned mainly to reduce infighting and feuds among the constituent village clusters and gained some jurisdiction over negotiations with foreign ambassadors and agents. It could declare war on behalf of the confederacy as a whole, but decisions had to be unanimous. (Wolf 1982:168)

Consensus as a prerequisite, rather than the fifty percent plus one, which is a common threshold of clarity, reflects an understanding of peace that requires all participants to be in harmony rather than the imposition of a norm that was arrived at either through human faculties of reason or divine inspiration. It cannot be normative and is thus always mutable, inflected, and relational, just as energetic peaces.

As a final word on this topic, I will posit that not just wampum, but all social currencies have the potential to make peace. By their nature they rearrange social relations to create a new status quo. They have the potential to take take unharmonious relations and rearrange them in a new, potentially harmonious, constellation. Although money has garnered the reputation of being the root of all evil, money differs little in its ability to make peace out of reestablishing a harmony by way of fines, payments of retribution. By looking at the word in French, *une amende*, it is clear that a fine is a way to make amends.

## ***The Living Cosmos***

By now it should be clear that energetic perspectives see humankind as part of the

environment. However, to say this only really makes sense in contrast to its opposite. It is only when humankind can be assumed to be separate from the environment that it becomes necessary to reassert our interconnection. This is a distinct dilemma in discussing energetic perspectives because it risks conflating them with postmodern perspectives since it is only after the experience of being separate that arguing in favour of the opposite becomes an act of differentiation.

The language that I use to try and make my case here even limits the possibility of discussion. The terms “environment,” “nature,” “the physical world,” all connote an entity that does not include me, the perceiving subject. They connote places that are outside of me, separate from me, through which I travel. “Mother Nature” comes close as it implies that I am her son and held eternally in her bosom, however, I am still my own man and I cannot stay in the protective arms of my mother forever. In that view, even “Mother Nature” implies an entity from which I must eventually separate myself. The challenge I see at this point is not making the argument so much as learning how to say it. The difference between postmodern approaches and energetic approaches, that I will come back to, is that the former reflects a superficial environmentalism based on a logical and rational argumentation for protecting “nature,” and the latter assumes an inextricable and symbiotic relationship, an embeddedness, in the physical world which is the source of life itself.

Energetic perspectives see human beings as part of the cosmos, not over and above it or detached from it. We have seen this in the focus on patterns and relationships, rather than individuals. It is clear when we look at patterns of material and energy throughput that a human cannot be separated from her environment. Our bodies are constructed from the food

we eat and the air around us is inside of us with every breath we take. Conversely, when beginning from the perspective of an individual, it is possible to imagine that an individual could exist separate from the environment in a space suit floating through the void — alone and separate. Peace as the harmonious vibration of the All-One implies that human beings and the natural world are both included under that broad umbrella category.

In reflecting on how I see the relationship with the environment in my culture around me, I notice an interesting distinction between natural and man-made products. This is a meaningful difference; there are significant differences in the texture and production-supply line of a wool sweater compared to an acrylic one. However, calling an acrylic sweater “man-made” hides the fact that at one point the methyl methacrylate was an organic chemical that came from the earth. Moreover, by not referring to a natural wool as being man-made, it potentially glosses over the hours of shearing, spinning, and knitting that go into creating a woollen jumper. This dichotomy of natural vs. man-made further perpetuates the perception of separation from nature.

For the most part, the arguments have all been laid out previously in the chapter. When we looked at gifts and gift economies we saw that gifts carry with them the spirit of their giver and that gift economies tend to treat things as if they were people. This too points to a non-distinction between people and their environments. Objects have spirits just as humans have spirits and a doctrinal assertion to the contrary, putting humans in a privileged position amongst God’s creations, would not occur in purely energetic perspectives.

More so than even these examples portray, there is something inherently peaceful about a deep connection to the environment, to the land, that energetic perspectives have. It is

a knowledge of one's place in the world. It is a connection to one's sustenance and ultimately, where one's bones will lie. It is an engagement to dancing with Freyr and Freyja, Pax, and Astarte, to tilling the soil and planting seeds, to placing my own fate in the hands of the fertility gods, so that I may live another year. This is the quintessence of energetic peaces. Pax, the Latin root word for the English 'peace' was an agricultural fertility goddess (Dietrich 2012:39); Freyr and Freyja, the twin Norse fertility deities are equally the origin of the Germanic words for peace, *Friede* (Jacobsen 2011:67-86). Peace understood as fertility is the dominant energetic interpretation of peace to come out of the Mediterranean basin (Dietrich 2012). Peace, thus, is when the grass grows and the rain falls and the sun shines and all in just the right proportions so that the wheel of life continues to turn, and we, fellow humans, are just a small part of it.

I believe that this sentiment is well captured in Munir Fasheh's essay on a Palestinian perspective on *shalom/salaam*. He recounts time spent on the land as a deep personal experience of peace.

The principal of the school in Ramallah where I studied was a student of Sakakini. Every Saturday he closed the school early and took all the teachers and students for a hike in the valleys and hills around Ramallah — which he considered as part of the curriculum. The habit of walking in the countryside never left me. There are certain trees, caves, rocks, springs, hills and valleys that I still remember from those days. Intimate relations developed between them and me; in a sense, they became like friends. Every time I pass by something that became a part of me, I feel I want to stop and say hello. This is what Palestine means to me: it is a web of relations; it is feeling the 'aesthetics of harmonious relations' with people, community, culture and nature. Palestine has never been an abstract official entity to me but relations that keep nurturing my life. They have been a basis of inner peace in my life. (Fasheh 2011 in Dietrich *et al.* 2011:102-103)

Fasheh's words here capture a reflection of the spirit of the nexus of connection with nature



in energetic perspectives and what that means in terms of a subjective, interior experience of peace.

Grimaldo Rengifo V., Peruvian pedagogue and peace scholar, goes a step further than Munir Fasheh's remarks. Rengifo says that not only do we have to know the streams and rocks of our land, but we must also learn to listen to them, for that is how we learn to be in peace.

Human beings have the desire, more so when we go to school and start being educated on freedoms, to become individuals; in consequence, this breeds separation, isolation, and we become deaf to the sounds of nature, to the links that unite us to our communities, and to our links with the deities. We become blind and deaf to the signals and we annul our relationship with mother earth. It then happens that we embark ourselves in manufacturing contrivances that no longer have any correspondence to time and place. As the Aymara say, we begin 'to do anything out of time and place.' We begin playing the music for sowing in harvest time, and dancing to rhythms that do not correspond to the time and place. We begin to do what has now become spread among many communities: to disrespect. Disrespect is the new illness that has been installed in the Andean world that is asking from all of us to 'go back to respect,' so that we may recover tranquility. (Rengifo V. 2011:384 in Dietrich *et al.* 2011)

What Grimaldo Rengifo sums up here is that when concepts of peace out of harmony are confronted with modernity, with modern education, that promises a modern peace, if that education disconnects its students from the matrix of perceiving the subtle vibrations of society-environment-life, then it is exactly an expression of un-peace. This is easily visible in the economic sphere where the amount of education necessary to prepare someone to take part in the global economy is extensive enough and so largely incompatible that it results in precisely the isolation and separation from nature, community, and deities as Rengifo mentions. The promise of a peace through development is precisely the cause of the

harmonic un-peace. This is the fundamental breakdown of worldviews at the core of misunderstandings around development and peace. Here it is not the lack of education that is an obstacle to peace and economic prosperity, it is education that teaches young people not to listen to the rhythms of life, the cadence of nature, with which one must be in harmony in order to experience peace.

The relevance of the environmental aspect of energetic perspectives rests on one key point: environmental degradation could never be justified as necessary for the economy. These two concepts could never even be portioned out and weighed against each other, let alone that some abstract and separate sphere of human activity, namely the economy, could trump the importance and sacredness of environmental integrity. This does not mean that people with energetic worldviews do not extract minerals from the earth, chop down trees, or fish rivers. However, by really experiencing the stones, trees and rivers as alive, not just things, inanimate, non-sentient collections of soulless atoms, one will undoubtedly proceed with respect and deference. The value of a living forest will always be more than the price of the total board-feet of timber just as a human life is inherently more valuable than the market value for the totality of human organs. A living forest is a grandmother, a brother, a teacher, a home and a home to our furry and feathered kin. As such, the environment is inextricable from the tapestry of human life.

### ***Energetic Peaces***

Energetic peaces can be found on all continents during all historical time periods. It may seem that modernity has swept them under the carpet, but it should be clear from this

analysis that they live on in pockets of exile and continue to thrive in their own unique contexts around the world. Just as in the beginning, Dietrich asserts that energetic peaces can be found everywhere, just under the surface.

[...] it may be correct that the living conditions of whole societies change so much in the frame of what we call modernization, development, or progress, that they lose awareness of energetic concepts of peace. However, when taking a closer look, hints of an energetic understanding of world and peace can be found everywhere, beneath the surface of a capitalistically commodified world. (Dietrich 2012:53)

Moreover, he states that energetic peaces can express themselves in religious structures and in science. “[T]he energetic understanding of peace cannot be shrugged off as characteristic of primitive stages of development, but that it much rather constitutes a fundamental human experience which can be narrated in the language of religion-founding myths just as well as in complex formulas and sequences of the natural sciences” (Dietrich, 2012:66). In this way I would like to affirm that energetic perspectives on peace are real and contemporarily valid worldviews and interpretations of peace.

Following Dietrich’s model of transrational peaces, energetic peaces are interior, intentional and cultural. They are most commonly expressed as peace out of harmony and peace out of truth. There are many other interpretations of energetic peaces, however, examples such as peace out of fertility, as was alluded to, and peace out of pleasure can be, for the sake of simplicity, subsumed under expressions of harmony. This is just to say that harmony and truth are not the only two ways that energetic peaces can be expressed.

Energetic approaches to peace start on the inside and relationships with the outer world are shaped from there. Our peace begins as an internal experience and our outward actions are reflections of our internal worlds. “Even if the individual being is perhaps not

exactly enlightened,” Dietrich says (Dietrich 2012:57), “conflicts can be transformed on the basis of such a worldview and the prospects for nonviolent relations under these conditions are not so bad.” This suggests that if I focus on my internal experience of peace I have good chances of relating outwardly in a peaceful manner.

As Dietrich outlines truth and harmony as the two most basic expressions of energetic peaces, I will end this chapter with a quick look at how the energetic versions of “economics” express peace in terms of harmony. To recap, energetic peaces have six characteristics: a belief in a primal energy; resonance and correspondence of the human body with the universe; unconditional truth; sublation of dualities; subjective experience; relational.

One aspect of peace out of harmony is the sublation of perceived opposites. Day and night are in a constant flux, alternating one to the other. Just as there can be no eternal day or eternal night, there can never be any final peace or a state of peace, only a dynamic equilibrium between the two. Even if the argument is taken to the arctic where there is a midnight sun and months of darkness, the cosmic ballet continues there, just over longer periods of time. Within this cosmovision, the human being who attempts to find peace finds a place to be in harmony with the perceived dualities.

The Maussian principle that a gift creates an obligation and always begets another gift is in *harmony* with these premises. The exchange of gift and counter-gift becomes an endless dance of dynamic harmony. There is no end state since static equilibrium is death. It reflects a relational peace that sublates the duality between giving and receiving, it is rooted in subjective experience, and is a physical expression of the pulsating primal energy.

## **Conclusion of the Energetic Chapter**

Energetic interpretations of economics least resemble what we may understand as economics. This chapter delved into the complexities of energetic approaches by beginning an explanation of an energetic approach to economics. This led into a discussion on the myth of barter which followed David Graeber's arguments against the emergence of money from barter. The chapter then discussed gift economies and human economies with the example of potlatch ceremonies as a particular case study. The chapter then picked up the threads of the dissertation with an exploration of non-linear and cyclical conceptions of time, which establishes a basis for a conception of eternity as a complex of repeating cycles. The concept of the primacy of relationships, I am because we are was discussed, which returned to an interpretation of justice as emerging from our relationships. Therefore, any notion of economic justice cannot be separated from our web of relationships. Energetic interpretations of money were discussed with wampum being a specific example and with the recurring theme that what is exchanged is the act of giving. Energetic understandings see the universe as alive and the human being as an integral part of the living cosmos. Energetic peaces are relational, unconditional, and often understood as harmony. As a corollary, energetic approaches to economics are thus constructed around ideas of harmony in our personal relationships and getting one's needs met through the alignment of harmonious relationships.



### 3 Moral Perspective

*Money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest.*  
-Aristotle

I recall a debate I had with an acquaintance in Argentina. We had stopped for petrol and an attendant was filling the tank. My Canadian sensibilities of egalitarianism, probably bolstered by my northern European origins, were offended by the apparent hierarchical class difference and I bemoaned my own discomfort by grumbling that I would be fully capable of pumping gas myself. When I was confronted by my cultural bias, I defended myself intellectually by arguing that automating the pumps would free up valuable labour for more meaningful and skilled tasks, that I, personally, would not want a career of being a fuel transfer technician, and that it was degrading to these workers to be our servants. My travel companion replied, asking me whether I would deny those people the dignity of proper employment. He further argued that if they were not working there, they would be idle and wallowing in self-pity. This way, they have the self-respect of an honest job at fair pay and are participants in society.

This brief anecdote captures the moral approach to economics and peace. It is a hierarchy in which there are fundamentally different kinds of people, and each one has their role to play. There is dignity in playing one's role and peace is the preservation of these structures of society. Peasants work the land and produce food, soldiers fight to defend the realm, priests pray for the good of all, royalty governs, and everybody does their part. It is all a complex divine hierarchy whose inner workings are God's will and are thus esoteric at best,

imponderable at worst, and always mysterious.

My sense of not wishing a fate on others that I would not want for myself is opposed to this worldview. By seeing oppression in the hierarchical difference between myself and the pump jockey, I moved from a moral framework to a modern (or postmodern) worldview. Rather than seeing oppression, as Karl Marx did, moral perspectives see the role that each person must play in order to maintain the sacred hierarchy on Earth to be able to reunite with the divine, from whence we all came, at the end of life. In looking at how “economics” manifests itself in moral perspectives, the result is no different. Moral peaces depend on the maintenance of normative structures and “moral economics” can describe examples of such social structures.

### ***A Moral Question***

To define the parameters of moral perspectives on economics I will begin at the end. In the time of Adam Smith and earlier, the study of economics was a moral matter; afterwards, it was a discipline unto itself and a mathematical science. The publishing of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) thus marks a shifting point after which economics is no longer a moral matter. It is the trouble with iconic figures that they are iconic because they changed things and, as such, Adam Smith does not fit nicely in either moral perspectives or modern perspectives. His arguments are moral ones; his orientation is modern. Modernity flows from the rift that he tears in the old way of doing things. Moral approaches to economics are thus the most dominant discourse up until the time of Adam Smith. This chapter will deal primarily with European examples, however, it should be clear that moral perspectives can be found all over



the world at many times in history.

Moral perspectives on economics can be rather deceiving because they resemble what we may know from modernity, yet are not completely equivalent. It is imprecise to say that some independent sphere of human creative energies, known as “the economy,” exists. There may be markets and those markets are generally constrained by a system of rules, but it is not possible to say that there is a universal set of mathematical formulae which govern their operations. Markets can be present in moral perspectives and they are guided by norms which become enshrined in institutions. However, markets are only one aspect in a complex set of hierarchies of relations. Traditionally, the institutions that govern the operations of markets are some variance of the pair church and state.

Moral worldviews are characterized by the preeminence of the *One*. This translates into the domination of monotheism as exemplified by the popularity and expansion of the Abrahamic faiths. Doubt is dispelled by the certainty of one God and one Truth. Whereas energetic perspectives hold that truth must lie beyond what is expressible in language (Dietrich 2012), moral perspectives find peace in the monopoly of the one Truth. Equally, whereas energetic peaces are the sublation of duality, being in harmony between perpetually opposing forces, moral peaces are accomplished by overcoming duality: good must vanquish evil. It is thus in the certainty of the *One* that moral peaces find their grounding.

The complex hierarchies that maintain moral peaces are enforced by normative frameworks, which is to say, a moral code. Moral codes are to protect the delicate arrangement of the moral peaces from being disturbed by human fallibility. The truth of such moral codes is not one that lies beyond the confines of language, as in energetic perspectives,

on the contrary: it must be expressed and understood in clear language. However, the norms of moral perspectives do come from beyond as they are divine laws that have come from God. Moral normative frameworks are thus indisputable because of their divine providence.

This chapter will elaborate how moral approaches to economics inform moral peaces by following our established threads. Moral perspectives start with linear conceptions of time. As linear time is a prerequisite for a conception of justice, of a bad past progressing to a good future, the enquiry will continue with a discussion of moral interpretations of justice. Debt and usury will be explored with the concept of primordial debt which will segue into the section on relationships in moral paradigms, focusing on hierarchies and how debt is used to legitimize relationships of exploitation. The following section on environment will outline how moral approaches see mankind as separate from nature and as enlightened stewards of the land whose calling is to subdue nature. That will be followed by a discussion of bullion currency as well spheres of exchange. The chapter will be concluded by a recap of moral peaces.

### ***Beginning of Linear Time***

In moral perspectives, time is perceived in a linear fashion. It is only through interpretation as a linear progression that peace can be perceived as a state that is coming in the future. I have outlined how peace requires a perceiving subject to exist and is therefore a lived experience. Whereas energetic interpretations of peaces exist in the moment, the lived experience is in the here and now, moral peaces can be pushed off to some indeterminate time in the future. Peace then becomes a state that may or may not arrive depending on

whether or not you follow the rules.

Linear time has pivotal implications for conceptions of peaces and for this study of economics. It is the basis of an idea of justice. It is also the epistemological basis for interest-bearing loans. We will come to these topics shortly; for now, we must take a look at what linear time is and how it came to be a dominant aspect of moral worldviews.

Dietrich outlines in detail the logical steps that led to cultural shifts in the perception of peaces, from energetically bound to morally imposed (Dietrich 2012). His examples are centred on the Mediterranean basin and explain how justice as a concept was borne into being and consequently divided the cyclical patterns of energetic interpretations of time into past, present, and future. I will attempt to summarize the salient points of his argument here. Since my purpose is not to rewrite Dietrich's book but to take his ideas and expand them into new directions, I will be intentionally schematic with the review. I take it as an initial assumption that patriarchy, linear time, and justice are intimately linked in moral peaces.

The story of linear time begins in energetic perspectives. Because this dissertation is about diverse interpretations of economics, the chapter on energetic perspectives discussed gift economies and social currencies rather energetic rituals of peace. Fertility cults, as was briefly alluded to, are a common expression of energetic perspectives, and by the logic of their nature, employ a conception of cyclical time. To everything there is a season, to paraphrase Ecclesiastes (3:1-15); a time to sow and a time to reap. Some interruption of this idyllic world creates a crisis and the peace of the continuing cycles is broken. The need for security, at first temporary, replaces female fertility deities with male war deities. The Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, are the clearest examples of a singular,

rather than polytheistic, male deity that claims the role of creator from a heavenly position, separated from the earthly plane. A uniquely male creator deity is unthinkable in energetic perspectives; they are commonly female (Isis, Ishtar) or paired (Shiva and Shakti, Freyr and Freyja). Equally important to moral understandings is that divinity is moved from an immanent, all-pervasive position to a transcendental god-point that is “posited outside of the relational sphere of webs of interrelations” (Taylor 2013:5). This shift, which may seem on the surface to be a simple translation of divine coordinates, has serious ramifications that change the entire orientation to the world, hence the shift from energetic to moral perspectives, and the shift towards linear time. The one transcendental God, located above and beyond the physical world, exists in a pure heavenly plane. Peace, exemplified in the grace of God, is something that God possesses and it is shared with only those who are worthy. Peace, therefore, is not free for anyone to experience at anytime, but is tied to many preconditions that must be fulfilled and is directional; it flows from God to the human being. Time, just like peace, follows the same directional stream.

We can make some tidy parallels here with the monopoly that a moral God creates. God has a monopoly on truth, which is absolute. It is possible to say that all knowledge belongs to God. God additionally has a monopoly on peace, which in His benevolence, He doles out in appropriate rations when any fallible human being chooses good over evil in a binary world. Peace can be experienced in small doses during a terrestrial life but God’s true peace comes when one reunites with the divine after death in Heaven. Knowledge and time also belong to God. This makes it morally reprehensible to charge money for knowledge, thus effectively banning private tutelage for profit and justifies the church’s monopoly on

knowledge and education in mediaeval Europe, and provides the moral basis for the prohibition of usury, which is a charge for time (Spruyt 1994:71). Since time belongs to God, one cannot profit from the rental of God's property.

Thus a singular and monolithic male god usurps the authority of a fertility cult based around feminine principles. Following Dietrich (2012), Göttner-Abendroth (1988), and Sigrist (1979), it probably came as a security response to an exceptional crisis situation. There were, without a doubt, charismatic male leaders in non-patriarchal societies, however, their proposals would have to be put to the wider community for debate and approval (Sigrist 1979). An exceptional crisis situation calls for swift executive action and a bold male leader is an ideal archetype for such a role. With supporters gathering around him, he could form an inner cadre of supporters/enforcers to safeguard his authority. He could then reorganize the existing distributional mechanisms to channel resources in his favour and maintain his position of privilege by perpetuating the state of exceptional crisis through continual migration or warfare (Dietrich 2012:69).

Seen in this light Naomi Klein's book *The Shock Doctrine* (2007) takes on new meaning. Her thesis that neo-conservative economists used exceptional crises such as war and natural disaster to push through ideological reform implementing their own self-serving agenda is nothing new, rather the latest iteration of an ancient pattern. I will maintain that Klein's analysis is carefully crafted, articulately expressed, and a scathing critique of contemporary political economy. What is of interest to me here is that, taken in a broad historical context over several millennia, it is a blatant statement of the obvious. Its current inflection is novel and arguably more sinister than in the past, due to its immeasurable scope,

yet it is no different than the patterns of reification of patriarchy since the beginning.

The introduction of linear time introduces an originary dilemma that is not present in cyclical energetic approaches. The classic chicken and egg paradox does not pose a problem in a cyclical conception of time. There is always a chicken in the past of any given egg and any way the wheel of time spins, it still endlessly repeats the cycle. However, for a linear time to exist, there must be an origin point. If we start with a chicken, it is possible to imagine that there must be an egg from which that chicken hatched that is suspended in some kind of pre-time state. Alternately, if we start with the egg, we could equally suppose that it must have been laid by some pre-time hen. These paradoxes are avoided by invoking the omnipotence of God. In the beginning there was timelessness and God is beyond time. God created the world and time, and then time started. As satisfying as this explanation might be due both to its simplicity and totality, it does seem to pose an endless number of further questions. Did God create an initial chicken or an egg? If an egg, how was it incubated without the mother hen brooding over it? If a chicken, why was that particular chicken denied a childhood?

The purpose here is not to poke fun at religion but to address a fundamental metaphysical question. If I perceive a past, present, and future, and my experience of time is a moment that progresses along a line of time, then there must be a beginning point and an end point. Infinity can be conceived, but on the heavenly plane, not on the terrestrial plane. The infinite and the void are divine. In that way, eternity bisects the timeline at the end of life. The timeline of life is effectively a line segment, and the immortal soul lives forever in the heavenly afterlife, thus grafting an infinite afterlife (with a definite starting point) onto a

finite life. Therefore, the choices that we make in life have eternal consequences. If I make mistakes in attempting to follow God's rules, I could be sent to hell and be paying for a momentary lapse in judgment forever. That is a lot of pressure and fear to live under; forever is a very long time. For comparison, in a world of reincarnation, which is an expression of cyclical time, if I screw up, I am reborn and I try again. My karma is what I create, but it is not a judgment. It may take me longer to let go of my attachment to samsara, but I will not be eternally punished for one moment of weakness.

Turning finally to an economic question, moral peaces, as their name implies, present a moral dilemma. On the one hand, linear time creates the ontological basis for usury. On the other hand, by its own moral logic, usury is prohibited by the same logic that creates it. Moral worldviews both create and prohibit usury in the same breath. The moral solution to such tension is to create rules governing such situations. Usury can be generally prohibited but a certain class can practice money-lending out of necessity and practicality while it is openly derided for its immorality. Rules for the protection of debtors, such as amnesty and the jubilee, lessen the social impact of the necessary evils. These are the central questions of a moral approach to economics and they will be explored further. The effects of linear time for moral perspectives will be further explored in the next section on justice.

## ***Justice***

Justice means that I expect someone else to change before I do. I have experienced some injustice in the past, which means that someone has done something to me that I interpret as against my rules, personal, legal, or divine, and I am hurt by it. I feel discomfort in the

present, and I expect that I will be granted justice by someone else who will do something to right the wrong that has been committed against me. Recalling the quadrants in the model of transrational peaces, moral peaces focus on the external, the behavioural and social, aspects. Justice does not ask how I can harmonize myself with the vibrations of the world, it asks how the world can change to suit me. People operating from this paradigm seek to be externally regulated by those around them.

This section will focus on moral peaces as peace out of justice. Moral and modern peaces occupy the external side of the transrational peaces' matrix which means that they are associated with justice and security. Justice is traditionally the domain of religious authorities, and security is the responsibility of the state. Following those lines, one can make the generalization that moral peaces are based on justice and modern peaces on security. This may be a useful approximation of the truth, however, it is not a law.

As has been stated, justice requires a conception of linear time. This means that there is a belief that grievances from the past will be made right in the future. The consequence is that a peace out of justice occurs as a projection into the future rather than a lived experience now. Under this perspective, we are moving from an imperfect past to a better future, or rather, from an unjust past to a just future. Thus, justice is twinned with, and cannot exist without, its ontological opposite, injustice. Injustice in the past begets justice in the future and conversely, the concept of justice is predicated on the existence of a prior injustice. Justice, therefore, is dependent on its own negation for its existence.

As a corollary of this perspective, justice comes with the reunification with God at the end of life. Terrestrial life is an experience of being ripped away from God and only through



living a moral life can one be reunified with God. Peace is the experience of the reunification with the divine. The peace through economics is following the rules, the moral code, on how society should best operate. Norms are imposed from outside (God) in order to maintain the order (peace) of society. One will be blessed with the peace of reunification with the divine at the end of life if you have followed the rules. The prime example of this are the Abrahamic faiths. The obvious exception is Buddhism, especially Vajrayana, in which liberation from suffering, a reunification with the originary divine energy is possible in this lifetime.

There is the understanding, within moral perspectives, of a natural order of things and the preservation of said order is an expression of peace. The concept of a just price, stemming back to Thomas Aquinas, is an example of this. From the contemporary view of things, we may be accustomed to price fluctuations; for example, supply and demand, changes in exchange rates affect imports and exports, sales and discounts reduce margins to increase sales' volume, changes in technology reducing the marginal cost of production, all affect the market price of a product. A just price is a fixed price set in accordance with moral precepts, which tries to maintain a homeostasis. Since moral justice is concerned with keeping everything the same, even through a linear progression, the preservation of the status quo is the expression of peace as order and continuity. This changes with the introduction of Classical economics, which departs from the idea of a just price.

To explain the peace out of justice that can come from keeping things the same, we can look at the example of the German *Reinheitsgebot* of 1516. It is an example of a kind of justice of purity. It is a law adopted in Bavaria, now a state in the Federal Republic of Germany, that was intended to control the prices of grains (barley, hops, wheat, and rye) in

the Holy Roman Empire. It is an example of a moral economy, in which there is an adherence to an idea of purity, to first practices, that inhibits innovation. In opposition to the modo, the ‘just now,’ of modernity, moral perspectives draw their authority from the tests of time — tradition. This is the recurring opposition between moral and modern perspectives: tradition versus the *right now* way of innovating. In the past, the law was meant to ensure just prices for grains and their derivatives: bread and beer. Such a practice of attempting to safeguard a just price for staple commodities is in accordance with what we might expect from a moral viewpoint. It is an attempt to maintain peace and order through a moral code, in this case, law. Now, 500 years after its implementation and when the law is no longer on the books, likely influenced by a postmodern *glocalizing* effect (one that romanticizes and essentializes the local and vernacular as ideal or superior), it is held up as an idealized example of a pure past which justifies superiority by appealing to a sense of originary purity and the peace and order of continuity. It is a postmodern reinterpretation of an element of a moral economy.

This aspect of moral peaces, to keep things the same even as time marches on, is a recurring theme. The *xiuhmolpilli*, or Aztec New Fire Ceremony, that was performed every 52 years has a moral aspect that expresses the conservative sentiment of material justice. There are of course many elements to the ceremony but one of note was that the 52-year cycle (cognate of the Mayan Calendar Round), when the solar and lunar calendars aligned, household items were destroyed. It was an event to renew cosmic time. Aztecs destroyed surplus and accrued capital thus ensuring that they did not grow, and by that, a certain equilibrium was achieved. This is a similar practice to ancient Sumer, and later Babylonia, in which new rulers would declare clean slates, a general amnesty on personal debts (Graeber

2011:65; Hudson 2002). In Judaism, the jubilee is the fiftieth year, the crowning year after seven sevens of sabbatical years, during which debts are forgiven and lands redistributed, as prescribed in Leviticus (25:8-13) in the Torah and the Old Testament of the Bible (Ellis 2011:96). This biblical precedent was echoed in contemporary politics. In 1995, on the fiftieth anniversary of the World Bank and IMF, on the “jubilee” of their creation, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) issued a statement entitled *50 Years Is Enough* (Fasheh 2011:112-113) claiming that fifty years of debt peonage is enough servitude for ancient Semites and ought to be enough for contemporary African nations. This is a call for an aspect of a moral peace in an amoral world, to a moral escape from modern entrapment. The claim is that it is immoral (against the will of God) and against a humane approach to be uniquely rational regarding the logic of debt.

A phenomenon that is characteristic of moral peaces is that of paying money to the religious authorities. This can take the form of zakat, alms, tithes, donations, indulgences, or many other such examples. I include these here because I am interpreting them as a form of moral justice. In moral perspectives, all monetary transactions are not so concerned with mundane existence as much as they are with the hereafter, the divine salvation to come after death. In this way there is an economic aspect to one’s salvation. Paying a tithe to the church, literally one tenth of one’s wealth, is a foundational principle and an obligatory duty to pay. Zakat is third of the five pillars of Islam and if you are negligent in paying zakat then Allah (the Glorified and the Exalted) will brand you with the gold coins of your wealth heated in the fires of hell (Koran 9:34-35). One of the professed purposes of these forced contributions to religious orders is the redistribution of resources to the poor. However, to take equitable

resource redistribution as the primary impetus is to mistake moral commandments for modern reasoning. Rather than doling out a fair share, which smacks of welfare state and Marxism, moral perspectives are guided by their obligation to their role in the social hierarchy. Christians are beholden to the church and obliged to tithe. Furthermore, it may sound like buying your way into heaven, however, it is more akin to following the divine path as prescribed by the Almighty. However, this was precisely Martin Luther's critique in his ninety-five theses, that indulgences were the marketization and thus profanation of salvation. Indulgences were perhaps a harbinger of the modern shift in worldview.

The example of obligatory religious payments gives another opportunity to contrast the five different peace families. As has been outlined here, in moral perspectives, people give to charity because it is the will of God to maintain the structures of society and it ensures one's passage into Heaven. Modern perspectives might continue the practice of giving to charity, even through the institution of religion, however it is rather seen as contributing to the common good or doing one's duty as an individual citizen. The charity, whether it be a church or an NGO, is primarily judged on its efficiency in redistributing resources. Energetic perspectives give gifts of charity because it feels good and to honour the relationship with the recipient, rather than out of an instilled sense of duty or as tribute. Postmodern perspectives see charity as little more than buying symbolic peace of mind in order to assuage one's own guilt. In transrational perspectives all of these reasons are valid and none of them are binding. From a transrational viewpoint, the best case is an action that fulfils as many of them at once as possible, which might mean an act of charity that has an established cultural tradition (moral), is directed at those in need (modern), elicits feelings of

genuine satisfaction (energetic), and builds compassionate solidarity (postmodern).

The ultimate expression of moral justice in economic terms is the idea of restitution. The principle of justice rests on the assumption that paying for some grievance restores the peace of the social order. It assumes that a slap on the cheek and a certain number of pieces of silver are somehow equivalent. Graeber (2011) proposes that the quantification of debts, of determining what amount is just, comes from some sense of a wergild (literally man-price) used in settling grievances. The energetic root here, as we saw in Rospabé's theory, is that the two things are not and can never be equivalent. No amount of silver can be the same as insulted honour, a dead brother, or stolen cheese. It is insulting even to suggest that they might be equivalent. However, to offer something of value in a gesture of condolence and guilt is a humble admission that they truly could never be equivalent, should never be, and that you genuinely seek reconciliation. However, moral perspectives bring examples of precise quantification rather than approximations of favours. Graeber's suggestion then is that the quantification of debts, what changes a favour between neighbours to exactly *how much* of a favour is owed, stems from the practice of making restitutions in cash and in kind. It is when people feel wronged, their ego is threatened and they feel hurt and vulnerable, that they are most likely to react in a precise and petty way. It is one of Virginia Satir's defensive communication styles (Satir 1988:80-100) to react with intellect and hyper-rationality, which is precisely the mode of humanity necessary for calculating the exact objective value of a grievance.<sup>18</sup>

This may seem obvious, but it is not necessary in energetic perspectives. To require

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<sup>18</sup> Satir outlines four main defensive communication patterns as placating, blaming, computing, and distracting and computing is the one to which I refer here.

someone to compensate me for a wrong-doing again comes back to the conception of linear time. It means that I am not at peace now; I am in some state of discomfort, restlessness, or agitation. In the future, when I receive my money, then I will be at peace because I will have something for my loss, the wrong will have been righted, and I will have justice. Energetic traditions do not depend on the action of another, the compensation, in order to achieve peace: harmonization can be done inside oneself. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, a cornerstone of Christian morality, does not say to demand obstinately proper restitution for a smitten right cheek, but to turn the other (Matthew 5:39; Luke 6:29). I am thus interpreting the Sermon on the Mount through an energetic lens, which I believe to be its original intention, rather than through a justice-oriented moral lens.

This brings us to an important question. What we are essentially talking about here are obligations between people. What are our duties and promises to one another? If I assume that I have the responsibility to do right by someone whom I have wronged, how does it come that the issue is framed in the language of debt and money? How is it that paying that debt with money can be an expression of justice? How can hurting someone incur a debt? Is justice not simply paying one's debts?

## **Debt and Usury**

I follow closely David Graeber's analysis of debt from his book *DEBT: The first 5,000 Years* (2011), which is to say that what is addressed here is merely a summary. I draw on Graeber's arguments to describe here the role of debt and usury in moral peaces. In sum, debt is the most expedient way to justify a hierarchical relationship of oppression. It is an instrument

that breaks the presumed equality of energetic perspectives, one divine light of the universe facing another, and translates it into a duality in which one is good and the other is bad. Importantly, the amorphous debt of a favour can only be turned into the exact debt of a quantity through the threat of violence: behind every debt is an iron fist, the tip of a sword, or the barrel of a gun.

To start with, there are many expressions that express an idea of a debt to society. We speak of criminals paying their debt to society, the idea of a social contract is an obligation to something called “society,” and paying taxes is, in a sense, paying for the benefits of the society around us. There is a notion that we owe our lives to “society.” And indeed we do. This is simply true. From the perspective of an interconnected web of life, no individual organism can exist without the infinite interactions with other organisms and the constant throughput of outside material. We owe our lives to the air with every breath, to the rivers with every draught of water, to the soil with every grain we eat. The list could go on both *ad infinitum* and *ad absurdum*. What is clear is that human existence can be said to owe a lot to sources outside what we might call an individual. From another side, following the credit theory of money, whose most prominent proponent was Alfred Mitchell-Innes (1864–1950) (1913; 1914), the state is a holder of debt for society. Money is created by an outstanding debt that never gets paid. Additionally, conquered people can be said to owe their lives to the new ruler for not killing them. For sparing them, they owe the new king and state bureaucracy their lives, quite literally (Graeber 2011). It is this debt to “society” that we project onto gods and is taken up by kings and governments (Graeber 2011:65-66).

Primordial debt theory, an idea to be attributed to Michel Aglietta, Andre Orléans, and

Bruno Théret, attempts to unify those three stories. It states that we are born with a primordial debt to society, which is a translation of debts of subjugation from conquering rulers, and the debt held by the state is the latest interpretation of that primordial life-debt owed to a monarch who could have killed his subjects but, mercifully, did not. As such, there is a transition from an absolute debt we owe to God, a primordial debt, to specific debts that we owe to our credit card company. The primordial-debt theorists' explanation of this, as Graeber explains, is that the debt to God gets slowly quantified in specific debts to society, which is a stand-in for God.

The answer provided by primordial-debt theorists is, again, ingenious. If taxes represent our absolute debt to the society that created us, then the first step toward creating real money comes when we start calculating much more specific debts to society, systems of fines, fees, and penalties, or even debts we owe to specific individuals who we have wronged in some way, and thus to whom we stand in a relation of "sin" or "guilt." (Graeber 2011:59-60)

This is essentially the same story of specific debts emerging out of general favours owed to neighbours, in this case out of the absolute debt to God, by appealing to justice from restititional payments.

I agree with the synopsis of primordial debt as an origin story for specific quantified debt. We all owe everything we are to long dead ancestors and hence are in debt to them. That debt to society or God, which in a Durkheimian sense are one and the same (Durkheim 1912), is used by institutions to legitimize their authority, and from a need to exact terrestrial justice, precise measurements and equivalencies are needed to count out smaller portions of the debt to society. This is a plausible story that begins to explain how debt came to define morality. However, I am sceptical of adopting a Girardian framework, that consumer debt is a lesser evil, a mimetic recreation of the original absolute debt to God, just as ritual sacrifice is



a recreation of an original murder that defines social life.

I also agree with Graeber's final analysis that if we repay our debt to our parents by becoming parents, our debt to the sages by becoming wise, our debt to humanity by expressing our humanity, then why frame it as a question of debt at all? Graeber argues that these are not equivalents to business transactions at all. They are not and should not be viewed as business transactions. However, it does make sense when viewed from an energetic viewpoint, or rather as a transition from energetic to moral perspectives. A debt to the cosmos is not a business transaction at all, it is a metaphor to describe the feeling of humility, submission to the divine, in the face of the infinite. To take it literally is to commit the perennial mistake of moral perspectives, which is to mistake the word for the tao, the signifier for the ineffable. From an energetic perspective, debt to God or to society or to humanity is a gift, a pay-it-forward, under which we have no obligation other than our own conscience and our own wonder at the mysteries of life itself.

A moral understanding of debt thus takes that energetic core, the gift of life and its mysteries, and uses language of the market, a language of a phenomenon that was emerging at the time (if we date the writing of the Vedas and Brahmanas to be around 500 BCE and the invention of coinage to 600-500 BCE they coincide, give or take a few hundred years), to try and bring it forth into the world in a comprehensible metaphor for the time (Graeber 2011:67). The idea of a gift from (or debt to) the gods is rather an energetic concept, and when it is expressed in moral language, it seems contradictory. Indeed, it is an absurd proposition to try to repay one's debt to God, for it would ultimately mean forfeiting one's life.

Graeber criticizes the primordial-debt theorists of working backwards from a modern position that presupposes that society is something that exists. It translates backwards in time the idea of a nation-state. I contend that even the Vedic texts that the primordial-debt theorists use to support their claim are guilty of the same inconsistent projection. By speaking of the *gift* of life as a *debt* to the cosmos, it is placing morally defined terms onto an energetic principle; it superimposes a linear chronosophy on the theretofore non-linear, cyclical, cosmovision. Contemporary debt theorists continue this pattern when they skip over social currencies in their historical analyses and go to early law codes instead, skipping over energetic understandings and focusing on moral understandings. The intricacies of energetic worldviews are not nearly as often written down because their very essence is impermanent and being written in stone, as the expression goes, is precisely the difference between energetic ethics and moral commandments. Moreover, this outlines the importance of an analysis of economics from the viewpoint of the families of peaces, because, as is all too often, conventional accounts systematically disregard the energetic paradigm and our history books start with moral perspectives, which make our stories appear to be entirely external affairs.

The transmogrification of the gift of life into primordial debts is the moral basis of the patterns that came to be a distinct sphere of relations known as the economy. Perceiving the gift of life as a debt is a distinct transition point from energetic to moral perspectives. The invention of interest-bearing loans appears to predate the invention of writing (which can be said to have come on the scene with the earliest traces of cuneiform script, circa 3000 BCE), and likely originated in ancient Sumerian temple complexes to finance the caravan trade

(Graeber 2011:64). Thus the language of debt to describe morality also extends back into the mists of time as far as the piercing light of etymology can peer. The language that is used in speech and metaphors is discursively entwined with the cosmovision of the paradigm. Reckoning and redemption, words used to describe the most intimate parts of Judaeo-Christian spiritual life, are clearly derived from commercial transactions. Arguably the most famous prayer in Christendom, the Lord's prayer, states, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." It is difficult to know whether this is meant literally, or it is a metaphor for sin. In fact, and probably more to the point, moral perspectives do not make the distinction.

Debt, in moral perspectives, is equivalent to sin. There may be some debate over whether the debtor or the creditor is the more sinful of the two, but it is clear that neither party slips through the transaction unblemished by the judging eye of the moral authorities. It testifies to Shakespeare's maxim from Hamlet (Act I, Scene iii), (if you will pardon the split infinitive) to "neither a borrower nor a lender be." There is ample etymological evidence in Indo-European languages that debt is guilt. The German *Schuld* is a prime example; the English, guilt, is related to *Geld*, 'money.' The Germanic forms refer to a promise (Nietzsche 1887:39-40): shall (should) / *Schuld*. The noun traces back to the verb which denotes not an action that one will do, but one that one *intends* to do, for what is society other than a series of promises we make to each other. A *Schuld*, a debt in that case, is one's intention. The energetic interpretation is that I intend to reciprocate the act of generosity and kindness that you showed me. Again, from a moral interpretation, when there is a normative framework insisting on when, how, and under what circumstances that reciprocation is to take place, then my *intention* to reciprocate transforms into a quantified debt. The very word debt implies

moral impropriety and yet this itself seems an intractable paradox.

The paradox comes in because debt is a useful tool that is a necessary part of human interrelations. It is a natural phenomenon in human relations to do things for each other and thus be in each others' debt. In a small town, everyone owes a favour to someone else and everyone has a cousin or a brother who is married to their debtor or creditor, so there is a complex network of relations. It is important to recall that moral perspectives tend towards interpreting relationships in binary and hierarchical manners, rather than as complex systems or rhizomatic structures, which are characteristic of energetic, postmodern, and transrational perspectives. If debts are equated to sin, then everyone is sinning. Moral paradigms seem to have a paradoxical ambivalence towards debt: on the one hand it is seen as immoral and, moreover, the very definition of the language of morality; on the other hand, it is a necessary aspect of human interactions, of village life, and of commerce. There is an acceptance that even if debt and usury are immoral, there is a time and a place in which a blind eye must be turned towards them because they are necessary evils. However, the question requires an awkward distinction. Debt is not in itself immoral; it is profiting from others' debt that contravenes social mores. This is the parallel of private property: private property is not bad, it is just the unfair advantages of owning it that socialists object to.

The final account seems to be not that debt is immoral, but that it is a moral danger. Credit systems are constantly walking a razor's edge, a tight-rope act, that is in danger of slipping into penury. This association with debt to sin is not that debt *is* sin, but that it runs the risk of turning that way quickly. There is nothing wrong with providing a loan to someone in need but there is something sinister about living off of pounds of flesh exacted

from a host of insolvent clients; there is nothing wrong with being in debt to someone but there is a danger in one's self-worth eroding from feeling inferior due to a debt. There is the constant tension between the moral standing of these dangers of debt and the fact that if all reckoning were taken, everyone would be in debt to everyone else and there would not really be any way around it; thus, if it is sinful, we are all going to hell, with or without a hand-basket.

Problems arise as debts become increasingly quantified. As they become quantified, they also become dehumanized. It is the difference between owing a favour to your neighbour, and knowing exactly how much or how many you owe him and being able to be dragged up in front of the village and demanded that you hand over twenty ewes or the equivalent in ermine pelts. The quantified debt enables the human being to be ripped away and dehumanized; Graeber examines how this was the case in the slave trade, and that the ripping away, the de-contextualization of the human being is necessary for the the quantification and commodification (Graeber 2011). The number can become more important than the human being attached to it. The divine light of the universe no longer recognizes itself in another human being; it sees only quantity and commodity. Precedents are taken to be traditions and institutions are borne into the world. Legal codices are the tool of the institution to enforce the quantification of debts. As this web of patterns takes hold, so too increases the propensity for it to slip into further dehumanization. The possibility of the debt trap becomes very real and children are ripped away from their families as surety, collateral, or payment. This may sound harsh but it is very true: from ancient Mesopotamia to present day the pattern of strong men manipulating loans to coerce people into selling their very own

flesh has been a time honoured tradition.

Whether legal frameworks have meant to protect debtors or creditors has varied over time. Historically, however, legal and moral systems have protected debtors from being carried off to whatever form of slavery was popular at the time (Graeber 2011); currently, and what creates so much moral confusion, institutions seem to be favouring creditors (Graeber 2011:18; Graeber 2011:368). It is the role of the moral systems, church and state, to stop the cheese from sliding off the cracker, or rather, to put rules in place so that all of the peasants do not become debt peons to an oligarchy of Shylocks.

A social system that quantifies favours, thus transforming them into calculable debts, can enable said debts to become larger than is manageable. This is part of the sleight of hand of negative numbers. Natural numbers (as opposed to integers) have the quality of needing to represent something that physically exists, however, a debt, which can be thought of as a negative integer, is a promise rather than an object and does not have a physical manifestation and as such can easily grow to a size that is completely out of proportion to any reasonable correlations with reality. There is such a thing as one apple, but there is no such thing as -1 apple. The sign signifies an action, for example, if you have one apple and I take it away from you, however, the -1 apple does not exist as a physical object. There may be some upper limit to the amount of gold that I can amass in my coffers, but there is no physical limit to the amount of debt that I can rack up. The only limit is when other people stop granting me credit.

From here it may be possible to see how debt can come to be seen as immoral. A simple friendly gesture between neighbours, the extension of a favour, taken down this moral

garden path can lead to mountains of debt if one is not careful. Money lenders can be reviled, usury prohibited, and debt seen as immoral, since it is a dangerous and slippery path for either creditor or debtor, yet doing favours for one another is the very essence of conviviality and of the phenomenon we call society. Surely, as suspect as it might be, debt cannot be criminal.

Credit relationships require trust and security. In times of political instability, who knows if your debtor is ever going to be able to pay you back the good turn that you deserve, or in times of war, if he will even be alive. In such times, as was mentioned earlier, bullion media are preferred over credit arrangements because bullion is transportable, untraceable, and accepted anywhere; it has no history and asks no questions. Times of social stability can allow for the extension of credit on friendly terms, whereas times of social unrest favour the spot transaction.

Graeber describes the circumstances out of which the cash society that we all know so well emerged (Graeber 2011:334-335). The criminalization of debt created a need for spot payments, which in the categories of the families of peaces marks a transition from moral perspectives, through Adam Smith, to modern perspectives. In Britain around the time of Adam Smith, as Graeber makes the case, the equation of debt to sin and immorality was so strong that it became the virtual embodiment of it. Debt was criminalized and was enough to get a person hanged (Graeber 2011:333-334). By contrast, the ability to avoid indebtedness by paying for something, a dress or a harness, on the spot with cash could be seen as the very essence of virtue. Graeber reiterates throughout his work on debt (2011) that for much of human history, common people simply did not have access to petty cash, even if accounts

were kept in units of an existing currency. Coins may have changed hands amongst soldiers or the aristocracy but most people payed with a handshake and nothing else between the palms (Graeber 2011:329). From the point of view described here that was forming in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, most people did not have access to the metal coins that could ensure virtue and were still riding on reputation, on credit (since all credit is, is one's reputation), which meant going in to debt to one's fellow man and running the risk of ending up swinging from the gallows.

This apparent demonization of credit does seem to be a bit absurd, however, from my own experience of spot trades, I recognize a distinct freedom in it. I have felt great freedom from receiving a grubby wad of cash at the end of a day of labour, knowing that I earned every dollar and I can exchange it for what I want and not owe anything to anybody. At the end of the day, I can just walk away from my labour and my employer and my vendors with neither expectation nor obligation.

My formulation of moral perspectives follows Thomas Aquinas' vision of a divine hierarchical structure of society. There are peasants and priests, lords and vassals, merchants and mercers, each playing their part; the arrangement might not be fair but there is a logic to it and it works. The whole system is predicated on different types of people owing responsibility to each other through hierarchic relations. The lord is by no means the equal to his vassals, but he is bound by many responsibilities to them, such as protection in times of war. This is not a contract entered into by two equal and consenting adults, it is a hierarchical relationship of fundamentally different people engaged in separate, distinct, and mutually beneficial roles of responsibility to each other.



Debt has the peculiarity of seeming to recreate hierarchical relationships even among people who would otherwise be equals. Even if we are friends and peers, if you owe me one (a big favour, a substantial sum of money, or if I am keeping a scandalous secret for you), then I have a proverbial ace up my sleeve to coerce you to do my bidding. This is of course just a polite way of saying blackmail. In this way a relationship of peers, two people who are in any legal sense equals, can be recast as a relationship of hierarchy and subordination. The psychological effects of a hierarchical relationship, especially one that has shifted from a relationship of equals to one of subordination, can be profound. Feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, despair on the part of the debtor can increase the possibility of the creditor to exploit the relationship. Graeber recounts the destruction of Tenochtitlan, framing it as the desperate and pathological attempts of Hernán Cortés (1485 – 1547) to escape from the oppression of debt (Graeber 2011:316-318). Creditors can leverage the feelings of inadequacy to exploit their debtors until a point when the whole apparatus cracks. Eventually, people cannot be made to feel anymore inferior and they fight back. The demands of every peasant revolt in history has been to cancel the debts and redistribute the lands (Finley 1960:63 in Graeber 2011:8; Graeber 2011:82).

The flipside of this way of thinking is that you also need to be peers in order to enter into debt. Contracts can be struck between equals and only equals. Preexisting hierarchical relations do not need a contract because, by the nature of hierarchical relationships, there is already a power structure in place that coerces, obliges, or pressures the subordinate to act. This is the difference between exchange and hierarchy.

To be a slave, or lower-caste, is to be intrinsically inferior. We are dealing with relations of unadulterated hierarchy. In the case of debt, we are dealing with two individuals who begin

as equal parties to a contract. Legally, at least as far as the contract is concerned, they are the same. (Graeber 2011:86)

The idea of a contract, as I am using the concept here, is different than some kind of social contract in a moral paradigm in which a vassal pledges allegiance to a lord and the lord ensures securities to the vassal. This could very well be seen as a contract in which both sides have their terms and responsibilities, however, my argument is that the hierarchical arrangement of the lord-vassal relationship means that the two people are unequal in a fundamental way. Two dukes could enter in to a contract together in a way that a duke and a peasant never could. The two dukes are peers whereas the farmer is not the duke's peers. In fact, this is the origin of the word peer. In contemporary usage it most often means a contemporary of roughly the same age, status, and background, however, its primary meaning in the English language is a member of the British aristocracy. Peer comes from Latin, via French, *par*, 'equal,' as in being on par with someone, literally, being their equal. This point is crucial because there are different rules for dealing with debt horizontally, as I will call it, within one's social echelon, than vertical debts that straddle social classes.

A key difference between moral and modern perspectives is an assumption of equality. If moral perspectives will assume that society is comprised of a system of ranked hierarchies, modern perspectives assume that all men (human beings, but let us just stick with men for the time being) are equal. If then, from a modern perspective, I subordinate myself in debt to another, it must be temporary. I cannot fully sell my rights; I am not free to sell myself into bondage. If I enter into a contract with a peer in which I am in his debt, I must return to my previous status, absolved of my debt, with the resolution of the contract. I can sell myself into labour, but only for a specified period of time, and at the end of the working

day, boss and labourer are both equal actors before the law. Debt removes the equality in a relationship and subordinates one to the other. The moral weight of debt comes down on the person who is no longer equal. Being a debtor implies that you have somehow made a mistake and are inferior to your creditors who, although often dubiously, still appear to hold the moral high ground.

There is a point here that I would like to reiterate to make sure that it is abundantly clear. Graeber makes a wry differentiation between, on the one hand, calling someone inferior and, on the other hand, calling someone inferior who should be an equal; the former is unfair and the latter is liable to provoke a man to indignant rage (Graeber 2011:8). The distinction that I just laid out between moral and modern perspectives I believe to be a recurrent tension in contemporary society. In morally oriented hierarchical societies, the fact that one has inferiors and superiors and that one has numerous obligations (debts) to those different strata of society is just a given of how society works. Not to say it is fair, but one expects to be in debt to and at the mercy of one's social superiors. Modern perspectives, by contrast, preserve the moral structures of class hierarchies but disguise it under the assumption of universal citizenship, rights' discourse, and equality before the law. Moderns believe that they are the same as everyone else, until the bank forecloses on their mortgage and they find out that some are more equal than others.

Returning to the etymological example of debt being synonymous with guilt and obligation, the guilt and obligation depend on whether that debt is between peers or between people of different classes. It is a moral argument to pay one's debts and, as far back as any records go, debt and morality are one and the same. It is then seen as virtuous to pay one's

debts. However, you do not have to pay your debts; forgiveness is divine. Amongst the rich and amongst the poor debts are forgiven all the time. Furthermore, there is such a thing as odious debt, which is a debt that was contracted under illegitimate means and therefore should be forgiven. The obligation to pay one's debts is moral and not economic: money is a debt obligation that when paid, ceases to be able to circulate. We do not have always to pay our debts as common morality preaches, in fact the system works when debts are not paid. Assuming that all debts will be recovered would create economic chaos. Creditors must assume the risk that not all loans will be paid back, otherwise, there would be no incentive to vet anyone. If all loans were guaranteed to be paid back, a creditor could give out loans willy-nilly, basically have a licence to print money, because all the loans would be guaranteed. That would still hold true even if the creditor has leveraged the loan in the first place. It would be a race to loan as much as possible all the time. This scenario is not all that different from the circumstances that precipitated the 2008 financial crisis.

I have been focusing here on the situations in which the creditor has the upper hand, however, the power relations can swing the other way. A creditor can be subordinate to a debtor, especially taken in the web of interrelations that a village or an economy naturally is. Tales of morality usually depict an evil moneylender preying on the innocent pauper. However, a creditor, having loaned out all his capital, could easily be dependent on the debtor's payments to remain solvent, even to the point of pleading him to repay the loan. If we imagine also that the creditor in question owes money to yet other creditors (perhaps less forgiving ones), which again is to be expected in an economy, then the debtor may be in a position of great power to save his creditor from falling victim to his own outstanding loans.

As John Maynard Keynes said (1945:258), “The old saying holds. Owe your banker £1000 and you are at his mercy; owe him £1 million and the position is reversed.” If the loan is big enough, the balance of power can shift to the debtor. The situation that is being described here is one in which the debtor, rather than being at the mercy of his creditor’s benevolence, has the power to call the shots. This is the logic behind the creation of national currency as, David Graeber explains.

In 1694, a consortium of English bankers made a loan of £1,200,000 to the king. In return they received a royal monopoly on the issuance of banknotes. What this meant in practice was they had the right to advance IOUs for a portion of the money the king now owed them to any inhabitant of the kingdom willing to borrow from them, or willing to deposit their own money in the bank—in effect, to circulate or “monetize” the newly created royal debt. This was a great deal for the bankers (they got to charge the king 8 percent annual interest for the original loan and simultaneously charge interest on the same money to the clients who borrowed it), but it only worked as long as the original loan remained outstanding. To this day, this loan has never been paid back. It cannot be. If it ever were, the entire monetary system of Great Britain would cease to exist. (Graeber 2011:49)

The debtor in this case is the crown, the House of Stuart. Not only is the bank, but as Graeber asserts, the very money system is at the mercy of the monarch. If he paid back the loan, there would be no more debt to monetize. A debtor is not necessarily a victim, moreover, debtors are required for a money system and a dualistic way thinking that conceives things in binary opposition is typical of moral perspectives.

In order to bring this section to a close, the question of usury cannot be forgotten, and I must tie the discussion on usury back to where we started talking about debt: as an expression of moral justice. Interest-bearing loans can be seen to have existed before, during, and after the Axial Age, which is the historical era during which moral perspectives have

been most salient. That is to say that interest-bearing loans are a phenomenon that predated the rise to dominance of moral perspectives, survived their prohibition, and continue to this day. However, in moral perspectives usury is pretty much universally condemned as an unjust act, and therefore, as disruption of God's peace. Debt's moral standing was dubious at best, but to profit from someone else's debt, thus to encourage others to sin in order to better your own lot, was clearly sinful.

First, a word about terminology and conventions. The difference between interest and usury is semantic. Interest, from Latin *interesse* (a late fee incurred by a defaulting debtor), means money paid for the use of capital. Usury, from Latin *usuria* 'use,' in contemporary English refers to interest rates above the legal limit. There is no practical difference between them, rather, a normative difference in where the line of in/justice lies. With legal interest rates set at sixty percent in Canada, it limits the scope of the usefulness of the word. Interest rates that high are only legalized robbery of someone desperate and hapless enough to sign off on the extortion. I will use the term usury here to refer to charging of any interest. This is, on the one hand, to be purposefully provocative, and on the other, to emphasize the common position in moral perspectives that usury is forbidden.

Interest does have a very natural corollary, however, whether this is a true origin of the practice remains open for debate and interpretation can likely never be known with any degree of certainty. If I lend you a ram and ten ewes for a year, and each ewe lambs, I should be able to collect 31 sheep at the end of the period. Estimating a mortality rate of 20%, I still have 25 animals, more than double the number I started with. Interest bearing loans appear to predate the invention of writing so the precise inception will remain shrouded by the veil of

time. However, it could come from livestock loans as I just illustrated, since in most ancient languages the word for interest is derived from ‘offspring.’ Graeber, however, finds this explanation too literal and favours a theory of temples and palaces providing interest bearings loans to finance trade missions (Graeber 2011:215).

Whether it was a reflection of natural processes or not, it is clear that moral philosophers of the Axial Age were frightened that usury would disturb the peace. In fact insolvent debtors being sold into slavery was rather common (Graeber 2011:8) and a very real and extreme example of disruption of peace; insolvent debtors could be executed under Roman law (Graeber 2011:201). All three Abrahamic faiths banned the charging of interest. Usury is prohibited under Halakha (Jewish Law) and traces its origin to the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 18:13), “Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? He shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.” The prohibition of usury, *riba* (ربا) in Arabic, is considered a foundational principle of Islamic economic jurisprudence, *fiqh al mu'amalat* (فقه المعاملات) (Kuran 1986), often referencing the Koranic ayat 2:275-280. One of the distinct scenes of the Christian New Testament when Jesus of Nazareth throws the moneychangers out of the temple, which is recounted in all four of the Canonical Gospels (Mark 11:15-19, 11:27-33; Matthew 21:12-17, 21:23-27; Luke 19:45-48, 20:1-8; John 2:13-16).

Spruyt offers an explanation for the prohibition of interest that was already mentioned in the section on time. He argues that interest was seen in Europe as a charge for time, which was the province of God, and was therefore morally incomprehensible, which furthermore forms part of a larger transition of modernization including technological changes and the

reification of the nation-state.

Business activity required formalized calculation of time. Time and space had been undifferentiated concepts, beyond the control of humans. Those with knowledge of ultimate ends, the clergy, claimed to have the ability to interpret the world, but they did not claim to make it. Proponents of the new beliefs did exactly that. They appropriated time and space by making them products of mortal calculation.

For example, if money was lent, interest rates had to be calculated with mathematical precision. After all, the lending of money entailed an opportunity cost. The church, however, dissuaded usury because it was considered to be the sale of God's possession. That is, usury was seen as a charge on time, not as the cost of money. Since only God possessed time, the charging of usury was an irreligious act. If one is indifferent to time, if one does not have a sense of a chronological progression of time, the value of a good (money) should not increase. (Spruyt, 1994:74)

What is of particular interest (pardon the ambiguous word choice) is Spruyt's emphasis on the "chronological progression of time" as a necessity for the conception of usury because it reinforces my thesis of the effects of linear time and a teleological conception of justice.

Justice in moral interpretations is about maintaining the natural order of things. Usury, unchecked, would result in unparalleled growth and prosperity for some, growth that seems to defy the natural principles of justice. For example, there was a norm in mediaeval Hindu law codes, and later in China, stating that interest could not exceed principal (Graeber 2011:11; Cartier 1988:28; Yang 1971:92-103). On the other side, unrestricted usury would result in rampant debt peonage. Anyone who witnessed children being carried off, lands being repossessed, and people being sold into slavery could not hold the position that usury was just. Whereas modern perspectives take the position that it is possible to manage the risks and find a fair balance between one's right to profit from an investment and the duty to protect against predatory lenders, moral perspectives find it easier simply to ban it outright.



In Europe, according to Spruyt (1994), after the defeat of Pope Boniface VIII (1230 – 1303), there was a shift in preference of Roman law over canon law. This change in jurisprudence was part of a general shift in epistemology; the source of law, what has authority to be definitively right or wrong, is predicated on what is a valid source of truth. The shift that Spruyt describes placed political power as the source of law, the *rex est lex* doctrine, whereas moral perspectives generally base their authority in divine providence.

Early rulers had legitimated themselves as discoverers of law. Greek leaders justified their authority as interpreters of the *nomoi*, existing norms which only had to be discovered. Similarly, Macedonian kings legitimated their rule by claiming divine status which gave them access to hidden perennial truths. Laws were timeless, divine revelations. They were revealed, rather than made, by those with special status. (Spruyt 1994:103)

Spruyt further summarizes that a preference towards Roman law was bolstered by the growing importance of the class of city-dwelling merchants, the infamous bourgeoisie.

Written law was suspect because it could be tampered with, unlike sworn oaths or divine justice which manifested themselves through trial by combat or ordeal. Moreover, given that writing was solely the province of members of the clergy, its accessibility to commoners was limited and hence distrusted. The emerging mercantile interests, by contrast, required exactly the abstraction and certitude that were absent in the old feudal order. Written law fit in the context of the burghers' literate and numerate understanding of the world. (Spruyt 1994:104)

It is of interest that the needs of commerce were pushing a grand epistemological change in Europe. The justice of divine providence began giving way to justice before laws written by reasonable men. This shift, which may be seen from modern eyes as a move away from superstition and towards greater fairness, is shown in Spruyt's description to be a highly suspect upheaval of the established order of things. Finally, the greatest importance of the preference for Roman law in Europe was that it, "in contrast to canon law, permitted interest

charges” (Spruyt, 1994:104).

The early proponents of usury contain the seeds of modernity. Whereas classical philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle condemned usury, philosophers from about mid-millennium onward, such as John Calvin, Francis Bacon, and Adam Smith, were in favour of interest charges, and criticized the church’s ban on usury. They based their epistemology in reason. If it is kept under control and a deal between partners, contained by law, why not let one rent his capital? It is only fair and reasonable. Again we can see a dividing line between moral and modern interpretations of usury. Moral thinkers say that the risk is too high and the safest thing to do is to ban it outright, nevertheless moneylending continues in the impious shadows of society; modern thinkers say that usury is a useful and necessary practice and morality was incapable of weeding it out, so it is possible to contain it and regulate through the perfection of a normative system.

It is also pertinent to mention an example, a rather large example, that ties together some of the loose ends of our story. That is the Islamic banking system. From a modern perspective a banking system that functions without usury defies the very basis of how we might think of a bank and its functions. The Islamic Banking System uses profit-sharing (and thus loss-sharing in the unfortunate case) rather than charging interest. This may be a simple change of name, however, a name change is also accompanied by a change in orientation. It is a fundamentally different social arrangement to be in your debt than to be equal business partners in a joint venture. Equity stake rather than a loan at interest. This orientation reflects the distinction between moral and modern perspectives, between hierarchy and peers, that I previously outlined. The common wisdom, especially amongst the political right, is that state

and markets are opposing forces; the truth is that they always emerge together and go hand-in-hand. States create markets and markets require states. The notable exception is the market system of Medieval Islam.

As we have seen in the case of Medieval Islam, under genuine free-market conditions—in which the state is not involved in regulating the market in any significant way, even in enforcing commercial contracts—purely competitive markets will not develop, and loans at interest will become effectively impossible to collect. It was only the Islamic prohibition against usury, really, that made it possible for them to create an economic system that stood so far apart from the state. (Graeber 2011:321)

What Graeber is saying is might appear counter-intuitive. He says that it is precisely the prohibition of usury that made a free-market system possible under Mediaeval Islam without state regulation. This is a perfect example of a moral interpretation of economy. The role of regulating the rules of the market, in this case banning usury to safeguard against debt-slavery, was filled by the religious authorities rather than, as is probably most common to think in 2015, by the secular state. With the advent of modernity, the state supplants religion in its place of authority, and in the case of the free-market economy, it was the Islamic precedent that nation-states began to recreate — except, of course, usury was legalized.

A moral justice is doing what is expected of you, following the rules, and paying your debts, all as prescribed by divine law. Justice is fulfilling your obligations to others within the divine hierarchy of social relations. Usury was banned because it threatened to destabilize the whole system: periodically, if moneylenders were unchecked, peasants who were down on their luck or had a bad crop ended up literally losing everything. If this were to happen en masse, which it inevitably did, it threatened to destabilize the very pillars of human civilization. Thence came another form of moral justice, the jubilee, forgiving debts, allowing

debt-slaves to return home, and enshrining forgiveness as a key virtue in the doctrine of Abrahamic faiths. Usury, charging of interest on loans, a practice older than the written word, continued in moral dubiety for millennia, and with the rise of capitalist empires of the last half millennium, its proponents gained ground until it became the backbone of a worldwide system of interacting. Interest is the gateway of transforming justice from a moral justice of reunification with the divine in the afterlife to a modern justice necessitating growth and development. Debt is the most expedient way of justifying a relationship of exploitation, and morality enables a relationship of power to feel like the oppressed's fault. It is time to look at what kinds of relationships moral perspectives foster.

### ***Moral Relationships: Mutuality***

There are two complementary aspects of moral paradigms that affect economics, the nature of relationships, and peace. Firstly, moral paradigms are characterized by their organization in structural hierarchies with God at the top of the pyramid. It is a divine structure that arranges the terrestrial actors in a complex hierarchy of responsibilities, which ultimately all relate to God. Secondly, exchanges, business deals, are personal relationships. The discussion will begin with a look at hierarchy.

The divine hierarchic order, or the great chain of being, is laid out in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* (written between 1265 and 1274), the roots of which can be found in Aristotle and Plotinus (Lovejoy 1936). Under such a worldview, economics, commerce, and trade are all parts of, and thus embedded within, a complex layering of social strata that form one's identity and one's role in society. Although a "web of relations" may

accurately describe the interlocking and overlapping strata of responsibilities in morally oriented societies, the metaphorical language of moral worldviews favours the ranked hierarchy rather than the network, the shifting plates, or the rhizome, that are characteristic of postmodern perspectives. The form of peace that is engendered here is to know your place in the rank and file and to act accordingly. Thus, an individual's relationships with others are governed by the divine law of a (male) creator God.

Hierarchy is of course not the only mode of interaction. For a framework I will once again turn to David Graeber (2011). He proposes three modes of interaction: communism, hierarchy, and exchange. Graeber admits that his choice of the term communism was intentionally provocative (Graeber 2011:94). His assertion is that a baseline communism underlies human relations. If the cost is small enough (such as bumming a cigarette), or the need is high enough (if, for instance, someone is drowning), then we are willing to give, from our ability, to each according to her need (Graeber 2011:97), which is of course the maxim that inspired Karl Marx. Baseline communism is particularly visible with people working on common projects: if you say, "pass me that hammer," you would hardly expect your co-worker to reply in the mode of exchange, "what's in it for me?" or, "how much will you pay me for completing this task?" You need the hammer, he has the ability to reach it and pass it with minimal effort, and the common goal is furthered. These kinds of actions pervade so much of everyday life that it is perhaps all too easy to take them for granted and overlook their significance. Exchange, by contrast, is the tit-for-tat mode of interaction that forms the basis for modern economics. The assumption of economists that all interaction can be reduced to exchange theory negates the roles of baseline communism and hierarchy.

Although baseline communism and exchange may appear to have significant similarities, they do differ in an important way; exchange is based on equivalence, whereas baseline communism is based on mutuality.

Hierarchy is of the most interest for this chapter because, I argue, it is a dominant and characterizing form of interaction in moral paradigms. Hierarchical relationships are backed up by the threat of violence; they are relationships between people who are not and can probably never be equals and the social structure at large reinforces that difference in social standing. That is to say that a king maintains loyal lords and soldiers who will point a sharpened sword at an insubordinate subordinate. Hierarchical relationships are often justified in reciprocal terms; the peasants provide the food, the lords provide protection; however, rather than reciprocity in the sense of an equivalent exchange, hierarchies operate on a logic of precedent (Graeber 2011:109).

There is a theory that the logic of precedent from hierarchical moral worldviews is the antecedent to a normative framework of the state. Graeber traces this theory back to Ibn Khaldun (1332 – 1406) and explains the evolution of precedent to law in moral perspectives.

Actually, one popular theory of the origins of the state, that goes back at least to the fourteenth-century North African historian Ibn Khaldun, runs precisely along these lines: nomadic raiders eventually systematize their relations with sedentary villagers; pillage turns into tribute, rape turns into the “right of the first night” or the carrying off of likely candidates as recruits for the royal harem. Conquest, untrammelled force, becomes systematized, and thus framed not as a predatory relation but as a moral one, with the lords providing protection, and the villagers, their sustenance. But even if all parties assume they are operating by a shared moral code, that even kings cannot do whatever they want but must operate within limits, allowing peasants to argue about the rights and wrongs of just how much of their harvest a king’s retainers are entitled to carry off, they are very unlikely to frame their calculation in terms of the quality or quantity of protection provided, but

rather in terms of custom and precedent: How much did we pay last year? How much did our ancestors have to pay? The same is true on the other side. (Graeber 2011:109-110)

For the other side, I also echo Graeber's sentiments regarding the precedence of charity: I once donated money to a university and I have ever since received petitions to repeat my donation. It is not an exchange (I donate X dollars for some service or for a feeling of generosity or magnanimity), it is based on precedence (I donated X dollars last year so I am expected to continue donating the same amount every year). It may be possible to extrapolate how the logic of precedence could lead to spheres of exchange, which will be discussed in more depth in the next section.

The previous section explored the nature of debt and ended on the conclusion that debt is able to justify relationships of exploitation. A relationship of exploitation is by its nature a hierarchical relationship, since the exploiter must be in a superordinate position and the exploited, the victimized or oppressed, in a subordinate position. Therefore, debt either creates or reinforces hierarchy.

This is the reason why moral traditions, such as Christianity, preach that true charity must be anonymous, since that is a way that the gift does not incur debt. As we saw earlier, in reference to the Maussian maxim, a gift begets another gift. Even a pious and kind-hearted person may be giving charity for personal motives; one could be subconsciously acting from the shadow side, donating to charity to assuage guilt, to reinforce class divisions, for self-aggrandizement, or to attempt to control the recipient. In the case of an anonymous donor, those motives may still be present, but they are removed from the equation. This is the spirit of Santa Claus, Saint Nicholas, at Christmas: gifts from Santa Claus are anonymous, incur no debts, and are not accompanied by an obligation to reciprocate. Clearly, in the ritual of the

holiday families and friends do exchange gifts in a reciprocal manner, but this does not contradict the energetic principle behind the moral teaching of anonymous charity.

There is an apparent paradox here. It hardly makes sense to have a social system based on hierarchy but then have a key point in the moral philosophy be to usurp the hierarchy. Graeber states that this paradox can be found in Christianity as well as in Vedic scriptures. Christian and Vedic teachings “end up making the same curious move: first describing all morality as debt, but then, in their very manner of doing so, demonstrating that morality cannot really be reduced to debt, that it must be grounded in something else” (Graeber 2011:89). This is the bind of moral perspectives: by rejecting the energetic perspective, the metaphorical language of moral worldviews is trapped in the binary logic of debt. The binary logic dictates that there must be a debtor and a creditor in a hierarchical relationship. This is why Graeber points out the conundrum of framing primordial debt as debt at all. If we repay the debt to our parents by becoming parents, why not *pass on the gift* from our parents by becoming parents? I posit that this shift in grammatical phrasing took place with the shift from energetic to moral worldviews, from peace out of fertility, in which life is a gift to be shared and passed on, to peace out of justice, in which life is a debt that is owed to an external creator God, that has already been described in the theories of Jaspers and Sigrist, citing the plough and monotheism as among the catalysts of the epistemological transference.

Returning to Dietrich’s argument on the threshold between energetic and moral worldviews, we can see how debt, hierarchy, and monotheism are interconnected. Dietrich makes the cogent argument (Dietrich 2012) that transitions from polytheistic energetic



traditions to monotheistic moral traditions historically occurred in a time of crisis in which, in order to ensure the social body's survival, special powers of protection were entrusted to one person, a protector or father figure. Once the crisis had passed, the society did not return to normal, moreover, authority became concentrated on a single man. This led to the imagination of a single deity and the conflation of god as father. What this also means is that there is a distinct hierarchy to society with God at the top, followed by the male representative of God on Earth, likely an inner circle of the politburo, and then the commoners and thralls. Debt is an economic expression of the restraints of the social hierarchy.

The second aspect of economic relationships in moral worldviews is that of mutual aid. By mutual aid I mean that the personal bonds of allegiance are of greater importance than the goods that are changing hands. Spruyt juxtaposes the moral worldview of mediaeval Europe with the modern sentiments of the rising bourgeoisie.

The business-person depersonalizes ties. Contracts between entrepreneurs are not the same as the contract of lord and liege. The latter is personal. Business contracts are upheld merely for the exchange of commodities, not because they signify some deeper bond. If service is required, it is depersonalized, circumscribed for a particular time and amount. One is buyer or seller, role players in the circulation of goods. (Spruyt, 1994:75)

Modern worldviews depersonalize economic transactions sloughing them off as being just business. Moral worldviews (as well as energetic) perceive the bond of the hierarchy of relationships to be more important than the circulation of commodities for competitive advantage. It is just as the mediaeval Islamic merchants of the Indian Ocean sealed their deals with a handshake and the glance towards heaven (Goody 1996:91 in Graeber 2011:277). There is a faith in their name and trustworthiness; their own relationship

outweighs the importance of whatever commodity was being transacted. This is the basis for the spirit of mutual aid, or mutuality, that I mentioned.

Moral worldviews are organized by social strata, of which the Hindu caste system is an example. However, within the classes, strata, or castes, we find relative equals. It is in these cases that the relational aspects of mutual aid become most apparent. Looking back at Graeber's framework of economic *modi operandi*, within social classes we are more likely to find examples of baseline communism at play. David Graeber uses the concept of a "communism of the rich" (Graeber 2011:326), which is an example of baseline communism as a fundamental operational principle within a social class. This is witnessed as "extending credit to one another on easy terms that they would never think to offer others" (Graeber 2011:231). This behaviour is not exclusive to the rich or any particular class. In small communities, rather than large impersonal cities, it can be very difficult to refuse a request from anyone who is considered to belong to the community (Graeber 2011:98). In this way we can see that there is mutual aid within a given community (social class) even if there is a hierarchy outside of it.

A moral interpretation of peace is in fact how one treats members of one's own family. This is how we treat people about whom we really care. Therefore, to be bound to baseline communism within one's family, community, or tribe is an expression of moral interpretations of peace. For comparison, purely energetic perspectives determine how to treat someone based on the specific context and circumstances. Modern perspectives extend the peace of the family out to the citizen, which in most cases includes all of the human beings living within the territory of a given nation-state. Postmodern interpretations extend

the peace of rights out beyond the borders of the nation-state to all the human beings in the world in the form of universal declarations of human rights. Such universalism, in the face of infinite diversity inevitable dissolves and fold back on itself, thus resembling the relativistic perspectives of energetic approaches. Transrational approaches acknowledge that relationships are always context specific, that family ties are always the strongest relationships, and that there may be times to treat a stranger like family and there may be times to treat family like a stranger.

European socio-political organizations that preceded the nation-state can be seen as some examples of relationality on the social level under moral principles. The Holy Roman Empire and the Hanseatic League are salient examples. Voltaire observed that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire (Voltaire 1756): it was political; it was German; and it and it was an agglomeration of kingdoms, principalities, duchies, counties, and free imperial cities. It was a socio-political structure based on layers of relationships of allegiance and religious affiliation. The relationship of a duke with the emperor is far more personal than a citizen with her government in a modern democratic nation-state, or rather in the Westminster parliamentary system, Members of Parliament do not owe the same allegiance to the Prime Minister that dukes owed to the Emperor. The Hanseatic League was an association of merchants in port cities primarily around the Baltic Sea, which extended as far as London, England, and Bergen, Norway. Merchants in disparate cities, in expression of their commitment to mutual aid, were able to band together which was solidarity based on relationships of trust for a common benefit: as the motto inscribed above the Holstein gate of Lübeck read, *Concordia domi. Foris pax*: unity at home, peace

abroad.

As an example of moral perspectives on social organization, the Hanseatic League can be clearly contrasted with the modern nation-state. The Hanseatic League was denied equal participation in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648)(Spruyt 1994:16), which was a defining moment in the discourse of the sovereign territorial state. From that moment on, there was a distinct separation between what was a legitimate political unit and what was not. The sovereign nation-state, the participants in the Peace of Westphalia, became the legitimate actors for the new unfolding modern cosmovision, and a loose association of merchant guilds based on reputation and trust across many cities, countries, and jurisdictions was figuratively not invited to sit at the grown-ups' table.

An example such as the Hansa underlines the role of mutual aid and interdependency of moral perspectives. It is in fact the purpose of the divine hierarchy, in moral perspectives, to nurture and preserve the mutual aid and interdependency. If the peasants provided the food, the priests provided the spiritual guidance, and the lords provided protection, there was no one calculating an objective standard to see if the lords were providing enough protection or the priests were praying enough: it sufficed that this was the arrangement. My argument is that this is a dividing line between moral and modern perspectives. This is not to say that moral perspectives do not have and actively use money, equivalencies, standards, and weights and measures; those are all active ingredients in moral worldviews. The bonds of one's role in social life, one's place in the big scheme of things, is a chief organizing principle rather than a unified and standardized objective measure of value that would allow the divine hierarchy to become unbalanced by giving proof, mathematically expressed

argumentation backed by the epistemological gravitas of scientific objectivity, that someone is not pulling his or her weight in the arrangement.

Graeber echoes the conceptualization of economics as mutual aid when describing the Islamic mercantile period under the Abassid Caliphate (Graeber 2011:271-282). The merchant domination of mediaeval Islam in the Indian Ocean was about mutual aid and not based on competition. It is a moral argument to keep things the same and stable and a characterization of moral perspectives to hold mutual interdependence in high regard. Graeber summarizes the arguments of the mediaeval Persian Islamic scholar Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201–1274), who claimed that society is based on our natural differences that make us able to engage in mutual aid.

[...] divine providence has arranged us to have different abilities, desires, and inclinations. The market is simply one manifestation of this more general principle of mutual aid, of the matching of, abilities (supply) and needs (demand)—or to translate it into my own earlier terms, it is not only founded on, but is itself an extension of the kind of baseline communism on which any society must ultimately rest. (Graeber 2011:280)

Furthermore, the Islamic economic system was able to establish itself as a de facto free-market with near global range at arm's length from the state precisely because of the prohibition of usury. Religious norms occupied the place of the state in other times; in modern economies, police and prisons limit thieving rather than the powers of church, mosque, or temple. As such, worldviews emerge that are focused on mutual aid in a larger brotherhood (the *Ummah*) rather than on competition.

But the very fact that this was, in a certain way, a genuine free market, not one created by the government and backed by its police and prisons—a world of handshake deals and paper promises backed only by the integrity of the signer—meant that it could never really become the world imagined by those who later adopted many of the same ideas and

arguments: one of purely self-interested individuals vying for material advantage by any means at hand. (Graeber 2011:282)

Although there are clear characteristics of free-market ideology in these examples from mediaeval Islam, it is clear that there is also a philosophical underpinning that is substantially different: moral perspectives embrace mutual aid as an organizing principle.

During this period of muslim merchants in the Middle Ages, the Indian Ocean effectively became a Muslim lake. “Muslim traders appear to have played a key role in establishing the principle that kings and their armies should keep their quarrels on dry land; the seas were to be a zone of peaceful commerce” (Graeber 2011:277). Islamic economic philosophy was also not opposed to profit; the honest pursuit profit was not seen as intrinsically immoral (Graeber 2011:275). Furthermore, the prohibition of usury did not stymie the use of credit instruments, in fact, both the pursuit of profit and use of credit flourished in the early centuries of the Caliphate (Graeber 2011:275). The prohibition of usury, however, was a distinct break from the empires of the past, which placed the Abbasid Caliphate on new moral ground: “Once freed from its ancient scourges of debt and slavery, the local bazaar had become, for most, not a place of moral danger, but the very opposite: the highest expression of the human freedom and communal solidarity, and thus to be protected assiduously from state intrusion” (Graeber 2011:278-279).

Since moral economic relations are based on patterns of relationships, one’s reputation plays an important role. Whereas the adage “you are only as good as your last day,” seems to be popular in the free-market economy of private enterprise, meaning that your reputation is not worth anything if you cannot produce results, reputation in moral perspectives is a form of capital. It may be comparable to the market value of a well-known

brand name or logo, which itself may guarantee market penetration even if the product it is stamped on is less than ideal. The cheque is said to originate in the early years of the Abbasid Caliphate (Glubb 1988:105) from the Arabic term *sakk* (Graeber 2011:275). The value of a cheque, rather than silver or gold, “was based almost entirely on trust and reputation” (Graeber 2011:276). In the case of a “partnership of good reputation,” a person could be extended credit based on reputation alone, making it better than, if not just as good as capital. One’s name was the mediaeval equivalent of Standard & Poor. Moreover, as has been alluded to already, Islamic merchants “shunned enforceable contracts, preferring to seal transactions “with a handshake and a glance at heaven”” (Graeber 2011:277).

Another note on mutual aid is relevant at this point. When we are talking of the Islamic merchants of the Caliphate, they were not sailing from the Arabian peninsula to the islands of Indonesia to trade rutabaga and cabbage. The items traded were luxury items: spices, fine cloths, precious stones, and the like. “Neither with the ancients, nor during the early Middle Ages—this should be emphatically asserted—were the goods of every day life regularly bought and sold” (Bücher 1904, cited in Polanyi, 1944:189-190). The market was not a place for the elementary needs of subsistence. Graeber mentions that Islamic ethicists, such as the theologian Ghazali (1058–1111), enjoined Islamic merchants to charge more to the rich in order to be more lenient to the poor (Graeber 2011:280). Echoes of this moral sentiment can be heard reverberating in the redistributive mechanisms of the modern welfare state, in the tales of the English folkloric hero Robin Hood who robbed from the rich to give to the poor, and in Christian doctrine in Luke 6:35<sup>19</sup> to “lend, hoping for nothing again.”

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19 “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”

Before the rise of the nation-state as the dominant unit of political interaction, identities were much more based on relationships, kinship, religion, or networks of loyalty, agreements, mutual aid, dependency, and submission (Spruyt 1994:67). By contrast, the territorial state is based on finite, demarcated, three-dimensional and Euclidian, space, and not on relationships. The juxtaposition of a territorial state with clear geographical borders against the Holy Roman Empire, being a vast agglomeration of relationships can be compared to Wolfgang Sach's juxtaposition of space and place (Sachs 1992). The territorial nation-state is thus under the logic of space, an abstract set of coordinates on the Cartesian grid of the surface of the Earth, and the Holy Roman Empire is under the logic of place, in which the place, one's physical location, has a thickness, a perceptible affinity. "This presence, naturally, is lived out in particular physical settings like piazzas or streets, mountains or seashores. And these locations are in turn imbued with experience past and present. They become places of density and depth. Therefore certain places have a special 'thickness' for certain people" (Sachs 1992:121). Sachs continues, saying that, "Ever since the temples of Tenochtitlan were destroyed in Mexico and a Spanish cathedral built out of their stones, European colonialism has been busy ravaging place-centred cultures and imposing on them space-centred values" (Sachs 1992:121). Following this differentiation, modern economics is a space-centred approach, whereas moral perspectives (also energetic, postmodern, and transrational) are place-centred approaches.

The paradigm shift from moral perspectives to modern perspectives runs along these lines. Differences between space and place will show up again in discussions on environment. However, as space-centred values begin to become more prevalent, there is an



entire web of other logical corollaries that accompany this shift. As I personally embrace a perspective that includes complex systems, I am implying that these changes occur hand-in-hand, as the expression goes, rather than implying that a shift from place to space orientation is the definitive causal factor that precipitates modern thought. In moral social structures, the food produced by the peasants is distributed and may belong, as much as that word holds any meaning, to the church or the Lord of the manor. Possibly as an extension of the idea of space-centred worldviews, philosophers such as John Locke began to establish the idea of a private sphere. Locke wrote in defence of private property, arguing that it is through one's labour that value is given to nature and one has a right to the outcome of that labour. The idea that the producer has a right, either divine or legal, to the products of his or her labour is in stark contrast to the social arrangements of hierarchy and delicately arranged strata. This is the beginning of the rights' discourse.

There is one final point that should be touched upon before this section is closed. It is the status of the soul. What we saw in the chapter on energetic perspectives is that the soul, human or otherwise, can be likened to a wavelet on the surface of the ocean: there is an infinite number of waves and ripples rising and passing away. Even though every wave may be unique, they are never more than a momentary manifestation of one small part of the vast ocean. Moral traditions, by contrast, especially the Abrahamic faiths, believe in a unique and immortal soul. We shall hold this thought in mind especially for the next chapter as it is the beginning of individualism, the nation-state, and an international system based on unique and immortal individual states.

## ***Gold is Money***

This section will look at how moral interpretations of money view money. Using Graeber's framework of bullion and credit, we will look at moral perspectives as being bullion. I also include in moral money the possibility of deictic money, that is something standing in for the bullion, which then is tied to relationships, much like a cheque is money but between two defined people, and is but an inferior substitute for the real gold or silver. Since bullion currency is so closely tied to gold, this section will also take a closer look at gold. Finally, the concept of spheres of exchange will be fleshed out as an example of moral perspectives.

The difference between moral and modern conceptions of currency are subtle yet important. Moral perspectives see that gold is money and money is gold; this is the defining idea of a bullion currency. Modern money is when the sign becomes money. That is, when the dollar bill (the sign) that represents gold bullion (the signified) becomes the referent, when the sign is separated from the signified and becomes the meaning of money in the popular imagination. I mentioned that moral money can still have this deictic quality that characterizes modern currency, however, the key difference is that moral perspectives still recognize the sign as a sign and maintain that real value is in the bullion, the signified, rather than in the sign. Modern currency shifts the focus on to the sign. To continue these analogies through the families, if modern money represents stuff, then postmodern money represents another representation an exact copy of itself in a Möbius loop of signifying itself but nothing. It may appear to be a logical and linear progression from energetic to postmodern perspectives. Energetic worldviews typically see an object, money (for lack of a better term), as a token standing in for a symbolic exchange, then the token is itself valuable (moral), then

a new token is created to refer to the value (modern), and then even that is washed away (postmodern). Rather, just like the metaphor of the Möbius loop, the postmodern folds back on itself and becomes like energetic perspectives — a symbolic exchange. Once again I would like to refer to Graeber's theory (2011) that history oscillates between two extreme poles of bullion currency or credit systems and moral perspectives align with models of bullion currency.

Money is a thing in moral perspectives. The thing could really be anything, but the most popular thing is gold. The question of what makes gold so attractive as a medium of exchange will be addressed a bit later in this section. At this juncture the point that is being made is that moral money is a concrete object that is perceived to have an intrinsic value. As such, I characterize moral perspectives on economics to be focused on use-value more than exchange-value. The value is perceived in the physical things themselves rather than in their ability to be transferred. As an extension of this line of thinking, I maintain that the idea of a backed currency, that money needs to be exchangeable for some commodity of "real" value, follows moral understandings. It may be confusing because I also use the example of a monetary system based on the gold standard as the defining example of modern worldviews, however, there are some key differences that I will make clear. Furthermore, the concept of fiat money, money that is declared into existence by an authority and is not backed by a commodity, is an example of a postmodern interpretation of currency.

Moral money can also be deictic. Although I am using the framework of moral money as being a bullion currency, it is still possible to have another object, such as a paper note, a cheque, a bill of exchange, that points to the bullion. The difference between moral and

modern worldviews is which one is perceived as being more real — the paper note or the gold bullion it represents? I maintain that deictic currency is an example of moral perspectives as long as it is perceived as being less real than the bullion that it represents. Modern perspectives require the existence of the bullion to create the discourse of the value of the paper currency, but the value of the sign effectively trumps the signified. Waswo asserts that mediaeval European philosophers were very familiar with paper credit instruments and yet their thoughts on the matter were grounded in a physicality.

None of these long-established practices [e.g. bills of exchange], by which fiduciary paper functions and circulates as money, nor even the very idea of credit, is ever mentioned in the reflections about money of Copernicus [1473-1543], Bodin [1530-1596], or W. S. [William Shakespeare 1564-1616] for they cannot conceive of money as a pure instrumentality, whose value is determined by what it can perform, and not by what it is or contains as an object. (Waswo 1996:15)

According to Waswo, credit exists, to be sure, but the concept of completely separating money from physical objects of intrinsic value does not even occur to writers such as Copernicus, Bodin, or Shakespeare. What makes the modern dollar bill so attractive is its pure instrumentality: it is anonymous, completely fungible, and nearly universally accepted. Moral deictic currencies, on the other hand, are tied to real people. A cheque, for example, is a moral instrument in that it is always a relationship between two specified people. Even if it is endorsed over to another person, effectively becoming currency, it is still an agreement between two people whose identities and names are specified on the document.

Money, in the family of moral worldviews, has a physicality to it. Thus, units of measurement are practical and grounded. The Made Beaver is an example of a currency from Canada, in use from the seventeenth century until the early twentieth century, that was “a

prime winter beaver skin taken in good condition” (Gingras 1968:39). The Hudson’s Bay Company issued a coin in exchange for a beaver pelt. This was a commodity currency backed by something very real: the skin of a dead mammal. During the Edo period in Japan, a unit of measurement was used, the *koku* (石), that was defined as the amount of rice needed to feed one person for a year (approximately 278.3 litres, weighing about 150 kilograms), and was also used to measure the economic output of each *han* (藩) fiefdom, including those that did not produce any rice (Beasley 1972:14-15). In ancient Sumer (c 2000 BCE), the base monetary unit, the silver shekel, was divided into sixty minas, and one mina was equivalent to one ration of barley (Graeber 2011:39), a ratio that was established by law as in the Laws of Eshnunna (Yaron 1969). In the Icelandic language, the words for money (*peningur* and *fé*) also refer to livestock, and *fé*, the genitive form of which *ffár* is used in compound words to mean finance, literally means sheep, implying that, in the not too distant past, the size of one’s flock was the ultimate definition of wealth and currency. The French Physiocrats,<sup>20</sup> a group of economists active in the eighteenth century who believed that all real wealth came from agriculture, are an example of a moral perspective, perhaps a throwback since they were contending philosophically with the rising tide of modern theories emerging from Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill, grounded in the aspect of physicality.

A logical consequence of attaching a physicality to money is that real physical objects wear out. Even mountains are worn down by the passing of time. This can be understood in contrast to modern perspectives in which money is abstracted from physicality and is a pure symbol standing in for something physical. Moreover, in postmodern frames, money becomes a symbol of a symbol. The difference between physical substances and money is

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<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the most prominent representative of the Physiocrats is François Quesnay (1694-1776).

that all material objects decay, whereas money, since it is a symbol and exists in the abstract realm of ideas, is not subject to the same physical laws of nature. An obvious objection to this assertion is that gold does not decay, however, we will come back to this point a bit later. The assumption of a physicality of money implies then that approaches that advocate the decay of money or place limits on the growth of capital are rooted in moral epistemologies and reflect moral perspectives. This dovetails with the previously discussed forbiddance of usury, since usury allows money to be a productive force in itself (recall that this was rejected by Aristotle and Aquinas), and thus grow infinitely and, since without a countervailing decay, unnaturally. The assumption that capital *should* grow, a derivative of the imagination of unlimited growth, is clearly rooted in the epistemologies of modern thinking.

As if to prove my point, Georg Simmel writes about this precise point, arguing himself that the conceptual connection to the physical representations of money rendered it virtually impossible to envisage money as pure instrumentality.

All the misgivings of the Middle Ages about the taking of interest arise from the fact that money then appeared to be, and actually was, much more solid and substantial, more starkly contrasted with other things, than in modern times when it appears and operates in a much more dynamic, variable and pliable way. The adoption of the Aristotelian doctrine that it is unnatural for money to engender money; the condemnation of interest as theft, because the capital repaid equals the borrowed capital; the argument in favour of this interpretation by Alexander of Hales, that money did not wear out by use and that it was not profitable, as were the objects of a lease, to the creditor; the doctrine of Aquinas that in the case of money, whose sole end is to be spent, use and spending were identical, and that therefore the use of money, unlike the use of a house, could not be sold separately – all these doctrines illustrate how inflexible and dissociated from the fluctuations of life money appeared, how little it was regarded as a productive power. (Simmel 1900:169)

Simmel, obviously writing from a modern perspective, writes of the attachment to the

physical aspect of money and its derivative implications in social norms (what we might call “economic policy”) as an antiquated perspective that fails to see money as a productive power. For Simmel, money does not have a function, it is a function. Furthermore, banning usury is thus directly related to money being perceived as a commodity, something physical, rather than being reduced to its purely conceptual nature as a function of interaction. It is only when money is divorced from its physical body, just as the mind is rent from the body by the Cartesian split, that it becomes possible to imagine concepts such as usury, money as a pure function, or the productive potential of capital.

There are many examples from Europe, from the Middle Ages to modern times, of currency systems based on demurrage. Demurrage refers principally to the cost of holding onto money. In reference to the concept of the natural propensity to decay, Charles Eisenstein uses equally the terms demurrage, depreciating currency, or negative interest (2011:205). The Brakteaten system of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries in Europe employed thin local coins made from gold and silver that were recalled yearly, reminted, and devalued, thus creating annual demurrage (Kennedy 1995:90). The Anglo-Saxon Kings in England (757 - 1066 CE) “recoined silver pennies every six years, issuing three for every four taken in, for a depreciation rate of about 4 percent per year” (Eisenstein 2011:206 referring to Zarlenga 2002:253).

The examples of currency demurrage are not isolated to Europe. In 1936, the Social Credit government of the Canadian province of Alberta issued a stamp scrip called prosperity certificates. This move was an attempt to inject needed currency into an economy that was wracked by the effects of the Great Depression. Notes were issued in one and five-dollar

denominations and required a one-cent stamp to be affixed to the certificate at the end of each week in order for the certificate to maintain its validity. This amounts to a demurrage charge of 1% per week. The plan was for the program to run for a full two years, totalling 104 stamps required (\$1.04) to keep one dollar in circulation, meaning that “the state would have enough money to redeem the note, with four cents profit” (Boulding 1946:145). Although the program was scrapped after one year, it was arguably successful in increasing the purchasing power of workers while its net effects for productivity, the economy, and the government of Alberta are disputed by the sources.

The theories of demurrage gained popularity in the last century through the work of Silvio Gesell (1862-1930), who used the term *Freigeld*. *Freigeld*, ‘free money’ in German, refers to a system of demurrage or negative interest. Gesell’s theories of *Freigeld* caught the interest of the notable US American economist Irving Fisher who elaborated on them in his book *Stamp Scrip* (Fisher 1933). I will list three notable examples of the implementation of Gesell’s theories. It was famously put into action in Wörgl, Tyrol, Austria. Faced with unemployment in his Tyrolean town, mayor Michael Unterguggenberger, familiar with Gesell’s ideas, decided to implement an emergency currency in the form of a depreciating stamp scrip. Beginning in 1932 it predated the Albertan example and also lasted for a year until the Austrian central bank put the kibosh on the whole affair. It was successful in returning people to work and increasing purchasing power throughout the town (Lietaer 2001:153-155; Ottacher 2001; Rohrbach 2007). The second example was even earlier, implemented in 1931 in Schwanenkirchen, Germany. Hans Timm and Helmut Rödiger were physiocrats, the branch of thinking that sees all value coming from Mother Nature rather than



from exchange, and founded the Wära Currency Agency, which included businesses from all over the German Reich. Wära was the name of their parallel depreciating currency, which derived from *Währung*, German for ‘currency.’ Max Hebecker acquired a bankrupt coal mine in the vicinity and with financing through the Wära Currency agency in Erfurt, was able to put people back to work paying workers two-thirds their salary in Wära rather than in Reichsmarks. The experiment was disbanded later the same year, 1931. In Schwanenkirchen, as well as in Wörgl, the parallel currencies were perceived as a threat to the state monopoly on issuing currency (Jacobs 1996:398-400; Fisher 1933). Furthermore, the WIR Bank in Zürich, Switzerland was founded on the principles of demurrage, a negative interest banking system, and the creation of a parallel currency, namely the WIR Franc. The name WIR is a clever play on words, being an abbreviation of *Wirtschaftsring*, ‘business circle’ in German, and also being the German word for ‘we.’ The bank was originally founded in 1936 by Werner Zimmerman and Paul Enz amongst fourteen others who were moreover inspired by the philosophies of Silvio Gesell and the theories of Freigeld. Although the WIR bank has distanced itself from the theories of Gesell and no longer charges demurrage or negative interest rates, it continues to offer only low interest rates, and is a current and contemporary example of an alternative banking system (Studer 1998).

An example like the WIR Bank in Switzerland is really the continuation of a long-standing tradition that are the moral perspectives. As has been previously stressed, the idea that money cannot be a productive force itself can be traced back to Aristotle. Demurrage is a continuation of this Aristotelian doctrine, adding that money, like any physical substance, must also decline and decay; both perpetual growth and immortality are unnatural. However,

banking and financial services flourished under the Abbasid Caliphate under a system of prohibition of usury. Rather than charging interest, investors are rewarded by a share of the profits (or losses) of the venture. A loan is like a marriage, a long-term commitment to each others' prosperity, and it is in this way that we can see the mediaeval Islamic notion of commerce as an extension of mutual aid. The glance towards heaven is a prayer in the ceremony of ensuring communal prosperity. This tradition is continued in contemporary society under the name of the Islamic banking system, which functions similarly to modern banks with the exception that the word "interest" is not used. Although this tradition can be traced back to the commercial practices under the Caliphate, I consider the Islamic banking system to be a postmodern phenomenon. It arose in the twentieth century as an attempt to fit within the parameters of modernity and the dominant model of Wallerstein's world capitalist system and yet still comply with Shariah (Ariff & Iqbal 2011:xii).

Demurrage encourages spending. If my money will depreciate if I hold it, it is better to spend it now and try to invest in something that might hold its value longer. With the experience of stamp scrip, it often occurred that shops were reluctant to accept the currency as the date approached to buy and affix the stamp that proved the payment of the demurrage charge. This created a game of hot-potato with everyone trying to get rid of the cash as quickly as possible and no one wanted to be stuck with it on the expiry date, thus incurring the charge in order to keep it circulating. This obviously stimulates economic activity, especially boosting it as the expiry approaches. "It might get to the point," observes Kenneth Boulding (Boulding 1946:145), "where nobody would accept it at all, except at a discount; then it would virtually cease to be money." This may sound similar to Keynesian economics,

especially Keynes' theory of reducing interest rates to stimulate spending as laid out in his *General Theory of Money, Employment and Interest* (1936), and in fact Keynes was inspired by the theories of Gesell. Since there is no promise of positive interest rates, there is no incentive to let cash reserves accumulate. The question may arise whether such a policy would create a society of spendthrifts. I do not believe that, within moral worldviews, demurrage eliminates the incentive to save or to keep reserves for resiliency, rather it is true to the assumption of the physicality of money that it too has a cost. A stockpile of grain is a necessary resilience factor, but it has a cost that a certain percentage of the grain will spoil, and following the same logic, a stockpile of cash is necessary for the proverbial rainy day, but it too should come at a cost.

All of this refers back to the idea that moral paradigms have a connection to the natural processes of life. Money that grows endlessly and exponentially is unnatural. Exponential growth, the paradigm of compound interest, describes phenomena such as cell division in the growth of a bacterial culture, and yet it is not endless. Such growth depends on factors such as food supply and space; when they are used up, the exponential growth can turn into a bell curve. Debt, by contrast, is a total abstraction: a bunch of bananas will turn brown and rot; the debt of a bunch of bananas can persist indefinitely. Following this logic of a physicality of moral money, just as the bananas will rot away, you should be able to compost your debt, because is it not like all things, arising and passing away?

Since moral perspectives see money as a physical object, I also see it being typical of moral worldviews to choose physical things over money. This challenges economic orthodoxy, but viewing things through the lens of a moral worldview may help explain why

some people may choose payment in kind rather than in cash. In Humphrey's analysis of the Lhomi in Nepal, she notes that there is a preference for physical manifestations of wealth over cash. She notes that "inside the Lhomi economy money 'disappears' because it is not accumulated as a goal of wealth. A Lhomi counts himself rich by virtue of ownership of land, livestock, and valuables such as jewellery" (Humphrey 1985:63). Humphrey cites an example from Pang Dok, Nepal, in which she refers to Crump's (1981) term "sink" for the non-monetized economic sphere, and illustrates that people prefer grains to cash.

In Pang Dok, although a relatively fertile village, people simply do not normally accept money for rice. Rice can be used both as high prestige food and as a barter good in the trade with Tibet two days walk away. Money, on the other hand, is only useful in the bazaar, five days arduous walk away. Potatoes and garlic are occasionally sold for money in Pang Dok because they are produced here specifically for trade, and are no use in the Tibetan barter. The same is true of wool. But people here want wages in grains, not money. Contrary to orthodox economic views on money, even in terms of exchange-value, it is much better in the 'sink' to be paid in grains than money. (Humphrey 1985:62)

This example is particularly interesting because it blends "currencies" depending on relationships and situations; money exists but is not the all-pervading standard of value. It is only one part of a rainbow of relations. Furthermore, in line with moral worldviews, the definitions of riches and wealth, are rooted in physical things: land, animals, food, treasures. The author, Caroline Humphrey, asserts that money is not an end in itself. This point can be contrasted with modern worldviews in which it is a recurring characteristic that money is in fact an end in itself, or further, it is the only end worth pursuing.

A few words must be dedicated to the idea of standardization as seen in moral worldviews. I have previously alluded to spheres of exchange, and the discussion will return to that concept shortly. I characterize the standardization that can be seen in moral

worldviews as a small-scale, local standardization, much like spheres of exchange. They are rough and ready equivalencies that are commonly accepted. This is an important difference because it is limited in scope, both in breadth and depth, as contrasted against examples of standardization in modern worldviews. Moral versions of standardization are confined to a relatively small area and often extend only to a few different types of things.

Understood broadly, moral systems of currency require a bureaucracy. There needs to be an organized system of execution in order to try to create coinage that is roughly of equal weight and purity. “The very idea of a coin originated in the goal of standardization, so that each drachma, each stater, each shekel, and each yuan would be functionally identical” (Eisenstein 2011:xvi). This of course differs from the theory of the value of uniqueness, in which objects are of value because of their ability to carry a history and be a personified object. Eisenstein reiterates the argument that was laid out in the previous chapter.

The products of the human hand were unique as well, bearing through their distinguishing irregularities the signature of the maker. Here was the link between the two qualities of the sacred, connectedness and uniqueness: unique objects retain the mark of their origin, their unique place in the great matrix of being, their dependency on the rest of creation for their existence. Standardized objects, commodities, are uniform and therefore disembedded from relationship. (Eisenstein 2011:xviii)

Since standardized objects are in fact abstracted, as in pulled out, from their web of relationships, they require an organized apparatus to design, implement, and oversee such a complex enterprise. To explain this, we will return to Graeber’s account of the Sumerian shekel.

The basic monetary unit was the silver shekel. One shekel’s weight in silver was established as the equivalent of one gur, or bushel of barley. A shekel was subdivided into 60 minas, corresponding to one portion of barley—on the principle that there were 30 days in a month,

and Temple workers received two rations of barley every day. It's easy to see that "money" in this sense is in no way the product of commercial transactions. It was actually created by bureaucrats in order to keep track of resources and move things back and forth between departments. (Graeber 2011:39)

Graeber's analysis has two critical points in it. Firstly, it challenges the common wisdom that money came into being to eliminate the problem of the double-coincidence of wants and thus facilitate trade, once again busting the myth of barter. Secondly, it reasserts that money, far from being a natural state pre-dating the state, really requires (some form of) the state for its existence.

To further bolster this argument, Graeber claims that the evidence suggests that "the invention of coinage did little to make trade easier" (Graeber 2001:103). This was due to the diversity of political units, which is the problem of the small-scale standardization, and a symptom of the diversity that modernity abhors. City states (e.g. the Greek poleis) minted coins but trade between them still required scales to determine equivalency. Even though there may be an internal standardization within each polis, taken as an aggregate, a given territory could be quite diverse with every town having its own weights and measures making commerce an occupation for mathematicians and scientists. Within the Hanseatic League there were grumblings that the barrel sizes varied immensely from one port to another, thus a barrel of butter was never quite the same amount (Spruyt 1994:160).<sup>21</sup> Once again, this fits with the characteristics of moral worldviews, maintaining a small-scale standard, while still embracing large-scale diversity.

As was pointed out, standardization goes together with the invention of coinage,

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21 There was an effort to use the Rostock barrel as a standard, however, using the variation in measurements to one's advantage was common practice. "The common saying was that the Dutch preferred to sell wood rather than butter because of their use of extremely thick barrels" (Spruyt 1994:160).

which marks a pivotal point between energetic and moral worldviews. The object as being unique, personified, and inalienable from its creator morphs into the object as being indistinguishable, fungible, and anonymous.

Coinage first appears around the same time in Lydia, China, and India, sometime around 600-500 BCE (Graeber 2011:212). The evidence suggests that all three cases emerged independently since each place used a different metallurgical method to create the coins: the Greek coins were stamped, the Indian coins were punched, and the Chinese coins were cast (Schaps 2006). The common story is that coinage was created to pay mercenaries. It is a simple way to feed an army: give all your soldiers gold coins and then demand that everyone give you back some gold coins in taxes. You have just created a market for soldiers to get their needs met (Graeber 2011).

Another factor in the story, as Graeber tells it, is that money came into being because of the need to determine the exact equivalent of what you owe someone who might otherwise be inclined to kill you (Graeber 2011). Einzig points out that, “In Iceland as in other Nordic countries, the development of an advanced primitive monetary system had been largely the result of the requirements of the highly developed wergeld system” (Einzig 1966:262). Einzig’s observations echo Graeber’s thesis in that a system of equivalencies really comes out of a system of fines and how to compensate for damages. This comes back to the idea of the unpayable debt that was discussed in the previous chapter, that is an attempt to demonstrate publicly remorse for the wrong doing, acknowledgement of the irreversibility of the act, and an approximation in whatever form the social group recognizes as fair and valuable.

Coinage, or anything for that matter, was always in short supply and hence there were intricate lists of equivalencies in the law codes of northern Europe. One could pay up with almost whatever was at hand. The unit of account might be kumal slave girls in Ireland, *kúgildi* cow equivalents in Iceland, or deniers of silver, but they were just that: units. Since we are describing a moral system, it is a system of strict rules to keep everything just, fair, and orderly. The role of money here is not only the role of bullion money, commodity money, but also the role of a unit of account. What grounds it in the realm of moral perspectives is the normative framework and the fact that ultimately the expression of how the units are finally paid is in physical things.

This preamble is to bring up a question of little import but of great consequence. If anything can be used as a unit of account, slave girls, cows, or tally sticks, and those units of account can be paid in kind with whatever material is available and simply converted through equivalencies established by law, then why has gold so thoroughly enthralled the spirit of men for centuries? The evidence shows that money can be anything as a store of value, unit of account, or medium of exchange. What is it about gold that makes it the lexical equivalent of money?

Gold is a highly nonreactive metal. Gold atoms bond to each other and it takes a considerable amount of energy to break those bonds in order to allow gold to form compounds with other elements. This means that gold does not oxidize: it will not rust and flake away like iron; it will not turn green like copper. It is soft and malleable and easy to shape into coins. Pharaoh's gold or Aztec gold glitters the same a millennium ago as today. It is an earthly representation of immortality and a material touched by the divine. In the words



of Brian Rotman, “[...] gold as intrinsically beautiful, changeless, precious, immutable serves as the perfect icon of a God who is beautiful, changeless and so on” (Rotman 1987:22). Gold appears to symbolize the immortal and immutable, making it divine itself, but also a gift suitable for God. Graeber has put forth that all forms of money originate in that they are divine objects that are what is suitable to give to a god (Graeber 2011). In that sense it is obvious: gold is the perfect symbol for timeless and changeless money. The logical line drawn from gold to immortality to money is easily understandable, however, it is not a universal human experience. Knolle points out that although goldsmiths were knowledgeable and capable in the Americas, and gold and silver were plentiful, they were never used as a medium of exchange as in Europe (Knolle 1992:59). In moral perspectives the invocation of gold as divine is to be taken literally, however, in modern perspectives, the gold standard represents an idolization of a secular modern deity.

## **Spheres of Exchange**

One final concept that is of interest here is that of spheres of exchange. The term originates in anthropological literature from Paul Bohannon (1955) and Laura Bohannon in their work on the Tiv of Nigeria. The purpose here is not to present a litany of examples, rather just to name a few examples as evidence that the phenomenon does in fact exist and then relate it back to previously discussed concepts of fines and precedent. To sum up what spheres of exchange are, I will turn to the summary of Paul Sillitoe.

They are an arrangement where material objects are assigned to different spheres for transactional purposes. People freely exchange items within the same sphere and readily calculate their comparative values. But things in different spheres are not immediately exchangeable against one another, such that between spheres there is no ready conversion.

(Sillitoe 2006:1)

In the terms of moral perspectives, spheres of exchange recognize that within the divine hierarchy there are fundamentally different kinds of things. One can perhaps, contrary to the adage, compare apples and oranges, but maybe not apples and goats. Things of a similar ilk can be equivalent but there are other things that can never be equal and, continuing this fictional example, no amount of apples could ever equal a goat. To illustrate such phenomena, we shall look at some real life examples.

Graeber summarizes that the spheres of the Tiv can be separated into the three levels. The lowest is ordinary, consumption goods, followed by masculine prestige goods, and finally, rights in women (Graeber 2011:146-147). The subsistence sphere consists of okra, yams, grain and other such daily items; the sphere of prestige consists of items that might be likened to denominations of currency, *tugudu* cloth and brass rods (Bohannon 1955; Graeber 2011:146); the highest sphere was that of females who were eligible bachelorettes. Since they were completely separate, “no amount of okra could get you a brass rod, just as, in principle, no number of brass rods could give you full rights to a woman” (Graeber 2011:147). Graeber further describes a scenario in which it is possible to “game the system” (Graeber 2011:147-148) and transform one’s charisma and prestige into wives, but it should suffice to say that this appears to be precisely the kind of behaviour that spheres of exchange are inherently hedging against (Sillitoe 2006).

Returning again to example of the Lhomi of Nepal in the border regions with Tibet, Humphrey observes that trades do follow established precedent. She argues that clear spheres of exchange do not exist but rather refers to the established precedents as “tracks.”

One common argument of economists for the efficiency of money is that it limits the

number of price quotations necessary. All items can be quoted in money, whereas in a barter system everything has to be quoted against everything else. In practice, this is not the case. Although there are no clear 'spheres of exchange', many items are never traded for one another. The reasons for this are usually purely practical, e.g. cattle are too valuable to barter for transportable amounts of grain. Barter, in practice, follows limited and well-known 'tracks'. (Humphrey 1985:56-57)

In this particular case, even if there are no formal spheres of exchange, there are practical ones, which still provide what can be called rough and ready equivalencies. Grain is traded for salt and not for cattle. It may be further extrapolated that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to determine precisely how much grain a cow is worth, if one were so inclined to attempt it. This is evidence of some kind of separate sphere of exchange because one cannot be expressed in terms of the other: a new unit of comparison is needed.

Another example can be taken from the Mae-Enga people of Papua New Guinea. Citing the work of Mervyn J. Meggitt (1971), David Graeber sums up some of the inferences on value that can be made by looking at spheres of exchange, however, a more detailed account of the items in each of the six spheres can be found in Gregory's *Gifts and Commodities* (Gregory 1982:48-49).

Among the Mae-Enga for example, there are six different ranks of objects. The most exalted category includes only two sorts of things: live pigs and cassowary birds. One can exchange a pig for a cassowary, or two pigs, or two cassowaries for each other; but one cannot exchange a pig or cassowary for objects of any other category. The next category includes pearl-shell pendants, plume headdresses, and stone axes, which again can only be exchanged for each other, and not for anything higher or lower—and so on, down to the lowest sphere, which consists of ordinary foodstuffs. Thus, while one could perhaps say in the abstract that pigs are worth more than axes, this is all one can say. To speak of value, one would have to be able to say how much more: to establish just how many axes it would take to reach the value of one pig; and in the absence of exchange, such comparisons simply do

not take place. (Graeber 2001:41)

Graeber underscores the point here that is key to moral understandings. If there are different levels in the divine hierarchy of existence, establishing equivalencies between them is unthinkable. They belong to separate spheres of exchange because they are a different and incomparable class of object. This is a parallel distinction to social hierarchy found in places like mediaeval Europe: peasants, priests and lords are fundamentally different classes of people who cannot be compared and are definitely not equivalent.

Obviously at some point in history and culture this worldview gets shattered. The discourse of human rights does not use the logic of a divine hierarchy of fundamentally different types of human beings, rather, that there is a shared humanity and each individual has rights that cannot be infringed upon by another individual. The theory as to how the moral system of spheres of exchange was finally replaced by the modern system of abstract standard of value has already been described, however, I will recap it here in order to tie it specifically to spheres of exchange.

The theory that Graeber (2011) puts forward is that the quantification comes from some idea of a wergild, which is a kind of fine or charge for physical harm or death to a human being, but more likely a man. Debts and gifts between neighbours are common place and it is even a good idea to have your neighbours owe you one because they will be there in your time of need: my generosity now ensures my retainers in the future. However, people tend to become petty and things get ugly when there is injury to person and property. This is where, Graeber claims, the quantification of favours happens. All mediaeval European societies had some kind of law code that spelled out in accurate terms the equivalence of all

kinds of bodily injuries, household items, and livestock. Graeber writes extensively on the charges in the Irish law codes to damaging one's reputation (Graeber 2011:171-176). In the European examples these fines could be paid in bullion, in gold or silver if they were available, or in whatever was at hand, which was possible because almost everything was ranked in equivalencies in the codices of law. If you did not have any silver coins, maybe ermine pelts, or salted cod, or bushels of barley. Therefore, the need to be able to pay fines and penalties to redress grievances made it necessary to be able to equate more and more things to a single standard of value in order to ensure that the victim was properly compensated. Under these conditions, even if spheres of exchange existed, they would be eventually torn down by the need to liquidate personal assets in order to pay penalties. This change was pushed by the worldview of a peace out of material justice.

Spheres of exchange are based on precedent. The objects that are included in any given sphere are there by virtue of tradition. In these moral cosmologies, one cannot invoke reason as the arbiter of truth. Why is a pig worth a cassowary but not an axe? Perhaps there is some explanation in the cosmology of the Mae-Enga, however, the explanation itself is not at stake here. It is that the spheres of exchange are maintained by precedent and tradition and not by objective reason or scientific deduction. The established precedents, however, become further eroded because there is the same need to avoid being slighted. When paying an honour price to redeem myself for an insult to another man, I am obliged to pay as it is literally a matter of life or death. If I have axes and no pigs, I need to know how many axes equal a pig even if they are completely different, tools and livestock, and traditionally in separate spheres of exchange. The recipient also will want to make sure that if he is not

getting a pig in payment, he had better receive a fair number of axes; anything less would be an insult to his dignity and then the problem would be right back where it all started. It is in fact one of the strong points of modern perspectives to create a vast mechanism that enables precisely this kind of comparison of unlike objects by comparing the two to a third purportedly universal standard of value. The precedent serves a divine justice, but reason serves a secular justice. As this describes the shifting point between moral and modern understandings, we also see a shift in emphasis from divine justice to secular justice, and a shift from faith to reason.

## ***Stewardship***

From what has been already discussed, a lengthy explanation of attitudes towards the environment in moral perspectives is not needed. The salient points have already been addressed. In the divine hierarchy, God is at the top. On Earth, man is at the top, being the mundane representative of God on Earth. In his role on the cusp between God and the rest of existence, man has three imperatives in moral perspectives: separation, stewardship, and subduction.

Firstly, moral worldviews see mankind as separate from the rest of the cosmic fabric. Humankind is a privileged being, different from the environment. This place of privilege amongst God's creations is discursively recreated by re-enacting this place of privilege. Mankind further distances itself from the rest of nature by acting from a place of privilege, and that only further demonstrates the ostensible superiority of homo sapiens. By treating other animals as inferior to ourselves, we entrench the belief of superiority in our own minds

and further distance ourselves from the compassion towards the web of life.

In this way, men come to see some themselves as stewards of the environment. This is the belief that the flora, fauna, and minerals of this world were put here for us to use, and thus not to use them, as is argued by Christian climate change skeptics, would be to contradict God's will.<sup>22</sup> This sense of stewardship requires the moral separation from nature as it is only if man is separated over and above the trees and fish and fowl that it is possible to view them as a utility over which he has dominion. This sentiment is clearly expressed in Genesis 2:15-16, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." God has given the man (Adam) the great responsibility of tending to the garden of Eden. What is more, God has also seemingly given mankind the right to eat the fruits of all trees, meaning to take freely all the bounty of the Earth.

Subduction is the relationship of humankind to the natural world in the paradigm of moral peaces. It is a divine permission to rule over the creatures and subdue the Earth. It is in reference to the Biblical passage found in Genesis 1:28, "God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." This passage, found in the first chapter of the first book of the Old Testament, sums up more than any other moral understandings of the relationship between humankind and the natural world. By divine gift, we, humans, are privileged, over

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<sup>22</sup> The perspective of Christian blogger Rod Martin succinctly expresses this attitude: "The atmosphere is likely deficient in CO<sub>2</sub> compared with the original created atmosphere. Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> would definitely create problems, but increasing it will not. Burning fossil fuels merely returns CO<sub>2</sub> to its place of origin. Forests are to be used for man's benefit. They are not needed to produce O<sub>2</sub> and they have no intrinsic rights, but should be managed responsibly and effectively." (Martin 2010)

and above other creatures and we must, by divine vocation subdue the world and control it.

## ***Moral Peaces***

Moral peaces are predominantly peaces out of security and justice. In the framework of the quadrants, security and justice are both external peaces. They relate to behavioural and social aspects, rather than to internal (intentional and cultural) aspects. Although moral peaces require the monopoly of the One Truth in order to claim authority over security and justice, they are not peaces out of truth.

Moral peaces carry at their core energetic principles. Every norm in moral understandings of peace is an attempt to help people resonate with the primal energy. The norms, however, are universally applied rather than on a case by case basis. The norms themselves then take on a life of their own and thus become a completely different, yet in their own way cohesive and convincing, worldview. Dietrich describes how living in a time that was influenced by the ideas of plurality and relativism from the currents of postmodernism allowed him to conceive of energetic and moral peaces not as stark opposites but rather as siblings that complement and interact with one another.

That is why I did not need to necessarily subsume every empirical result under the two mentioned categories in order to be able to keep up the hypothesis. Concepts of peace beyond those categories seemed imaginable and did not frighten me, because I had assumed that I would not encounter a rude dualism between energetic and moral concepts of peace, but rather communicative patterns in social systems which, in the course of their changes, now and then might banish certain connections from people's consciousness. (Dietrich 2012:7)

It is in this way that although moral peaces can differ from energetic peaces in ontology and



epistemology, they are not necessarily in direct contradiction. They are located on opposite sides of the quadrants, thus reflecting internal and external aspects of peace and complementary aspects of a greater whole that remains beyond expression.

Moral peaces are external concepts of peace because they require an outside narrative for their power. Moral peaces require re-traumatization of people through the retelling and reenacting of a traumatic event. This is often a historical event that is replayed in the collective conscience as a chosen trauma that even defines the contours of the social group (we are the people who suffered this trauma). It is thus possible to maintain a state of fear because the chosen trauma, that particular Gestalt, is never completed — it remains opened and wounded. Consequently, people, entire societies, are kept in a state of exceptional crisis, fight or flight mode, because the trauma of the past is always engaged and the healing, the justice, is always coming at some omega point in the future.

If this vectoral understanding of societal time is connected to the material aspect of justice, then it is not far from an ideology that has revenge for injustice suffered in the past, hate towards others — the heretics — in the present, and greed for more of such justice in the future written on its banners. To link revenge with the past, hate with the present, and greed with the future results in a highly problematic ethic of peace. It is thus much rather a fear-driven and exclusionary legitimization of violence and war. (Dietrich 2012:75)

The linear timeline breaks with the feminine cycles of nature, which continue irrespective of the deeds of man, but whether or not their observance is a central organizing factor in the interpretation and understanding of reality is another question. In an institutional setting, the norm, no longer a guidance to promote resonance with the All-One, is first a tool of domination and then becomes a reason for being. The trauma of the past has to be activated through stories so that people feel fear. Fear is the way that people not only accept the

imposition of dominating norms, but greet them with open arms as a soothing balm to assuage the uncomfortable sensations of the repressed trauma. Fear awakens a need for security, the plea for justice, and the desire for truth, which is the flight from Eros to Phobos (Dietrich 2012); the love of the One turns into fear of everything that is not the One. Norms pretend to provide protection but really provide perpetuation because the norm becomes the institution's *raison d'être* and requires the continual activation of the fear to be seen as a defence against it. Moral peaces thus need a traumatizing origin and a teleological final goal.

Moral approaches to peace see the world in binary pairs. If the world is made up of good and bad, peace must be the good and not the bad. However, extirpating the evil is first an impossible task, and second is removing part of ourselves. Like cutting a magnet in twain, there only appears a new north pole. In fact, the attempt to eliminate the evil represses it, makes it stronger, it is unable to be expressed, smothered in shame when it shows itself, and is not only the seed of violence but is itself the purest expression of pathology as it represents the unbalance of the natural forces and the cosmic ballet of the dynamic equilibrium.

In contrast with yin-yang or the image of Shiva-Shakti, here the dualism of male and female does not unite to create cosmic harmony; instead this duality is thought of as an insurmountable antagonism between good and evil. The human being, under the threat of cruel punishment, is supposed to decide for the one and against the other. The assessment of good and evil does not reside relationally between human beings but with the creator god. He is above any will power and in possession of the absolute truth. (Dietrich 2012:76)

This way of thinking induces a mentality of control. We can accept that we can choose good over evil if we can believe that everything can be controlled. Security in a moral (or modern) sense may be the control of every variable, however, security from a transrational perspective is found in releasing the insecurity and knowing that one is capable of responding and

adapting to the situation.

Finally, in their most beautiful expression, moral perspectives can be relaxing. There is safety in submission to the moral hierarchy. One does not have to worry about whether her actions are good or bad, the rules are spelled out and there is a class of people, the clergy, whose job it is to interpret and communicate the will of God. If I am ever in doubt, I may turn to those people (men) to debate and contemplate and come up with the answers of what is right. All I have to do is tow the line and follow the rules. This can be a very satisfying position to take in a complex and capricious world.

### ***Conclusion of Moral Chapter***

Economics as seen from the perspective of moral peaces is based on a divine hierarchy. Man's role on Earth is to maintain the structure of the divine hierarchy; creative energy goes into re-creating the structure. Time is a linear construct in which a wrong in the past must be righted in the future. Time, however, belongs to God, and is morally (with some exceptions) beyond the purview of human commerce. Commerce, however, is based on personal relationships and is largely seen as an extension of mutual aid. Money is understood as bullion and although forms of credit instruments exist, they are perceived as secondary to physical expressions of wealth. Finally, mankind is located in the divine hierarchy above the natural world and as such, all animals, plants, and minerals exist for him to increase his wealth. Since peace is understood largely as justice, commerce fulfills divine justice by re-creating the divine hierarchy and secular justice by extending mutual aid.

As we look to the next chapter on modern approaches to economics, we can contrast

some of the aspects of moral understandings. To paraphrase psychologist Erich Fromm, in moral systems, capital is the servant of man, and in modern systems, man is the servant of capital; in moral systems, the end is spiritual salvation, and in modern systems the end is profit; profit as an end in itself would seem as irrational to a mediaeval philosopher as would its absence to modern economists (Fromm 1941:119).

## 4 Modern Economics

*To him that hath shall be given.*  
Mark 4:25; Matthew 13:12, 25:29

This chapter will elucidate how modern economics supports the creation of modern peaces. Of all of the chapters, of all of the families of peaces, this is the one we know; it is the water in which the modern fish swims. Whereas the energetic approach may seem quaint, yet unrealistic; the moral approach, superstitious; the postmodern, depressing; to a modern observer, the modern approach to economics reflects the cold, hard facts. Life is nasty, brutish and short (Hobbes 1651:76), nature is red in tooth and claw (Tennyson 1849); we all need money, resources are scarce, and one has to fight to get one's share. This should all be old news and as the modern cosmovision is the dominant and most ubiquitous in my cultural milieu; it is also the one about which the most has been written; it is the most elaborated, and the most critiqued. It would be presumptuous of me and equally beyond my scope to assume that the contents of this chapter might propose a new economic theory that central banks around the world could adopt, nor is this even the point. The purpose is to summarize the assumptions of modern economics, their successes and their critiques, and how they relate to modern peaces.

The modern approach has also been the battleground for intense philosophical debates, particularly of the twentieth century. Whether communism or capitalism was the true path to paradise on Earth or whether liberalists or physiocrats possessed the best formula for maximizing profits, all provided intellectual distraction from the modern sacred cows that

were beyond dispute: reason, objectivity, and the State. This loosely follows Descartes, Newton, and Hobbes, however, these connections will be taken up more extensively in the coming pages.

With these guiding lights in mind, we will pick up the threads that we have been tracing from the previous chapters. This chapter will open with a discussion of what modernity is and how it can be defined, which will lead to a working definition of modern economics. From there, the focus will turn to how time, justice, relationships, money, and peace are perceived in the modern perspective. Once again we shall see how these separate threads are one and the same, not only in how they are interwoven in this text, rather how a modern perception of time defines a perception of justice and therefore peace as well. The section on relationships will deal primarily with the nation-state, which is inextricably linked with assumptions of the nature of space-time. The thread of money or currency takes on special relevance in this chapter. Beginning from the assumptions of a modern perspective in which the absence of money is virtually unthinkable, it seemed a logical theme to follow. Had I begun from an energetic perspective, I may have traced the thread of the changing nature of the gift, rather than referring to currency. The final section will summarize by tying all of the threads back to the cardinal theme of perceptions and interpretations of peace.

I wish to present the modern cosmovision in the best light possible; that means a viewpoint that has a fixed point of orientation within the perspective. This is true of all of the families of peaces but is of particular importance for this, the family of modern peaces. My motivation for this topic is rooted in a deep discontentment with modernity, a nagging feeling that it is false, and an intense anger at the apparent futility of it all. Therefore, to put myself

in the seat of an advocate of modern peaces brings me face to face with aspects of my shadow self: my anger and fear. The premise of this entire thesis is that the modern cosmovision claims universality, but is incomplete, its promises are false, and that it should not be rejected totally. I intend for this chapter to express my admiration for the divine power of reason to cut through false assumptions, my gratitude for the surety that structure provides, and my awe at the efficiency with which capitalist economics can satisfy human needs, as well as being a scathing critique. It may be a razor's edge to walk.

### ***Defining Modernity***

The entirety of this chapter will address the question of what modernity is and what is a modern interpretation of economics. Unfortunately, in the end, no exhaustive answer will be provided; only tendencies. Nevertheless, we must embark on this voyage from the quay of working definitions. I will start with a short reflection on my own experiences with modernity which will segue into a presentation of different interpretations of modernity. This section will be concluded by outlining the the guidelines for an interpretation of economics from the modern worldview.

Before venturing into my university career, I had no idea about the philosophy of modernity. I had of course heard the words modern and modernity, but their meanings were simple: modern meant now — something new, technological, fashionable, and advancing away from obsolete traditional ways. This is worth mentioning because it is a rather modern perspective on modernity: modern is now and it is better than the past and it is a way of dealing, interpreting, and living, like a fashion, and, importantly, it is not to be questioned. In

fact, the term *modern* comes from the Latin *modo* meaning ‘just now.’ In this sense it has been used to denote a break with the past — the now that is different from the tradition.

## **Many Modernities**

Despite it being a rather unmodern thing to say, there is no one way to define modernity. As I follow Dietrich’s theory of the families of peaces, I also follow his view of modernity as a state of mind. As Eisenstadt (2000) has suggested, there are multiple modernities and enumerating the plethora of interesting theories and proposals would be nearly impossible and, for the purpose of this work, irrelevant. Nevertheless, some salient examples of multiple modernities include transmodernity (Sardar 2006), liquid modernity (Bauman 2000), second modernity (Beck 1986), vernacular modernity (Bubandt 2004), and Latin American modernity (or Neobaroque theories)(Kaup 2006). Despite this apparent diversity and inflected variations, it remains that modernity is a European phenomenon that thence spread to the rest of the world.

Modernity can firstly be seen as a time period. Modernity, seen thusly, is a historical epoch with a beginning and, perhaps, an end on a timeline, something akin to the Jurassic period. According to this view, modern times can be said to have begun with the Spanish voyages to the lands later to be known as the Americas, or in the common Eurocentric language, the discovery of the New World<sup>23</sup>. In this formulation the modern era began in 1492, at the end of the fifteenth century. This turning point in European history is further buttressed key by events that are instrumental in solidifying what is known today as modernity: the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg (1439); the publication of the

<sup>23</sup> Carl Schmitt (Schmitt 1950:87) argues that this is the historical turning point for the beginning of modernity since modern European politics is a result of the discovery of the New World.



first grammar textbook, the Nebrija Grammar of the Castilian Language (1492)<sup>24</sup>; the Reformation (1517); Galileo's apocryphal experiments on the speed of falling bodies (1586); René Descartes uttering his famous "*cogito ergo sum*" (1637); and the decline of feudalism (Sussman 1997) to name a few. The modern era has also been further divided into three time periods: early modernity, classical modernity (echoing Hobsbawm's long nineteenth century, 1789–1914)(Hobsbawm 1962; Hobsbawm 1975; Hobsbawm 1987), and late modernity (Berman 1982).

There may be a loose consensus on the commencement of the modern epoch, however, the ending, much like the end of the age of Pisces, is the subject of much more vigorous debate. One option is that it has not ended; either the times are still modern and are continuing as such (such as Beck 1986), or modern times will not come to an end because they are the fullest expression of human reason (Fukuyama 1992). If modern times have come to an end, this presents further problems of when that happened and what has taken its place. Günther Anders has proposed that the modern age came dramatically to an end on the sixth of August, 1945, when the first atomic bomb was detonated over Japan (Anders 1961).

Another possibility is that the modern age ended when Lyotard wrote *La condition postmoderne* (1972), thus marking the beginning of some kind of era of postmodernity. Postmodern perspectives is the topic of the next chapter and this will be further explored there, however, within the current of postmodernism, it has never been argued that postmodernity is a new temporal epoch that has supplanted modernity. Therefore, there is vociferous debate over the nature of contemporary times: are they still modern times, a new

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24 "Whoever before had just expressed himself could now on do so in either the right or the wrong manner according to a dualistic logic, through which his value, his belonging, his being thus and not other were determined." (Dietrich 2012:123-124)

phase of modernity (Bauman 2000; Beck 1986), postmodernity, a post-postmodernity (Turner 1995), or even something else (pseudomodernism or digimodernism, Kirby 2009).

For the purposes of this dissertation, it does not matter whether the early modern era began with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 or with the discovery of the Bahamas in 1492, nor is it essential if today is a modern day, a postmodern day, or a something-else-day. I have not taken upon myself the task of tackling the specific question of the nature of contemporary times vis-à-vis modernity, however, my answer to this question will unfold further throughout this chapter, the next chapter on postmodern approaches to economics and peace, and more specifically in the chapter on transrational approaches to economics and peace. Since I have adopted the position of focusing on viewing modernity as a discourse and as a state of mind, the question of a specific, longitudinal, and demarcated temporal period is not of central importance. It is important, however, to note that there are historical markers that define a time during which modernity as a state of mind arose as a dominant discourse and that those historical events have an impact on how the universe is interpreted and therefore what constitutes a good life.

I follow the understanding of modernity as a way of perceiving the world: a worldview; *Weltanschauung*; cosmovision; cosmology; paradigm — all terms that I use basically synonymously. Modernity as a state of mind is the definition that Wolfgang Dietrich uses in his exposition of modern peaces (Dietrich 2012) and since I am following his theory of the families of peaces, it is also in this way of perceiving modernity that I plant myself. It is an attitude toward life; a set of ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Dietrich constructs his framework for modern peaces on the three pillars of Hobbes

(nation-state), Newton (mechanism), and Descartes (reductionism)(Dietrich & Sützl 1997:283). The pantheon of patron saints of modernity can be expanded to include Galileo Galilei (empirical observation), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (social contract), Immanuel Kant (secular reason), Karl Marx (vectoral history), and Sigmund Freud (behavioural psychology). Undoubtedly, the list could go on. An obvious yet important observation to emphasize at this point is that, unlike the previous two paradigms, the tenets of modernity are inextricably tied to the names and reputations of individual people, and, furthermore, those people are invariably white, European, and men. Even including two of the most important characters with respect to modern economics, Adam Smith and David Ricardo, this pattern is not changed. That modernity is the product of the philosophy of white European men is an important aspect, but not the main detail. What is the focus is how modernity is a state of mind.

Modern peaces primarily come from justice and security as do the moral peaces as we have seen in the previous chapter. With this in mind, we may see that the modern paradigm is a continuation or an echo of the moral paradigm with one fundamental shift of Copernican proportions: God is replaced by reason. The rational and scientific, and therefore irrefutable, access to truth is the defining characteristic of modernity as a state of mind; all other points follow from this central one. It follows that the dual structure of this state of mind was inherited from the moral paradigm.

If an absolute good exists, it must be possible to differentiate it from bad. If it is possible to identify truth, it follows that one can separate it from untrue or false. If there is objective beauty, it must be the ugly or at least the less beautiful that is different. If a personal God represents these values, the believers will be obliged to comply with his commandments if

they do not want to follow Satan. If a Pope, a king or a cast<sup>25</sup> of high priests represents the One God on Earth and interprets his will, the subjects have to obey and follow, fulfill the law and respect the rules. We are so used to this narrative that we did not even consider to change it when we substituted God by reason. (Dietrich 2011:10)

The most direct and influential consequence of this dual nature of the modern state of mind is that there is a constant tension between these two poles. The obvious answer to relieve the tension is to eliminate the negative one. Since we are endowed with the faculty of reason, we have the ability to discern the good from the bad and we can progress from an ignorant past to an enlightened future — and we are always somewhere in the middle.

The modern state of mind is one based on reason. Reason gives us access to truth; the irrational must lead to falsehood and is thus discarded. The world is made up of objects that exist in physical space because our reasonable faculties tell us so, and the relationships between those objects are linear, knowable, and predictable. Therefore, since all is knowable, humankind can create the peaceful paradise on Earth that it desires. As such the modern mythology is constructed.

Modernity brought with it many gifts that, although breaks with tradition, were a welcome innovation. Scientific efficiency compels us to find ingenious ways to do more with less. Modern money allows for rational allocation through an objective and standardized method of comparing unlike things. Modern money is an objective metric for comparing apples and oranges. The shift from moral worldviews to modern worldviews was neither good nor bad but a time of change. However, Stephen Greenblatt sings the praises of the emerging modern cosmology in his description of the shift from moral to modern

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25 I assume that Dietrich means “caste” referring to the Hindu system of hereditary social classes, but equally “cast” as in ‘a theatrical troupe performing a show’ is a humorous and appropriate interpretation.

understandings of peace.

The transformation was not sudden or once-for-all, but it became increasingly possible to turn away from a preoccupation with angels and demons and immaterial causes and to focus instead on things in this world; to understand that humans are made of the same stuff as everything else and are part of the natural order; to conduct experiments without fearing that one is infringing on God's jealously guarded secrets; to question authorities and challenge received doctrines; to legitimate the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain; to imagine that there are other worlds beside the one that we inhabit; to entertain the thought that the sun is only one star in an infinite universe; to live an ethical life without reference to postmortem rewards and punishments; to contemplate without trembling the death of the soul. In short, it became possible — never easy, but possible — in the poet Auden's phrase to find the mortal world enough. (Greenblatt 2011:10-11)

In short, Greenblatt praises the strength of modernity: reason will uncover the truth that has remained hidden and obscured by superstition and falsehood. A better time is coming in the future as more and more truth is progressively revealed through the rigorous application of the human faculties of reason.

## **Defining Modern Economics**

Having established a working framework for a modern approach, we may turn to a question that is central to this investigation: what defines modern economics? The answer to this question is both complicated and facilitated by one tacit premise: economics is inherently modern. It makes no sense outside of the modern worldview to talk about economics or even "work." Every approach to modernity agrees on this one point: modernity is intertwined with the capitalist world system. A discussion then of nexuses between economics and peace must be part of the ontological structure of modernity.

The task of this chapter is to tease apart the definitions of modernity to show how

modern economics are conceived and defined and furthermore, how economics is implicitly assumed to be creating modern peaces. Modern economics are differentiated from the other families by the following criteria:

- Linear conception of time
- Reason
- Mathematical language
- Nation-state
- Market
- Money
- Interest
- Exchange-value
- Secular justice and security

All of the preceding points of definition will be briefly expanded here and then further elaborated in this chapter.

The first, possibly due to its ontological primacy, is the modern conception of time. A modern conception of economics, of life support and of trade, is based on the idea of linear time. The implications of linear conceptions of time were explored in the previous chapter on the moral approach and will re-emerge in the following chapters. Time proceeds relentlessly (and apparently uniformly) in one direction: from the past to the future. Time is finite and the clock is ticking, which provides a motivational impetus imbued with existential angst to get things done before it is too late. Because of the dual nature of modern thought, finite time is not just moving from past to future, but is also *progressing* from a bad past to a good future. In the same of vein of the modern perception of space-time, modern economics are clearly marked by the language of mathematics, which is the language of reason and universal truth in the modern paradigm. With the introduction of numbers, the mathematical models created the perfect modern way of viewing the housekeeping: a godless economics was the answer

for a rationality that had supplanted the divine. An absolute God was replaced by the absolute of numbers.

Peace out of justice and security are the peaces most closely associated with the modern family of peaces. It is, however, the secularization of these peaces that makes them distinctly modern, distinguishes them from the moral approach, and thus links them to the economy. The chapter will look at development discourse as the mechanism of a promise of justice and security through the filter of economics.

Probably the single most important distinction of a modern economics is the existence of the market. Above all it is the existence of market economy that is separate from other spheres of life. That means creative human endeavours, otherwise called labour, can be separated from other aspects of life and viewed in ostensible isolation. This separation of spheres of life is linked with the existence of the territorial nation-state. The nation-state is the unit of economy. Because of the authority and organizational power of the nation-state, modern economics is the scientific organization of labour.<sup>26</sup>

The final set of defining characteristics is that of money. The existence of a single standard of value by which it is possible to rank nearly everything follows from the modern tenets of rational objectivity. The invention of paper money, a medium of exchange that is divorced from a substance and that exists solely as a sign, sets the modern approach apart from the moral interpretations. Equally, the permission of charging interest, prohibited by the big three monotheistic religions as we saw in the previous chapter, marks a transition point from a moral approach to modern economics. As a final point, I posit that, despite conflicting theories, the modern attitude is characterized by an assumption of exchange-value, meaning

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<sup>26</sup> Mentioned in Bauman 2000:57 paraphrasing Vladimir Illich Lenin.

that the act of exchange gives things value because others desire them, in contrast to things having an inherent value that I am maintaining as a moral perspective.

To wrap up the defining pillars of modern economics, we must venture further down the spiral and return to where we began with our new insights. We come back to the question of the connection to peace: what is peace according to modern economics? The case being made is that modern economics, the so-called capitalist world system is assumed to be, by its architects and high priests, a peace-making apparatus. Peace researcher Nigel Young (Young 2011:58) suggests that the chief contribution of the Anglo-American world to peace theory “was not a contribution in words but a focus on deeds: Practical peace-making, implementation of utopian schemes, peace plans and proposals, and the rationalization of capitalist contract or free trade imperialism as a formula for peace.” Economics as the formula for peace, long assumed, was given worldwide public concretization when, in 2006, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Bangladeshi economist, professor, and banker, Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank. Thus economics as a discipline received its highest endorsement as the mechanism of modern peaces. The capitalist world system, armed with sustainable development and corporate social responsibility is going to make the good life for everyone.<sup>27</sup> The bonds of trade, under neo-liberal assumptions, tie the nations of the world in a net of interdependence, which pacifies the international system because of our interlaced fates. It is in itself not a bad idea; however, it has not delivered on its promises.

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<sup>27</sup> I classify sustainable development and corporate social responsibility as postmodern approaches to economics and they will be further discussed in the next chapter, however, being classified as postmodern does not make them un-modern. In fact, I refer to them as modern responses to a postmodern condition.



## ***Modern Time***

This section will outline modern perspectives on time. We will look briefly at the origins and implications of a vectoral chronosophy and at how the perception of time as detailed in the chapter on the moral perspective differs from the modern chronosophy. Furthermore, we will discuss the relationship with infinity. From there we will look at how perceptions of time have shaped fundamental economic assumptions such as scarcity. Next, the topic of growth as it relates to time will be explored. We will touch on how growth relates to development, as that thread will be picked up again a little later when we talk about the nation-state. The discussion on time will be brought around to the topic of justice, which will be a segue into the next section.

What is time exactly? Its presence is perceived but it cannot be touched. In European traditions, images of a Father Time equipped with scythe and hourglass, or Chronos, the Greek deity of time, were replaced by the cogs and gears of clockwork. It is the perfect metaphor for modernity: meticulous in its creation, impeccable in its execution. It takes God's call from Genesis to go forth and subdue (Genesis 1:28) a step further. It is the kind of secret that Francis Bacon (1561–1626) would like to torture out of nature.<sup>28</sup> The attempt to measure and quantify time is the quintessential modern endeavour and the basis of scientific enquiry. It is not to say that pre-Colombian Mayans, ancient Greeks, or stargazing Nubians are “moderns,” but rather the attitude towards the endeavour of quantifying time corresponds to the tenets of modernity.

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<sup>28</sup> Pesic (1999) has suggested that rather than the torture of a slavish victim, Bacon was implying “an encounter between the scientist and nature in which both are tested and purified.” I might be inclined to agree with Pesic's interpretation but for my purposes, the four hundred intervening years make the point moot.

The image of nature as clockwork was a metaphor that was prevalent in early modernity. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) carries the attributed honour of being the first, in 1669, to refer to nature as *horologium Dei*, ‘the clock of God’ (Copleston 1994:267). The world was described as a machine. It was no more and no less than a sum of its parts. The actions of a large whole could be accurately described and thus predicted by analyzing all of its constituent parts and their interactions. This approach has been called Cartesian reductionism in reference to the philosophical work of René Descartes. This metaphor of the clockwork of nature, poetic and aesthetic in its own right, has one logical flaw: if nature is clockwork, where is the clockmaker? Moderns, try as they might, were not able to banish God. Secondly, and perhaps a derivative of the first, was the infamous second law of thermodynamics.<sup>29</sup> Clockwork eventually runs down and stops. To paraphrase, the universe is going to an undesirable place in the proverbial handbasket. A pocket watch requires an outside influence to wind it; it requires an injection or throughput of energy from outside the closed system to keep it in homeostasis far from equilibrium. Barring the hand of God coming to wind the clockwork of the world, the world will eventually wind down: time is linear with a beginning and an end and the end (although it may be a long way off) will come eventually. This conception of time, which will be referred to repeatedly, is the basis for development as the mechanism for creating a peace out of a modern justice.

## **Vectoral Chronosophy**

I will admit that, being a pedantic academic, I like the term “vectoral chronosophy” because it sounds sophisticated. However, its use is not just empty rhetoric dressed up in Greco-

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<sup>29</sup> The total entropy of any closed system increases over time. Its first formulation is attributed to Nicolas Léonard Sadi Carnot in 1824.

roman clothes. A vector implies having direction and magnitude and “chronosophy,” the ‘love of time,’ refers to perception of time, such that it refers to a linear perception of time that is also quantified. In the chapter on energetic approaches, we saw how the conceptions of time are characterized by cyclical and spiral patterns and by an ever-present now. In moral approaches, we explored how binary thought, connected with concepts of justice, divided time into past and present, thus creating the concept of a linear progression of time. In this chapter on the modern approach, we revisit the concept of linear time with its modern twist. In this case the modern is defined by the measurement and quantification of time. This is symbolized in the semantic shift of referring to this modern perception of time as vectoral: it is not just that the perception of time is linear, it is how much. The question of the quantification of time is furthermore essential for its consequence, the monetization of time, which therefore enables a modern institution: wage labour.

It is important not to get lost in these trips back in time, nevertheless, there is another important factor regarding time: navigation. Of all the inventions to mark and quantify time, from sundials to water clocks, none were accurate, portable, or reliable enough to be taken on marine voyages. This had one large shortcoming: there was no technology to determine longitude. It was the invention of the chronometer, the first by John Harrison (1693–1776) in the 1730s that was resistant to the movement of the ship and fluctuations in temperature, that made it possible to determine longitude (Sobel 1995). Comparisons were made between the solar time at the current location and the time of the chronometer calibrated at the point of origin. By measuring the difference in the two, one could determine how far east or west of one’s origin one had travelled. This vastly improved navigation and made transatlantic

voyages much more reliable. It set the stage for European colonialism and mercantilism: the age of capitalist empire.

Throughout the history of humanity, there was always some kind of frontier beyond which was an apparently limitless unknown. Today, I can go to Google and see detailed maps of virtually any part of the planet or even the moon. However, at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Europe with the European settlement of America, the notion of limitless expansion was at the vanguard (Knolle 1992:73-74):<sup>30</sup> there were literally whole new worlds to explore, and, following the moral logic, to subdue.

Around this same time, there was another dangerous concept creeping into the psyche of Europe: 0. Zero. The void — and through the void, its twin: infinity. The concept of zero had been known in Mesoamerica since the fourth century (357 CE according to Justeson 2010:49) and Babylonia around the same time, perhaps even earlier (Justeson 2010:46). It was used in India from around the mid fifth century (Seife 2000:67) from where it is said to have made its way into the lexicon of Arabia through traders on the Silk Road around the ninth century (Seife 2000:72). It was later, approximately the sixteenth century through the Italian Renaissance, that the Arabic numerals supplanted Roman numerals and the idea started to take hold amongst a wider audience (Seife 2000:83-104). Mathematically, it is only through the concept of zero that the infinite can be conceived (Rotman 1987:71; Seife 2000:131-156). The introduction of zero bolstered the concept of infinity in European society.

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30 Knolle argues rather convincingly that the ideas of unfettered growth captured the imagination of the first European settlers of the Americas. With biblical commands to “go forth and multiply” and “to fill the land” (in the German translation), the vast prairies of the North American continent were firstly sparsely populated, second, reduced by disease, and thirdly, seen as an obstacle to the destiny of manifesting God’s Anglo-Saxon kingdom on Earth.

These tangents have the purpose of outlining an important tension in modernity. The creation myth of the theoretical physicists is that the universe and time are infinite, yet our human lives are finite. How does a modern human reconcile these two philosophical poles? The universe is expanding infinitely, the very fabric of existence appears to be expressing a code and yet we humans cannot seem to be a part of it since we are fragile and mortal. It is out of this tension, I argue, that the greatest impetus for the paradigm of infinite economic growth comes. It is an attempt to follow the map of the universe, the scientific scripture of the secular deity, not only to go forth and be fruitful as the God of Genesis urges, but to follow in the example of the cosmos. It is a rational attempt to connect with the divine in world that has banished the mystic.

We have always known that our own death is coming — sometime. With church bells chiming the hour and Seiko wrist watches, the reminders that time is running out have become ubiquitous. The quantification of time has made it possible to calculate precisely how much of life one is living: how many widgets can be made in an hour, how much money can I earn in a lifetime, how many times can I make love? The role of the Protestant work ethic in the formation of capitalism has been famously explicated by Max Weber (1905) and its psychological elements criticized by Erich Fromm (1941). I will not go into more detail into the Protestant work ethic other than to say that I agree that the supreme emphasis on work as a mode of spiritual salvation is rooted in an existential fear of death that can be traced back to a linear conceptualization of time.

The impact of a vectoral chronosophy on the interpretations of modern peaces is two-fold. Peace cannot be perceived now, as in the energetic model, rather is always off

somewhere in a pluperfect future that must be attained. Secondly, differing from the moral approach, the future peace is not a peace in a celestial Paradise after life — that has been discounted as pre-rational fabrications: it has to be created on the earthly plane. Since our mortal human lives are short (maybe even nasty and brutish), if we have any chance of getting to Paradise, a Heaven on Earth, then we have to work hard to create it as quickly as possible. If not, we will die alone and having failed our dreams.

## **Law of Scarcity**

This section deals with the perception of scarcity in the modern framework. I have included it here because it emerges from binary and finite linear thinking in modern mindsets. The existence of scarcity as a given fact, as law, justifies efforts made in the name of growth, attempting to overcome scarcity, and thusly, is connected to perceptions of infinity. I will present the case that scarcity is a perception and not a law. Secondly, I will trace how this perception is embedded in the context of modernity using feminist critiques. Finally, I will reconnect the topic of scarcity to modern peaces.

Gustavo Esteva (Esteva 1992:15) postulates that “the whole construction of economics stands on the premise of scarcity, postulated as a universal condition of social life,” and that furthermore, “rather than being the iron law of every society, scarcity is a historical accident: it had a beginning and can have an end. The time has come for its end” (Esteva 1992:19). He argues that a perception of scarcity is created and perpetuated by the economization of the nation-state and consequently of colonialism, thus privileging the hegemony and one worldview over all others. It is not an *a priori* fact about reality, rather, as Eisenstein (Eisenstein 2011:23) posits “what we take to be objective truth is actually a

projection of our own condition onto the “objective” world.” This echoes the Taoist teaching “you are what you seek,” supporting my contention that scarcity is a perception of reality that is rooted in a primordial fear of scarcity.

An elegant illustration of the perception of scarcity and abundance came to me from Zen Buddhism. In the Ryōan-ji (龍安寺) in Kyōto (京都), Japan, there is a *tsukubai* (蹲踞), a stone receptacle holding water for purification rituals. Around the central hole of the *tsukubai*, can be



Figure 6: *Tsukubai* at Ryōan-ji

found four *kanji*<sup>31</sup> (漢字) characters. By themselves are they without any particular significance, but when combined with the the central square hole that can be interpreted as the mouth radical, *kuchi* (口), they form different characters: 吾, 唯, 足, 知. They read *ware tada taru (wo) shiru*, which means ‘I only know plenty’ or ‘I learn only to be contented,’ which is to say, what one has is all one needs. It emphasizes the central Buddhist teaching of detachment of physical desires and underscores that scarcity or abundance is the result of perception, possible through a conscious choice and practice of the observer. It has been a central tenet of philosophy and moral systems the world over: money cannot buy happiness, the best things in life are free, yet it does not factor into modern equations. This is the *trans* in the transrational.

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31 Sino-japanese characters

Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1975), Gregory Bateson (1972), and Fritjof Capra (1982) all present arguments, in their respective manner, that the presumption of scarcity stems from an over-emphasis on masculine values in modernity. In the Mediterranean context, Apollo won the fight; Dionysius is out. Capra refers to the Taoist terminology of *yin* and *yang*, however, it can be equally expressed in terms of expansion (Bertalanffy) or purpose (Bateson). They symbolize dualities that are united in a greater whole beyond the paradox and are in constant flux. Peace is the dynamic balance of these flowing forces. Yang symbolizes expansion whereas yin symbolizes contraction; yang is masculine, yin is feminine, and the list goes on.<sup>32</sup>

<u>YIN</u> 陰	<u>YANG</u> 陽
Feminine	Masculine
Contractive	Expansive
Responsive	Aggressive
Cooperative	Competitive
Intuitive	Rational
Synthesizing	Analytical
Earth	Heaven
Moon	Sun
Night	Day
Winter	Summer
Moisture	Dryness
Coolness	Warmth
Interior	Surface

Capra argues that the gross Western misconception of Taoism has been to impose the values of positive and negative on to yang and yin respectively. In the economic realm this makes expansion of the economy good and contraction of the economy (a recession) very, very bad.

The theory is that the patriarchal period began with the shift to agricultural societies (Lerner 1986). Thus it was the beginning of the dominance of yang values. A hunter-gatherer

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<sup>32</sup> The following list is taken from Capra 1982:36-38 who draws inspiration from Porkert 1974.



society is no longer the recipient of Mother Nature's abundance rather reaps the product of one's labour. All bounty therefore has a cost; it is the cost of one's sweat and toil. It is a shift to see Earth (the feminine) as the passive recipient of the seed rather than the active donor of life and bounty. Tim Ward (Ward 2006:69) argues that this shift is described in the Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone, in which Persephone is captured and raped by Hades with Zeus' consent, thus marking "a shift from a pre-agricultural life of abundance to one of scarcity and struggle." The means of livelihood transfer from a feminine semantic field, where they are gifts from the motherly body, to the masculine, where they are the products of man's hard work.

I hasten to add here two important points regarding the plough and the patriarchy. Firstly, following Wilber (1995), I believe it unhelpful to look back on early agrarian society as an unjust usurpation of feminine power on the part of men: it must have been a practical and consensual redistribution of tasks. Secondly, the metaphor of the nature as feminine (Earth, Terra, Pachamama) is found throughout humanity, which can be problematic in the modern structure of nature subordinate to man. It carries with it all the negative connotations of patriarchal modernity, since Woman = Nature can be seen as the source of female oppression as man vs. nature is then equal to man vs. woman. Ken Wilber says (Wilber 1995:186), according to liberal feminists, that, "'Woman = nature' translates directly into 'barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen.'" The challenge is, as Wilber explains (Wilber 1995:187), "[...] not [to] deny the radical feminist claim that women have special connections with Earth and body and nature; it means only that that is not *all* they are or have." The challenge is to celebrate feminine connections with nature and not to be bound

with rigid gendered categories.

Within the modern worldview scarcity is dominantly perceived, so dominantly perceived that it is considered a law. Hermann Heinrich Gossen's third law of economics is that scarcity is a necessary precondition for value (Gossen 1854). Furthermore, it is in opposition to feminine principles. Perceived as a natural law, scarcity adds weight to the impetus to grow perpetually because of an insatiable fear of not having enough. It must be a primal fear: is it a fear of being the runt of the litter and being kicked off the teat? Is it a fear of not receiving our mother's love? I posit that the fear is really a fear of abundance and of the feminine. As this may seem counter-intuitive, I claim that it is another case of ontological twinning as we have seen with in/justice and in/security. In other words, one cannot be perceived without the other and they are thus two sides of the same coin. Dorothy Dinnerstein argues that there is a universal masculine experience of loss and rage at the feminine that stems from the "sense that the original, most primitive source of life will always lay outside of himself, that to be sure of reliable access to it he must have exclusive access to a woman." (Dinnerstein 1999:43). A fear of abundance is Fromm's fear of freedom (1941). Moreover, the assumption of scarcity provides limitless justification for the ill treatment of the *other* because all are subject to a zero-sum game with finite resources — it is either us or them. Such binary and linear schemata are the hallmark of modern thinking.

Scarcity, as Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef points out, is an entropic principle (Max-Neef 1982:49). Entropy is the quantity of disorder in thermodynamics, the decline of thermal energy in a system, derived from the second law, which, as was mentioned earlier, claims that everything is running down and it is evidence and justification of a vectoral

chronosophy. Wood can only be burned once, hence the arrow of time returns to our discussion and points to the presumption of scarcity. Max-Neef argues that economic processes are not mechanical (meaning in this sense reversible processes), although he argues that economists assume a mechanistic frame, rather they are entropic, bound by a unidirectional trend. Just like in the case of the burnt wood, resources have a useful life and then are discarded as waste, the discipline of economics takes this entropic principle as an *a priori* assumption. Max-Neef further laments that economics, modelling its scientific language on that of physics, never made the same quantum shift in the twentieth century (Max-Neef 1982:49).

A classic example of entropy is the mixing of two liquids. Imagine we have a small pool and a jug of ink. We can say that there is a relatively high state of order and low entropy; there is only ink in the jug and only water in the pool. When I pour the ink into the pool, the two begin to mix. At first the ink will stay close to the place where I poured it. Compared to our original state, disorder (entropy) has increased; if I act quickly, I might be able to scoop out all the ink and still have mostly pure water and only slightly dilute ink. This becomes increasingly difficult over time until eventually, the whole pool is a new colour. The second law of thermodynamics states that I can never get back to that original state of order without a net loss of energy. Firstly, thinking of the burnt wood, it is our natural experience that I cannot bring the tree back from that — it is irreversible. Let us imagine for a moment that I could sweep up all the ash, the smoke, the steam, collect all the heat and reconstruct the log; even if I could do that, there would be a net loss of energy. It would take me more energy than I would get out of the fire. I could not keep burning the same log over and over again. I

would need other inputs of energy.

The physics of the twentieth century came up with an interesting phenomenon when trying to model thermodynamics. Thinking back to our ink in the pool, it seems natural to assume that after a few hours the ink is uniformly distributed throughout the water. Upon closer inspection it came to light that the ink is never perfectly uniformly distributed and it is impossible to accurately predict how it will be distributed. This gave rise to Ludwig Boltzmann's (1844–1906) statistical model of thermodynamics. According to this theory, it is a statistical possibility, however unlikely or counterintuitive, that in the course of flowing about the pool and bumping into H<sub>2</sub>O molecules, all of the ink molecules could randomly find themselves all in one fat globule again.<sup>33</sup> In this theory, it is a latent possibility that entropic events miraculously reverse themselves in defiance of the arrow of time. Philosopher Ken Wilber proposes that entropy is counter-balanced by complexity (Wilber 1995). As the universe tends to greater entropy, it also tends to spontaneous leaps in the complexity of organization. Finally, I am not denying the second law of thermodynamics: I can neither disprove it scientifically nor object to it on religious grounds. This analysis is part of the larger thesis that the five families of peaces are whole perspectives unto themselves that come full with their own ontologies, epistemologies, and mythologies and the modern worldview is no different: the modern perception of time is part of that package.

An assumption of scarcity, an entropic principle, is at the basis of modern economics and is fundamental to a modern perception of time. The existential fear of scarcity/abundance drives the justification of modern peaces. They are, as Dietrich identifies them (Dietrich

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<sup>33</sup> It is perhaps more likely that the sun will expand into a red giant and vaporize the entire pool before that happens.

2012), peaces imbued with Phobos.

## Linear Time and Growth

The concept that we are discussing here, linear time, validates economic assumptions of perpetual growth. According to the orthodox mythology of our times, we live in an infinite and perpetually expanding universe and it would only seem logical that the mechanisms of our livelihood operate under the same preconditions — infinite and perpetually expanding. Linear time that is constantly progressing towards a better, more perfect future justifies and validates a growth paradigm. Unfettered growth, a tenet of modern thinking, has been brought, in its capitalist guise, under the microscope of rigorous critique countless times from Kenneth Boulding, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Fritjof Capra, so some of the influential voices be named. We will return to the topic of growth repeatedly and particularly in connection with the modern nation-state and development.

It is equally the linear thinking of time that adds impetus to the motive of accumulation. As we have seen in the chapter on energetic perspectives, cyclical concepts of time emphasize sufficiency (having enough) and the return of resources (animal migrations, annual crops). In this view, accumulation makes little sense beyond satisfaction of needs and stores for resiliency, and a spirit of acquisition (*krematistiké*<sup>34</sup>), of growth in order to fulfil such a spirit of acquisition, reconnects with the previously discussed fear of abundance/scarcity. A fascination with growth is the manic attachment to try to overcome scarcity. In the words of Wallerstein (Wallerstein 1988 in Balibar, Wallerstein 1988:145):

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34 Smith and Max-Neef (2011:24-25), in reference to Aristotle's differentiation between *oikonomia* (the art of living and living well) and *krematistiké* (the art of acquisition), argue, following Cruz *et al.* (2009:2021-30), that modern economics is the usurpation of economics by chrematistics, while maintaining the good name of the *art of living*.

If capitalism is anything, it is a system based on the logic of the endless accumulation of capital. It is this endlessness that has been celebrated or chastised as its Promethean spirit (Landes 1969). It is this endlessness which, for Emile Durkheim, had anomie as its enduring counterpart (Durkheim 1897). It is from this endlessness that Erich Fromm insisted we all seek to escape (Fromm 1941).

I argue that this endlessness, be it Promethean spirit or bottomless anomie from which we seek to escape, traces its conceptual roots to a projection of an infinite timeline extending out into an infinite universe which progresses, in the spirit of *post tenebras lux*<sup>35</sup>, from the dark past into the bright future.

The modern solution to these problems is growth. Growth, therefore is the metric of success, which is reflected in the emphasis on tracking economic growth metrics, such as the change in GDP over time. There is a sole and unbalanced emphasis on growth; it is not a flux of growth and decay as in the energetic perspectives. Growth is the only option that makes logical sense and it is a defining characteristic of the modern approach. Turning to the words of Eisenstein:

[...] it is not just that the apparent limitlessness of money, observed since ancient Greek times, allows us to believe in the possibility of eternal growth. In fact, our money system necessitates and compels that growth. Most economists consider this endemic growth-pressure to be a good thing. They say that it creates a motivation to innovate, to progress, to meet more needs with ever-increasing efficiency. An interest-based economy is fundamentally, unalterably a growth economy, and except for a very radical fringe, most economists and probably all policy makers see economic growth as a demonstration of success. (Eisenstein 2011:104)

Following this logic of growth equalling success, the opposite must also be true: contraction

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35 'light after darkness' draws inspiration from the Biblical passage Job 17:12 "*post tenebras spero lucem*," 'after dark I hope for light,' and was the motto of the Calvinist movement and the Protestant Reformation. It is also the motto of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, the home of John Calvin.

must mean failure. Within a modern logic of binary choices, dichotomy, and dilemma, as Tim Jackson states (Jackson 2009:64), “the capitalist model has no easy route to a steady state position. Its natural dynamics push it towards one of two states: expansion or collapse.” That means that if the economy is not expanding then it must be collapsing. To recap some of the parallels that have been drawn here, we can see that Jackson’s option of continued expansion corresponds to the modern family, the collapse corresponds to the postmodern family, and the “steady state position,” a dynamic equilibrium in flux, a dance between expansion and collapse, corresponds to energetic, postmodern, and transrational families.

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As a concluding thought on the modern perceptions of time and how they shape the discourse of peace and economics, I reflect on the marvel of technology that timekeeping is. Timekeeping is now so ubiquitous that simple wonder at its processes seems infantile. Smart phones have alarm clocks and stop watches built in; town squares have clock towers; a digital watch is so cheap that it disguises and disgraces the miracle of its technology. It is easy to forget how elusive reliable timekeeping was for so long and easy to forget how fluid time is. With atomic clocks and cell phones with alarms, the lustrous marvel of a pocket watch seems dull. This in itself is part of the modern miracle; it has imposed a (false) sense of order to the universe. Time is much more impure, arcane, complex and convoluted than most people reckon. Nothing is static; calendars will need to be revised and replaced; the cosmic ballet continues. It is not that the calculations are beyond comprehension, far from it. The point is that the currently popular Gregorian calendar is impermanent and merely an approximation that fits now but will not fit in the future and that the method of counting the

days, following the spirit of energetic traditions, needs to be constantly reassessed, adapted and inflected.

### ***Modern Justice***

The concept of justice has existed as long as a linear chronosophy. Dietrich traces justice back to the prophet Isaiah (Dietrich 2012:72). Any time that we project our fears from the past onto the future, we create an apparent need for justice. However, modern interpretations of justice differ sharply from moral interpretations in that God has been usurped by reason. The discourse of rights is the blueprint for justice in modernity and the belief in an individual is necessary for a rights' discourse. It is also necessary in order to envisage private property and to be able to understand that one can own the fruits of one's labour.

Justice is so much a part of the discourse of peace that to take a critical approach seems blasphemous. It goes beyond peace, often cited as either a prerequisite for or a primary outcome of peace, to being a core value of modern civilization. "It is hard to challenge the concept of justice in a modern Western context," writes Dietrich (Dietrich 2011:11), "though people usually disagree greatly on what justice in a concrete situation means, they tend to agree that justice is a good thing."

Modern interpretations of justice, especially as they apply to economics, hang on three interconnected precepts: individuality, private property, and rights. As was mentioned in the chapter on energetic perspectives, John Locke's defence of an individual's right to access the product of his or her labour, as well as Karl Marx's perception of exploitation if that access is denied, only holds up if one sees the world as being made up of autonomous



individuals, a direct corollary of the Cartesian split of subject/object, mind/body, and man/nature. It is dependent on a perception of binaries, polar opposites, and irreconcilable duality. The example of ubuntu which was used to explain energetic perspectives, *I am because we are*, does not allow for the atomization of social fabric into distinct individuals who can have rights independent of the collective. The mental pattern of perceiving dichotomies extends to in/justice.

Justice does not exist as an abstract and absolute state. Justice requires a previously perceived injustice in the past. The binary nature of justice in linear conceptions of time has already been elaborated in this dissertation. However, a modern interpretation of justice through economics is the promise of satisfaction of material needs. Moral interpretations of justice focus on divine justice administered by God, however, in modern interpretations of justice, since God has been removed, the focus is therefore on the material concerns of life; since we can no longer have justice in the hereafter, we need to have justice on earth in this lifetime before it is too late. A focus on material justice, furthermore, transcends the divide of capitalism or communism, left wing or right wing, because both maintain a secular justice of freedom from material wants through an independent sphere of human activity called the economy. Modern justice in economics is the promise of liberation from the shackles of material wants through the emancipatory effects of technological advance, economic expansion and the guidance of the state.

Gilbert Rist is able to summarize the connections amongst justice, vectoral chronosophy, and development. “The minority who run and profit from the system therefore have no interest in challenging it,” writes Rist (Rist 2008:viii), “they merely assert that,

despite all the evidence, wealth can be generalized to everyone on earth. Once people are brought to believe this, injustice can be presented as a merely temporary state of affairs.” A vectoral understanding of time allows for a faith in the epistemological surety of progress; since injustice can be presented as a temporary state, then we must be progressing ineluctably towards a state of generalized wealth. Furthermore, following the logic presented by Rist, this must be leading to a state of a more fully realized expression of justice.

It is quite clear that the promise of salvation is that the past was bad, we scraped out an existence with sweat and toil, the future is looking brighter, the progress of technological advance will continue to make things easier, and we are somewhere in the middle. In order to be less burdened by the yoke of material wants, we need to have economic growth to ensure that it is available for everyone. Development is clearly the means by which economic growth, and therefore modern material justice, can be brought to everyone. It may be argued that it never has been the intent to help all people equally, but that is a different argument; that refers to a critique of modernity rather than the promise of it. Thus, this interpretation of justice depends on growth and development.

Tim Jackson, who writes a postmodern critique of the growth paradigm, summarizes this mindset clearly. For Jackson, it begins with a fetishization of novelty, which leads to growth as an end in itself. The state reinforces the growth paradigm in the attempt to create a materialistic Utopia (Jackson 2009:202-203). My addition to Jackson’s summary is that his summary explains the modern secular interpretation of peace out of justice.

Modern economics tries to establish a peace out of justice from the understanding of peace as *Zufriedenheit*. *Zufriedenheit* is a German word containing the root word for peace,

*Friede*, and means ‘satisfaction,’ or more literally ‘the state of being at peace.’ It relates peace to the satisfaction of human needs. Modern economics brings the promise of satisfying basic human needs and provides the justice for all because it assumes that everyone is an equal participant (or rather competitor) in the economy. The economy, the free market, is a level playing field where everyone is playing by the same rules is the modern rhetoric. The market can bring peace through satisfaction by ensuring that everyone has access to money and thus access to meeting all their needs through depersonalized spot trades. This version of peace out of justice needs growth and development in order to ensure that absolutely everyone has access to money and can thus insert themselves into the economy.

I can empathize with the frustration that modern perspectives inevitably face in trying to achieve the Utopian dream. It is precisely because it is so clinical and mechanistic that it is also so seductive. Modern perspectives claim to have figured it out; the problems of production and prosperity have been solved and we can all now be rich and happy. The people just need to follow the prescription that has been laid out by the educated experts. It must be so frustrating, especially to the experts who may genuinely want everyone to be wealthy and prosperous, when people refuse to follow the prescription and actively oppose it. Human life goes off in its own direction and does not need to follow a prescription, from the Pope, the IMF, or Alan Greenspan. It is all too easy to look with disdain at those who seem to be choosing poverty or the fringes by not following the rules of a modern prescription, a so-called best practices approach. However, therein lies the seed of violence; the love of the truth, the One Truth, that is the prescription for prosperity, happiness, and peace, must declare all other prescriptions false. It is based on an exclusive epistemology that is absolute. The

greater the zeal of the followers of truth, the greater the violence that can be committed in its name.

## ***The Nation-state***

How relationships affect economics in the modern paradigm will be explained primarily through the filter of the institution of the nation-state. Modern relationality will trace two main threads that follow the distinction between micro and macro-economics: the abstraction of relationships at the personal level and the organization of society into a national economy. It will be argued that both are mediated by the state. This section builds on Polanyi's case that the state is necessary to create, reify, and enforce a free-market economy. The nation-state thus becomes a lens through which all relationships are refracted and is the central organizational force of society. We will then return to our previous discussions of time and justice seeing as the institution of development is a derivative of a vectoral chronosophy and the authority of the state is the ultimate arbiter of mundane secular justice. This section will cover how the nation-state quantifies and aggregates all creative human potential through creation of a National Economy and the calculation of GDP. This will lead into the next section on modern currency.

The fact that the nation-state is the central organizational principle of relationships in modern economics does not mean that it is the exclusive philosophy. It is simply the dominant, most ubiquitous, most coercive, and, being a tenet of the modern state of mind, often unchallenged influence. To say that modern economics reduces all human interactions to Carlyle's (1795–1881) "cash nexus" (Carlyle 1843) is true as a generalization, yet facile

and over-simplistic as a rule. It does not mean that people do not treat one another with kindness; it is saying that the dominant discourse governing economic relationships (employer-employee; business transactions) is one that abstracts and quantifies the encounter. Moreover, modernity is full of (even requires) paradoxes and there are plenty of instances in which creative human beings usurp the confines of the state and interact in subtle and generous ways. These examples that seem to go against the assumptions of modernity (e.g. gifts, local currencies), these areas of exile, have been mentioned throughout the text.

Above all else, the notion of a modern economic human being is that of a solitary one. Thomas Hobbes' famous quotation starts from that very point, that life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Modernity assumes the solitude of man, expressed as a discreet and separate self and the Cartesian separation of mind and body. Modern worldviews assume that society is made up of independent individuals who are interacting. In this instance it has a twofold consequence: society is built up of rational individuals who try to maximize their take whilst minimize their efforts, and society is a sum total of the parts. These assertions are reflected in rational choice theory, the micro-economic orientation of the Chicago School.

There seems to be consensus that the nation-state is one of the clearest defining characteristics of modernity (Foucault 1975; Giddens 1998; Jones 2003). As this is an enquiry into peace, it ought to be pointed out that, "although states do other things," as Michael Mann surmises, "they are mainly concerned with war" (Mann 1988:130 cited in Dietrich 2012:128). Many (if not all) of the tenets of modern republican<sup>36</sup> values come from the war machine of the state. Taxes exist to create markets in order to support armies. In my

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<sup>36</sup> I use the term here in its sense of the values of a republic rather than the values espoused by the US American Republican party.

home country of Canada, the tax on personal income, a debated, despised and oft dreaded institution, was first implemented as a temporary measure to fund Canada's participation in the Great War (the First World War) with the Income War Tax Act (1917), and yet endures to this day. The famous Autobahn of Germany were built under the National Socialist regime for the express purpose of transporting troops. The modern state is, as Max Weber would argue, just an efficient apparatus for the conscription and organization of a standing army (Weber 1919). Hospitals (e.g. Les Invalides in Paris, France) and indeed the standard-bearer of impartial International Non-Governmental Organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (and Red Crescent), arose from the need to palliate the human cost of war.

The mere existence of money is not enough to make people see themselves as individuals or to incite nation to swap things for the greatest advantage. If that were the case, as David Graeber quips (Graeber 2011:45), economics would have been invented in ancient Sumer and not in Scotland in 1776. As such, there is something deeper afoot here than the creation of money and markets. Polanyi (1944) cites a "utopian endeavour" to set up a self-regulating economic system; the end of that dream was the "great transformation" that created a market economy enforced by the state. The authority of the state is required to maintain the existence of the three commodities that Polanyi defines as artificial: land (private property), labour, and money (Polanyi 1944).

## **Defining the Nation-state**

As far as defining the nation-state, I will begin etymologically. *Nation* derives from Latin, via French, from the verb *nasci*, 'to be born.' It assumes a homogenous population in language, religion, cultural practices, ethnicity, and genealogical descent. Thus, a nation is born

together, children of the motherland and the *patria*. A nation-state is an independent and sovereign territory with a centralized government and/or administration. Furthermore, I follow Spruyt (1994) in arguing that what distinguishes the modern nation-state from earlier or contemporaneous competing models of social organization is the concept of a mapped and rigid territory with fixed borders.

The emergence of the nation-state as an elementary unit is the Peace of Westphalia (1648). It is from this point on that one can speak of something being “international.” It also marks the beginning of the current world system in Wallerstein’s sense.

Spruyt makes an interesting argument in his book *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Spruyt 1994). He challenges the idea that the nation-state was the logical outcome of the decline of European feudalism and argues that the territorial nation-state was only one of several competing models of political organization, the other two being the city-league and the city-state. He argues that three factors made the nation-state particularly effective.

First, the internal logic of organization of the sovereign state had less deficiencies than its rivals. Sovereign, territorial states were better at rationalizing their economies and mobilizing the resources of their societies. Second, state sovereignty proved to be an effective and efficient means of organizing external, interunit behavior. Sovereign states could more easily make credible commitments than their non-sovereign counterparts. Third, sovereign states selected out and delegitimized actors who did not fit a system of territorially demarcated and internally hierarchical authorities. The organizational principles of territorial states and city-leagues were mutually incompatible, exactly because the latter had no specific borders. (Spruyt 1994:28)

Furthermore, Spruyt contends that Wallerstein has reversed the cause and effect regarding the emergence of the nation-state. Citing support for his theory (Zolberg 1981; Baechler, Hall &

Mann 1988; Gilpin 1981), Spruyt argues that nation-states did not emerge as a result of a capitalist world economy, rather the other way around.

Functional and teleological accounts cannot explain the variation in types of institutional arrangements other than the sovereign state. As a consequence, world systems theory misdates the emergence of states. States preceded the development of a capitalist world economy, rather than the reverse. Indeed, the differentiation of Europe into different states might be the very reason why capitalism developed in Europe and not elsewhere. (Spruyt, 1994:19)

Thus we have the argument that the contours of the economy, and consequently of the world capitalist system were formed based on notions of fundamental political organization.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I am not as interested in the precise theories on the emergence of the nation-state. It may be that nation-states are an answer to the economic contradictions of feudalism, as Marxists argue, or that increased dynamic density was the impetus, as Durkheimians contend, or that the state is an evolution toward instrumentally rational, formal organizations as Weberians may see it (Spruyt 1994:20). What is important for this analysis is the nation-state as a replication of the belief in an immortal and unique human soul.

If we assume that there is something that we call society, then that society is made up of people. People are the base units, the elementary particles, of society and are thus called individuals because they lose their function when divided into small parts. This metaphor is buttressed by the physics of the time that can reduce all existence to atomic particles that are the building blocks of all matter, and further, a handful of sub-atomic particles (protons, neutrons, and electrons).<sup>37</sup> A belief in a unique human soul means that each individual is also

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<sup>37</sup> This is of course a summation prior to the quark model proposed in 1964 by Zweig and Gell-Mann independently (Riordan 1987).



a unique and sovereign being. Since the world is made up of unique individuals, then the the form replicates itself on a higher level: an international system is made up of unique individuals. The international society must be made of an elementary particle, just like the society of village, clan, or tribe, and that elementary unit is the nation-state. Countries are simply the atoms of geo-politics.

We think of nation-states as people. They have the same functional parts, borders, a centralized government, a judicial system, a citizenry, and yet are unique individuals with their own unique personalities. We often think of countries as being singular and monolithic versions of a stereotype: Germany is the stoic, rational workhorse suffering from a debilitating guilt-complex; the USA is the reluctant cowboy world enforcer; Japan is the collectivist-minded, technological innovator with latent imperialist tendencies; and so on. We even speak of countries, especially in the news media, as if they were individuals with a single-minded agenda: America will want to veto; China is embarrassed; Britain insisted on amendments. It is not clear *who* really is experiencing these human emotions, but it could hardly be an abstract concept that is based mostly on the definition of particular territory, somewhat on the legitimacy of a representative government, and vaguely on a shared cultural and linguistic heritage.

Just as an individual has rights, each country has rights. Each state is sovereign and has the right to its territorial integrity, which is the basis of the UN Charter (chapter I, article 2.1: sovereign equality of all its Members), which is a kind of *habeas corpus* writ for nation-states. An individual has definable boundaries, and nation-states have clear designated borders: this is why a collective like the Hansa did not fit in the emerging modern worldview.

Just as every person has a unique personality, then every nation-state has a unique personality. This works the other way too, as the nation part of the name implies. Every discernible and identifiably distinct and cohesive group, a nation, thus deserves, by this logic, its own statehood. This is the logic behind the partition of British Indian Empire, and the creation of the state of Israel, but also the argument behind separatists such as the ETA<sup>38</sup> Basque separatists in Spain and the PKK<sup>39</sup> Kurdistan Workers' Party in Turkey and Iraq.

Another key mark of the nation-state is its tendency towards standardization. In the previous chapter on moral understandings of peace and economics, we saw that the invention of coinage came about as a bureaucratic accounting tool and that coinage and money could not exist without a centralized authority willing to take on the task of setting down some clear ground rules. However, in the examples of moral perspectives, the standardization was always a rather localized and vernacular standard. Modern standardization is extended to every corner of the realm — and then beyond. In the categories of the families of peaces, I am aligning the universal standardization beyond the borders of the nation-state with postmodern perspectives, however, it should be clear that the philosophical orientation of such an undertaking is clearly modern. The twist of postmodernism comes in questioning the validity of any grand unifying narrative. Obviously, standardization facilitated trade; fewer conversions, fewer price quotations, mean more efficient deals; however, standardization comes at a price. We have already seen that the quantification of debt requires violence. Furthermore, the imposition of universal norms on a naturally diverse backdrop can only be achieved by violence. For standardization to be in place, the natural diversity must be

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38 Euskadi Ta Askatasuna

39 Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê

contained and suppressed. This is the chink in modern armour: the love of the one Truth of reason sows the seeds of unpeace.

## **National Economy**

Modern approaches to economics require the territorial nation-state. The state tries to create a perfect peace through the national economy. The state requires the “reification and objectification of authority” (Spruyt, 1994:68), in order to create and maintain markets. Markets are thus not antithetical to governments, they depend on their existence and intervention to function. The authority of the state is required to maintain the existence of the three commodities that Polanyi defines: land (private property), labour, and money. This is to create a national economy and thus a secular peace of justice and security; GDP is the measure of that peace. Development, justified by a belief in perpetual growth, is the mechanism for increasing GDP and therefore peace. It is a discursive trope that every “economy” must be “a national economy and that it is the task of the national government to develop the country” (Escobar, 1995:47).

Modern approaches to economics require the state because the economy requires police to keep it running. The assumptions of free-market capitalism compel participants to try and take as much as possible from others whilst preventing them from the most expedient method: murder and theft. It encourages people to treat each other as if they only have their rational self-interest in mind. Markets therefore need police to keep everyone treating each other as if they had no interest in each others’ well-being and yet without killing each other. Another way of saying it is that markets require police to prevent everything from tending

towards monopoly, as Wallerstein explains.

A monopoly, as we know, means a situation in which, because of the absence of competition, the transactor can obtain a high profit, or one could say a high proportion of the surplus-value generated in the entire commodity chain of which the monopolized segment is a part. It is quite clear, in fact self-evident, that the nearer an enterprise is to monopolizing a spatio-temporally specific type of economic transaction, the higher the rate of profit. And the more truly competitive the market situation, the lower the rate of profit. Indeed this link between true competitiveness and low rates of profit is itself one of the historic ideological justifications for a system of free enterprise. It is a pity capitalism has never known widespread free enterprise. And it has never known widespread free enterprise precisely because capitalists seek profits, maximal profits, in order to accumulate capital, as much capital as possible. They are thereby not merely motivated but structurally forced to seek monopoly positions, something which pushes them to seek profit-maximization via the principal agency that can make it enduringly possible, the state. (Wallerstein 1988 in Balibar, Wallerstein 1988:147-148)

Capitalism needs the state because the assumptions of modern economics require the constant intervention of authority to keep the system moving, to prevent all sectors from moving to monopoly. Polanyi (1944) also argues that markets need the state to regulate them or else they all tend to monopoly. Ludwig von Mises (1881–1973) said the same thing, except about socialism: socialism leads inexorably to fascism (von Mises 1922). The agreement between the two is that modern approaches require the intervention of an objective and centralized authority in order to constantly regulate the system.

Before we go any further, we should take a look at why markets even exist in the first place. The previous two chapters cited examples that functioned either without any market or markets that were very different from modern market ideologies. If gold is wealth, asks Graeber rhetorically (Graeber 2011:49), then why go to all the trouble of “extracting the gold, stamping one’s picture on it, causing it to circulate among one’s subjects—and then

demanding that those same subjects give it back again?” Why not just take control of the mines and hoard it all? The argument that governments tax in order to get their hands on other people’s money only makes sense if one starts from the assumption that markets predate the state and are some form of a primordial *tabula rasa* that existed before coercive and conniving governments got involved. It does make sense, however, when one looks at it as a simple way to create a market. The theory that Graeber (2011:49-50) proposes is that bullion currency was used to pay soldiers and mercenaries; demanding taxes created demand for the bullion which created markets to provision the armies. If everyone needs to pay a gold coin to the authorities under the threat of direct physical violence, then everyone is going to be willing to trade with the soldiers for food, wine, sex or whatever they want, in order to get their hands on a few coins, pay their taxes, and avoid punishment. The logistical nightmare of feeding an army just got a little easier.

We have discussed the fact that markets, in some form or other, have existed for thousands of years. Markets are not excluded from moral worldviews. The difference between moral approaches to markets and modern approaches to markets lies in scope. The examples from moral worldviews, such as spheres of exchange, should demonstrate that moral perspectives generally have tightly prescribed markets. Contrarily, modern perspectives hope to unify all things by allowing the market to be free — free to subsume all things under its sphere of influence, as Wallerstein argues.

The capitalist world-economy is a system built on the endless accumulation of capital. One of the prime mechanisms that makes this possible is the commodification of everything. These commodities flow in a world market in the form of goods, of capital and of labour-power. Presumably, the freer the flow, the greater the degree of commodification. Consequently, anything that restrains the flow is hypothetically counter-indicated.

(Wallerstein 1988:31)

It is this inexorable tendency to grow, to include more, to subsume, and to commodify all goods, assets, and actions, to the rules of a market that starkly differentiates modern worldviews from moral approaches. Wallerstein makes the case that modern worldviews use the universalism of commodification to reduce social relations to objective mathematical standards.

Hence, by a sort of impeccable logic, particularisms of any kind whatsoever are said to be incompatible with the logic of a capitalist system, or at least an obstacle to its optimal operation. It would follow then that within a capitalist system it is imperative to assert and carry out a universalist ideology as an essential element in the endless pursuit of the accumulation of capital. Thus it is that we talk of capitalist social relations as being a 'universal solvent', working to reduce everything to a homogeneous commodity form denoted by a single measure of money. (Wallerstein 1988:31)

If Wallerstein is right, and I believe he has a valid point, then the idea behind a national economy is to create a single standard of value, exchange everything using that standard, and then, since everything is measured, then all transactions mediated by the market (which are theoretically all of them) will be fair: everyone will get their just deserts.

For me, growing up and living in Canada, I have recalled Gustavo Esteva's words, that economization and colonization are synonymous (Esteva 1992:14), especially in the process of this investigation. Being a member of the settler culture in Canada, it has often been difficult for me to see the links that are blatantly obvious for Esteva. However, the history of the European settlement of Canada (which is colonialism), is also a history of resource extraction. Every step of the way, white settlers commoditized beavers, set up saw mills, established monoculture crops, built canneries; it has been a systematic

industrialization of resources from sea to shining sea. This process may be patently clear here, but Esteva also argues that Harry S. Truman, president of the USA, succeeded in detaching development from colonialism (Esteva 1992:14), even though it served the same end. Development was colonialism with a new name. Where it all comes together is that they are all examples of creating markets where none previously existed. So-called third world development projects have consistently undermined subsistence relationships in order to create market economies, as if to give forcible truth to Adam Smith's assertion that human beings have a natural propensity to truck and barter.

The Gross Domestic Product, or GDP, is the most common metric used to measure the success or failure of a national economy. It is subsequently a proxy metric, albeit imperfect, for well-being and the secular justice of the satisfaction of material needs. Although ultimately his thesis is that GDP is a such a grossly inadequate measure for a healthy economy and social well-being that even using it at all exacerbates the problems that it purports to be addressing, Tim Jackson wrote a succinct justification of the relevance and attractiveness of GDP.

What is the 'psychic satisfaction' from an iPhone? A new bicycle? A holiday abroad? A birthday present for a lover? These questions are practically impossible to answer. Economics gets around the difficulty by assuming their value is equivalent to the price people are prepared to pay for them in freely functioning markets. It casts utility as the monetary value of market exchanges.

The GDP sums up all these market exchanges. Broadly speaking, it measures the total spending by households, government and investment across the nation. Spending is taken as a proxy for utility. And this, in a nutshell, is the case for believing that the GDP is a useful measure for well-being. (Jackson 2009:39)

The beauty of GDP is found in its simplicity. It is, as Jackson points out, a solution to the

problem of how to compare apples and oranges, or rather, how to assign value to unlike things in order to make them comparable. It is a scientific and practical response to a philosophical problem that dispenses with myth and superstition and grounds itself in the epistemological certainty of numbers.

There are, obviously, valid criticisms of GDP as the standard by which to measure economic success. Many have been the dissenting voices over the years but a recent notable addition to the chorus was the report co-authored by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi 2008). There are three main areas that GDP fails to address. GDP fails to account for non-market services, destructive activities, and the future prospects of asset bases. Non-market services include volunteer work, household chores, and child rearing that are essential and yet are not figured into GDP because they are unpaid. Ironically, when people are too busy at work to do these things and have to outsource the laundry and hire a babysitter, then GDP goes up at the cost of the cohesion of familiar conviviality. Destructive activities are counted in GDP just as much as productive activities, as Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn explain.

Hence, the economic view of development, measured by means of such aggregate indicators as the GNP, indiscriminately regards as positive any processes where market transactions take place, regardless of whether they are productive, unproductive or destructive. As an example, it is in this way that the indiscriminate depredation of natural resources makes the GNP grow, as in the case of a sick population when it increases its consumption of pharmaceuticals or use of hospital facilities. (Max-Neef, Elizalde & Hopenhayn 1991:58)

A further example is building more jails to house an increased number of incarcerated



people, which can increase GDP but does not take into account the qualitative aspects of having so many people in prison. Future asset bases are the value of a forest. A forest can be easily assessed by the volume of timber that can be recovered from it now, or projected some time in the future, and a decision can be made as to when might be the optimal time to log — now, in five years, or in ten years. However, the value of the forest as a forest is incalculable until it enters the market as a commodity; if it is logged, it has a calculable market value, yet ceases being a forest. As seen from the logic of GDP, increased throughput is always good; the more materials extracted, processed, consumed, and discarded, the better it is for the economy. This argument automatically implies its opposite: postmodern perspectives argue that increased throughput is bad, since resources are finite.

What it also implies is that GDP can be increased by economizing, commoditizing, and privatizing services that are part of the social fabric. This is a central thesis of Eisenstein in *Sacred Economics* (Eisenstein 2011). Things that we used to do for free, minding each others' children for example, is now more likely a paid position by someone with a degree in Early Childhood Education. Emphasis on the part of it being for free makes the argument sound a bit miserly. Rather than being "for free," the emphasis should be on it being non-monetized, since childminding takes time and disciplined attention. Anyone with experience with a toddler knows the mischief they can get into with a moment's inattention. Rather, the point is that things that what we used to do for each other as part of our communal relationships is more and more monetized and done by strangers. True, we build relationships with our mechanics and plumbers and chimney-sweeps, but there is a fundamental difference between the modern cash nexus which is the basis of those relationships and the principles of

conviviality that inspire the proverb “it takes a whole village to raise a child.”

The relentless pursuit of increasing GDP means that traditional convivial services must be privatized in order to add more activities to the economic sphere. Furthermore, Eisenstein makes the cogent case that GDP is further increased, not even by creating new needs, but meeting needs that the demands of the capitalist world system have stripped from us.

Consider telecommunications. Human beings do not have an abstract need for long-distance communication. We have a need to stay in contact with people with whom we share emotional and economic ties. In past times, these people were usually close by. A hunter-gatherer or fourteenth-century Russian peasant would have had little use for a telephone. Telephones began to meet a need only when other developments in technology and culture spread human beings farther apart and splintered extended families and local communities. So the basic need they meet is not something new under the sun. (Eisenstein 2011:80)

Technology creates the problems it purports to solve. Although it is not the technology of a telephone itself that creates a problem, rather a socio-economic system that de-couples people from subsistence, and thus creates an economic imperative to de-contextualize oneself and follow the whims of capital. There is a social expectation as well as an existential exigency to uproot oneself and go where the jobs are. Telegraphs, satellites, and teleconferencing software is but a balm that briefly dulls the pain of the sores that such dislocation causes. It is a trope turned cliché in my home country of Canada that young people will go out to Alberta to get a job in the oil and gas industry. The youth of the nation, mostly men, trundle off to the work camps, working to pay for the smart phones that keep them connected to the loved ones they had to leave behind.

In this way, GDP grows by replacing the satisfier for our fundamental needs with

something that can be trademarked, patented, licensed and sold to the consumer, rather than the traditional means that previously existed in a non-monetized sphere. False satisfiers of needs are therefore created, just as in Eisenstein's example of telecommunications, ostensibly solving a looming social problem, but rather temporarily assuaging the insalubrious and injurious effects of the previous technological advancement. The inherent imperative to increase GDP, the corollary of a vectoral chronosophy, demands that ever more traditional ways of sharing, caring, and interacting become monetized as an economic necessity.

Development, the concept that human economic activity shall be improved and refined in order to create peace and prosperity as quickly as possible, is both the outcome and manifestation of vectoral chronosophy — it is the child and the twin of linear thinking. It is a concept that has dominated international politics for over half a century, and yet development can mean just about anything. It is a plastic word that moulds itself to the desires of its speaker. As Wolfgang Sachs quips, “development can mean just about everything, from putting up skyscrapers to putting in latrines, from drilling for oil to drilling for water, from setting up software industries to setting up tree nurseries. It is a concept of monumental emptiness, carrying a vaguely positive connotation” (Sachs 2010:x). As the concept of development was created to replace colonialism, it is used by a developed one to refer to some undeveloped other, and thus reifies an archetypal power relationship of parent to child. Development is then “more a sign of power over the Third World,” as Arturo Escobar writes (Escobar 1995:9), “than a truth about it.”

The conflation of development to mean economic development, a re-creation of the path blazed by industrialization, began in the twentieth century. However, the word itself has

a longer history. Esteva writes (Esteva 1992:4) that it “was between 1759 (Wolff) and 1859 (Darwin) that development evolved from a conception of transformation that moves towards the *appropriate* form of being to a conception of transformation that moves towards an *ever more perfect* form.” Escobar echoes this sentiment (Escobar 1995:73), saying that before the 1930s, development “was usually understood in a naturalistic sense, as the emergence of something overtime.” It is in these semantic transferences, from an emergence to a more perfect form, that we can really see the ontological manifestations of linear conceptions of time. “The metaphor of development gave global hegemony to a purely Western genealogy of history,” writes Esteva (Esteva 1992:5). We are thus advancing (“advancing in the sense of a necessary, ineluctable, universal law and towards a desirable goal” (Esteva 1992:6)) along the arrow of time, however, the path that the arrow takes has been prescribed by the laws of only one small segment of human epistemologies.

The concept of development as we know it, and as I have been describing it as a recipe for salvation from penury, is a product of the latter half of the twentieth century. Escobar cites three exceptions that were forerunners to development discourse: Joseph Schumpeter, a number of historians of the British Empire, and Karl Marx, however, he claims that the clearest forerunner was the 1929 British Colonial Development Act (Escobar 1995:73). Max-Neef, Elizalde, and Hopenhayn also name the work of Schumpeter, an Austrian School economist, as an intellectual pioneer of development. “Although Joseph Schumpeter had already written about the concepts of economic development in the 1920s, it was not until the 1950s that it became fashionable” (Max-Neef, Elizalde & Hopenhayn 1991:108-109). Escobar reaffirms that “notions of underdevelopment and Third World were

the discursive products of the post-World War II climate,” and that these “concepts did not exist before 1945” (Escobar, 1995:31). The whole idea of being underdeveloped came onto the world stage on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1949, in the inaugural address of US American president Harry S. Truman (Esteva 1992:1). “On that day, 2 billion people became underdeveloped” (Esteva 1992:2).

Never before had a word been universally accepted on the very day of its political coinage. A new perception of one’s own self, and of the other, was suddenly created. Two hundred years of social construction of the historical-political meaning of the term ‘development’ were successfully usurped and transmogrified. A political and philosophical proposition of Marx, packaged American-style as a struggle against communism and at the service of the hegemonic design of the United States, succeeded in permeating both the popular and the intellectual mind for the rest of the century. (Esteva 1992:2)

Thus development became a leading concept of our time. Criticism of development is tantamount to condemning poor people to their misery, since it effectively says that the poor do not have a chance to become un-underdeveloped, and they never have a chance at sharing in the bounty of the Earth and of the multifarious fruits of human ingenuity.

Part of the power of attraction of the concept of development lies in the fact that it appeals to moralistic sentiments. If some people are suffering from poverty, and others have seemingly “solved the problem of production,” as Schumacher put it (Schumacher 1973), and are reaping the bounty, then do we not owe it to our brethren, our fellow citizens, to point out the error of their ways so that they may also rejoice in the light of material prosperity? It makes perfect sense if the problem of being poor has been solved, why would we not all want to be rich and fat and happy? Thus, as Kenneth Boulding points out, development of the poor is the most pressing issue for the creation of peace of our time.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the most fundamental world economic problem is that of improving the level of technical productivity of the backward three-quarters of the world. Until this is done, a genuine world unity cannot be achieved, and there will be constant sources of conflict, both economic and political. The magnitude of the task should inspire us rather than appall us. It is difficult; it may take one or two centuries, but it is not impossible. It will require large-scale investment on the part of the technically advanced regions, investment not only in equipment but in education. Indeed, it is probable that education is the most difficult part of the task, for it is easier to move mountains than to change the inherited patterns of peasant life. (Boulding, 1946:96)

Boulding, himself an influential peace philosopher and forerunner to the environmental movement, really hits the nail right on the head. It is difficult to change patterns of behaviour, either by carrot or stick. It is thus necessary to convince people that they are “underdeveloped” so that their “backward” patterns of peasant life can be rearranged in order to have peace.

The problem of underdevelopment exists in our minds and persists in the lexicon. Underdevelopment cannot exist without a perceiving subject who identifies himself as being developed. He must also be imbued with the authority to pass judgment on who does or does not live up to his standard — who belongs to the in-group (developed), and who does not belong (underdeveloped). Paradoxically, and yet fittingly, there are no overdeveloped nations. Overdevelopment is hardly even a term that is talked about, yet has corollaries in the worldview of dominant culture. Tim Wise explains how dominant culture, just as with development, easily perceives the apparent deficiency of the Other, but is blind to its own privileges.

History has been taught as if racism were something done to people of color, with *no beneficiaries* at all; as if there could be a down without an up; as one can have an “underprivileged” ... and yet not an overprivileged. Our denial then extends even so far as

our lexicon, so that if there is no word for the phenomenon, the phenomenon conveniently fails to exist. (Wise 2008:63)

This argument extends into postmodern perspectives, which suggest that the vector is wrong: underdevelopment is not the problem; it is overdevelopment that is the problem. However, what is of interest here is to underline the unilinear framework into which development fits. It is not even a ternary system (under, neutral, over), but simply binary (positive or negative). This example furthermore illustrates the place of privilege that development occupies. No one self-identifies as being underdeveloped in a vacuum. I can only see myself as underdeveloped by internalizing the belief of someone else.

Once underdevelopment exists, it needs its sacerdotal team of experts to interpret and manage it. Following in the critical tradition of Ivan Illich (1970), Escobar explains (Escobar 1995:45) that the professionalization of development “is accomplished through a set of techniques, strategies, and disciplinary practices that organize the generation, validation, and diffusion of development knowledge, including the academic disciplines, methods of research and teaching, criteria of expertise, and manifold professional practices; in other words, those mechanisms through which a politics of truth is created and maintained, through which certain forms of knowledge are given the status of truth.” In short, the professionalization of development begins with the demarcation of its epistemology. The university, the home of scientific knowledge is given the status of truth, and everything else, be it traditional knowledge, intuition, or something else, is not. “The professionalization of development,” Escobar continues (Escobar 1995:45), “also made it possible to remove all problems from the political and cultural realms and to recast them in terms of the apparently more neutral terms of science,” which has been a consistent critique of modern worldviews.

Information, then facts, or small-tee “truths,” couched in the language of mathematics become irrefutable and the professional class of development experts can hold their monopoly on truth. This is the argument of Polanyi (1944), and more recently of Smith and Max-Neef (2011), that in reducing economics to the ostensibly neutral language of mathematics in an attempt to make it appear more scientific and truthful, it has also been disembedded from its cultural context and social implications (its web of human relations). Thus, the creation of a professional class of development experts dis-members people from their communities since they can no longer be trusted to develop themselves and save themselves from poverty.

Albeit an important part of the story, development is only one facet of modern perspectives. Without belabouring the point, I do find it meaningful to take a look at some factors that shaped development discourse. I will review some of the additional circumstances that, the fertile soil that helped development discourse take root. Around the end of the Second World War “a reorganization of the structure of world power was taking place” (Escobar 1995:32) with the rise of US American preeminence along with socialism and Chinese communism, and colonies of Asia and africa were changing. Anticolonial struggles, growing nationalism, cold war and the fear of communism, need for new markets, fear of overpopulation, and faith in science and technology all played crucial roles in fertilizing the growth of development discourse (Escobar 1995:32). I will briefly elaborate on the importance of colonialism and communism.

In the definition of Wolfgang Sachs (Sachs 2010:xii), “development discourse is an outcome of the post-war era of fossil-fuel-based triumphalism, undergirded by colonial



perceptions and the legacy of Western rationalism.” Additionally, development is a project of nation-states inflicted upon other nation-states. Escobar points out that in order to see and understand development as a historically produced discourse, it is necessary to ask firstly, why so many countries started to see themselves as underdeveloped in the early post-World War II period, secondly, why “how to develop” became a fundamental problem for them, and, finally, why they embarked upon the task of “un-underdeveloping” themselves by subjecting their societies to increasingly systematic, detailed, and comprehensive interventions (Escobar 1995:6). The task of un-underdeveloping is taken on by the state, since only the state has the clout to organize massive industrialization projects like the building of enormous hydroelectric dams. Escobar (1995) affirms that the creation of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), precursors to a world government, was instrumental in disseminating and entrenching a development discourse. They provided direct mechanisms for developing and un-underdeveloping nation-states.

Colonialism played a key role in shaping development discourse. Development carried on the structures of colonialism while giving it a new name that seemed to break with past. The mercantile empires of the rise of capitalism were gone, the colonies were being given independence, and new individual citizens (the new nation-states) were born unto the international stage. Nevertheless, there was no expectation that anything would actually change in the world. As Esteva’s earlier point was, the success of development was that it cast all the old structures of dominance in a new light that let them appear different and optimistic. Furthermore, by expressing the new vision in the seemingly complex language of

mathematics and formulae, it imbued development with a sense of object and irrefutable truth.

The decolonization period after the Second World War was not an altruistic move to free the people of the world, but was part of the re-codifying of the structures of dominance. Escobar says that the USA supported European colonies after the Second World War and abetted their economic development because they were necessary to provide the raw materials to fuel Europe's production so that the Europeans could in turn purchase US American goods. The prosperity of the USA was therefore dependent on perpetuating the mercantile relationship of Europe and its colonial possessions (Escobar 1995:31). "During the late 1940s," Escobar continues (Escobar 1995:31), "the United States supported European efforts to maintain control of the colonies, although with an eye to increasing its influence over the resources of the colonial areas, most clearly perhaps in the case of Middle East oil." As such, the discourse of development was never meant to serve all equally, rather some more than others.

The pattern of unequal treatment serves to perpetuate the distinction between developed and underdeveloped. The First World got the Marshall Plan but the Third World got Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). It was possible to give away the product of labour (Bataille 1991:175) to Europe because it had once been rich, prosperous, and powerful and it was an effort to rebuild and return Europe to its glory. Furthermore, the Marshall Plan was for US American self-preservation as it needed trading partners to maintain its economy engines. However, Latin America, Africa, and Asia did not get the preferential treatment that Europe received, but instead got debt.

Nation-states are not benevolent donors; they engage in international development aid programmes for their own benefit. Escobar (1995) cites the example the CIDA (Canada) justifies to the Canadian taxpayers the fact that a large percentage of money spent in aid benefits Canadian exports and creates jobs for Canadians. Whether aid is given away or incurs a debt, neither is without its catch. The double standard of the Marshall Plan and the SAPs underlines the attitude of infantilization of the Third World, as well as racial biases with which it is inextricably linked. The USA may have extended favourable terms to their European allies, an example of the communism of the rich, but they did it for themselves to keep their own economy rolling.

A metaphor that crystallized the thought patterns of the world since the Second World War has been that of the three worlds. The origin of the term Third World, denoting non-aligned countries that were allies of neither NATO (First World) nor the Communist Bloc (Second World), has been attributed to Alfred Sauvy in an article entitled “*Trois mondes, une planète*” published in *L'Observateur* in Paris on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1952 (Wolf-Phillips 1987:1311). Since communism was an existential threat to the First World, development was a policy intervention enacted by the First World upon the Third World. The Second World, the communist countries, can be said to have engaged in their own Second World development in the form of promoting communist revolutions. The communist revolutions in Ethiopia and Angola, the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, and Ernesto Guevara’s ill-fated campaigns in the Congo and Bolivia are all examples of Second World development.<sup>40</sup> Development was a countermeasure to communist revolution. A fear of communism reinforced the need to

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40 I should point out that in my research I found virtually no trace of Second World development as an established concept, nevertheless, I find it useful in understanding the impetus behind development discourse.

develop the Third World, that is to claim as much of the non-aligned territories as possible before the revolutionaries got to them. Nowadays, the terms, especially Second World, have largely fallen from favour, yet they persist in the vernacular and the metaphor has not changed. The preferred terms “developed,” “developing,” and “underdeveloped,” have changed the label but maintain the tripartite metaphor.

The fear of communism and the Cold War were important contextual factors in entrenching development discourse. “It was commonly accepted in the early 1950s,” explains Escobar (Escobar 1995:34), “that if poor countries were not rescued from their poverty, they would succumb to communism.” This is an example of an extreme modern perspective on economy: capitalism and communism are seen as mutually exclusive polar opposites and each camp strives to exclude and deny the other at every point in a zero-sum game, but both are manifestations of modern worldviews operating on the same assumptions of expansion and industrialized production predicated on the abundance of fossil fuels. The common vectoral chronosophy compelled both camps to develop the Other in its own image, thus turning development into an end in itself, as Escobar argues.

In the late 1940s, the real struggle between East and West had already moved to the Third World, and development became the grand strategy for advancing such rivalry and, at the same time, the designs of industrial civilization. The confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union thus lent legitimacy to the enterprise of modernization and development; to extend the sphere of political and cultural influence became an end itself. (Escobar, 1995:34)

The Cold War might be remembered as a war that never happened because of the hegemony of the US American version of history. However, for anyone living in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Korea Nicaragua, or Viet Nam, there very much was a war going on.

In sum, the nation-state regulates people's economic interactions. To paraphrase Graeber's caricature of the popular version of history (Graeber 2001:10), it goes something like this. Human beings are driven by unlimited desires. Human beings are rational and calculate the most efficient way to get what they want. If rational individuals are completely free, a free market will inevitably develop where each can calculate the most efficient way to satisfy as many of the unlimited desires. For most of human history, a free market did not emerge, but that was because of the interference of an outside force: religion, politics, feudal elites. The feudal system is based on force and markets are based on freedom so when, in European history, feudalism began to dissolve, people became free and markets inevitably began to emerge. The same kind of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* logic can be used to explain the transition to markets with the fall of the Soviet Bloc in 1990.

The work of Polanyi, and others, including David Graeber, who followed that this story is fallacious and backwards. For most of human history there were no free markets. When markets did form they were tightly controlled by social conventions, moral precepts, or the threat of violence. The common wisdom that governments are inimical to markets obscures the truth that states are required to create and maintain markets. Governments demanding taxes are not so much stealing the fruits of labour from the citizens, rather creating demand for a national currency.

Based on the legacy of monotheistic religions, the belief in a unique and immortal human soul translated itself into the notion of the unique and indivisible nation-state. Each nation-state takes on the attributes of a person with a seat at the General Assembly of the United Nations. Political entities that are not recognized by the UN do not effectively exist.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The salient example is of course the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Inheriting the philosophical tradition of the time, nation-state on the world stage is like the butcher, baker, or fish-monger in Adam Smith's imaginary Scottish village in which it was not by benevolence but by each individual's self-interest that the commons flourished. Each nation-state therefore is tasked with administering its national economy.

Armed with an unwavering belief in perpetual growth, inspired by the forward march of linear time, terrorized by the fear of death in a godless cosmos, fortified by faith in science and progress, each nation-state must grow its national economy to create a materialistic peace. Failure to do so is to condemn the people to penury. After the Second World War, the concept of development replaced colonialism as the metaphor by which the industrialized nations infantilized the rest of the world. It described itself as a promise of prosperity but was never more than the perpetuation of subordination. The timeless patterns of human life, subsistence, artistic expression, storytelling, healing, and expression of identity, are satisfied through the market by grocery stores, wage labour, blockbuster movies, privatized health care, and fast fashion, which is a social arrangement created and reinforced by the nation-state.

## **Psychology of Modern Relationships**

This section roughly corresponds to "micro-economics" as I laid out earlier. The previous section dealt with how nation-states behave, which is the macro-economic view. This section deals with how folk behave and how that is influenced by modernity, but also by the state. It looks at what patterns of relationships typify modern perspectives and how they might be created.

The nation-state creates a society of atomized people that are linked by the

aforementioned the cash nexus. “To separate labor from other activities of life and to subject it to the laws of the market,” writes Polanyi (Polanyi 1944:171), “was to annihilate all organic forms of existence and to replace them by a different type of organization, an atomistic and individualistic one.” Of course, this is not even true: we live in a complex array of relationship webs. However, the proclivity of modern worldviews is to tend towards the abstraction of relationships. Swinging back the other way, modern relations are more embedded than people realise, which was the argument of Polanyi, and is the mantle that others have taken up such as Mark Granovetter (1985). This is precisely what makes work of someone like Granovetter so remarkable and his theories worth discussing: they contradict the dominant worldview of the time that sees a world made up of autonomous and separate individuals. So, if we really are far more embedded in our networks of social relationship than anyone seems to realise, how is that modern worldviews can continually see human relations as mediated by the market, in which “all objects are disembedded from their former social relations and exist only in relation to money” (Graeber 2009)?

It happens through violence. The state is ultimately built on a logic of conquest (Graeber 2009) and, as Max Weber articulated (Weber 1919), has the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. It is only through violence or the real threat thereof that folk and objects can become disembedded and decontextualized from their web of relations, and thus commoditized. Graeber explains this process in detail (Graeber 2011:208).

[...] first, perhaps, women given in marriage; ultimately, slaves captured in war. What all these relations have in common, I observed, was violence. Whether it is Tiv girls being tied up and beaten for running away from their husbands, or husbands being herded into slave ships to die on faraway plantations, that same principle applies: it is only by the threat of sticks, ropes, spears, and guns that one can tear people out of those endlessly complicated

webs of relationship with others (sisters, friends, rivals ...) that render them unique, and thus reduce them to something that can be traded.

All of this, it is important to emphasize, can happen in places where markets in ordinary, everyday goods—clothing, tools, foodstuffs—do not even exist. In fact, in most human economies, one's most important possessions could never be bought or sold for the same reasons that people can't: they are unique objects, caught up in a web of relationships with human beings.

Firstly, it is important to note that Graeber uses the extreme case, slavery, to illustrate the less obvious case. Graeber is describing an energetic perspective according to Dietrich (2012) and the formulations laid out in this dissertation. The embeddedness in the web of relationships applies equally to objects and things as to human beings. Since violent de-contextualization does in fact happen, that is the euphemistic academic way of say babies are ripped from their mothers and sold, entire forests are razed, it raises the question of how a human being could get to the state that this seems not only like a good idea, but the best option.

I will attempt a brief explanation using Dietrich's interpretation of Wilber's matrix of Eros and Agape, however, I will only discuss the ascent, Eros. Moreover, I am rather suggesting one interpretation of what might cause folk to move towards disembeddedness. Eros is wisdom and love and can be visualized as the Many returning to the One, just as the many forms of man can unite behind the epistemological certainty of objective reason. This means that love for one thing creates fear of everything that it is not, which is the One Truth of Phobos to which Dietrich refers (Dietrich 2012:68-95).

Eros, in the guise of Phobos, flees the material aspects of life whenever the path of ascent is understood as a one-way street, and whenever in the striving for the higher/divine the multiplicity of the aspects of this-worldly *Dasein* are not respected and integrated but rejected and repressed. From this derives the fear that everything this-worldly will hinder the path of ascent, contaminate it, dirty it, or drag it down. In the logic of the pure, vectoral



thinking of ascent fear of the material world, Phobos turns into the all-dominating factor. Phobos, in its headless rush to reach a better world, pushes the pure ascenders toward ascetic repression, to denial, fear, and hate of all that is of this world — denial of pure aliveness, sexuality, sensuality, the nature of the body, and also always of the female. All of this makes those driven by Good, the pure ascenders, very dangerous. Behind their blatantly announced love of the higher, hides the violent hand of Phobos, if it is not possible to reconcile them in Agape [compassion]. (Dietrich 2012:93-94)

Dietrich suggests that when Eros turns to Phobos, when love of the One turns into fear of the Many, is when energetic experiences turn into aggressive philosophical speculations (Dietrich 2012:95). The Eros that is not balanced with Agape will turn to Phobos, and the Agape without Eros descends into Thanatos. The unbalanced human heart, an Eros that is striving so hard towards the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, can go to lengths of great cruelty if it perceives a threat to the ascent towards the One. It is this unbalanced human heart that is capable of the violence necessary to disembed people and things from their energetic webs of relationships.

There is, however, an upside to having some level of disembeddedness in human relations. One advantage of modern worldviews is that some relationships do not have to be bonds forged in the fires of time, but can be instrumentalized without insult. Recalling Hyde (Hyde 1979:72), it is in fact a virtue of modern relationships that I do not need to get involved in the intimate details of someone's life. I can simply pick my product, pay, and be done. I do not have to spend time drinking three cups of tea, an hour pretending to be friends and haggling, years getting to know someone and his or her precise needs or desires to be able to reciprocate a gift. Hyde illustrates the advantage of the modern cash nexus.

It is the cardinal difference between gift and commodity exchange that a gift establishes a feeling-bond between two people, while the sale of a commodity leaves no necessary

connection. I go into a hardware store, pay the man for a hacksaw blade and walk out. I may never see him again. The disconnectedness is, in fact, a virtue of the commodity mode. We don't want to be bothered. If the clerk always wants to chat about the family, I'll shop elsewhere. I just want a hacksaw blade. (Hyde 1979:72)

To paraphrase Graeber's (2011) reading of Adam Smith, Smith envisioned a Utopia in which nobody needed to owe anyone anything. Since debt was seen as sinful, a system of spot trades could eliminate the need to be indebted to anyone; once the transaction is over, you are free. This speaks to the value of freedom and individuality in modern worldviews. However, I do say from experience, there are few things more satisfying than a mitt full of grubby cash at the end of a hard day's work — unlimited possibilities contained in each bill and freedom of knowing that each one is mine, won by the sweat of my own brow, and am free to dispense of them in any way I see fit (albeit, for the most part in accordance with the law). This is the ethos of modern economics, the supreme value of the individual, the independent person who stays out of sin by not owing anything to anyone: favours are reciprocated immediately in cash.

The shadow side of freedom is fear of responsibility. The Eros of liberty can turn into the Phobos of being bound to another. It can be a daunting prospect to have to know another intimately enough to know both their subtle and profound needs. It is much easier to dispense with intimacy and just pay cash or swipe a credit card.

I have a friend who complained that his mother would always, seemingly pathologically, repay things immediately. Visits to relatives would be accompanied by many gifts and her explanation was so that no perceived debts would be left outstanding. With the insight from Graeber's research that payment is required only with someone whom I have

little or no expectation of seeing again (a stranger) or with someone who may rip me off (also a stranger, because if not, I will exact revenge), then a person who needs to reciprocate immediately for every favour is afraid or mistrusting of relationships and always keeps them at a distance. Modern relationships foster this kind of psychological orientation. To elaborate this point, I return to the fundamental conceptions of time: modern worldviews are fuelled by a fear that time is always running out. Energetic understandings, on the other hand, know that there is always time. To a modern man who has to work for a living, especially wage labour, and knows that “time is money,” energetic perspectives may seem improvident.

Graeber used an example that illustrated this point. Iroquois villages are divided into two halves, which is a moiety system, a common social arrangement that is also present in Amazonia and Melanesia (Graeber 2011:99). One half of the village buries the dead of the other half. No one needs to keep score because the assumption is that there will always be two halves of the village. To assume otherwise is to predict the complete destruction of the social fabric. If one side ends up having to bury a lot of dead one year or ten years, it will eventually balance out, and nothing could be more absurd than complaining about it. “The Iroquois example brings home clearly what makes this possible: that such relations are based on a presumption of eternity. Society will always exist. Therefore, there will always be a north and a south side of the village. This is why no accounts need be taken” (Graeber 2011:100). The assumption of eternity allows for the reciprocation to be more or less inevitable: if not by me, maybe my descendents will return the favour. Assuming that I will never see you again and needing to settle up sometimes occurs, but those are not the lasting bonds in our lives. Modern worldviews do not assume eternity; they assume finite time and it

is therefore necessary to pay one's debts.

Eisenstein characterizes the faith in the market of modern worldviews as another iteration of “magico-religious thinking” (Eisenstein 2011:142). Although modern worldviews pride themselves for their rationality, the assertion that free-market capitalism is an organized religion is well founded (e.g. McMurtry 2004). “Some would scoff at primitive cave-dwellers who imagined that their representations of animals on cave walls could magically affect the hunt,” writes Eisenstein (Eisenstein 2011:143), “yet today we produce our own talismans, our own systems of magic symbology, and indeed affect physical reality through them.” Magico-religious thinking corresponds to level 10 on Ken Wilber's AQAL matrix (Wilber 1995). The belief in the primacy of rationality that characterizes modern worldviews lulls folk into accepting irrational explanations that they would otherwise reject.

A further trait of modern cosmovisions is viewing things as an extension of oneself. It is a logical consequence of vectoral chronosophy, growth paradigm, and the logic of conquest that one's Self aggrandizes with the accumulation of property. This reflects Weber's famous critique of the Protestant work ethic (Weber 1905) in that material prosperity was a manifestation of God's beneficence. One's possessions are extensions of Self and loss of possessions diminishes the self (James 1890; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981). However, the very nature of objects has changed with the processes of industrialization, as James Carrier discusses.

Through the later nineteenth century the mechanization of production meant that the origin of objects became more opaque, and objects themselves became divorced from comprehensible production processes and human activity. They became fetishistically endowed with an independent existence of their own. (Carrier 1995:6 with reference to Williams 1982:205-207)

This makes sense with what we have already seen of the differences amongst the families of peaces. Objects are imbued with the spirit of their creator, especially when we know how and by whom it was made. Hand thrown pottery may have the distinctive flair of the friend who made it or subtle imperfections that make it unique and tie the object more intimately to its maker and its history. Industrially produced kitchenware made with Teflon® and other space-age technologies that is flawlessly reproduced countless times is, frankly, impenetrable to average person. As our things are less able to have a spirit of their own, perhaps it can be conjectured that they more readily become extensions of ourselves.

Polanyi may have called out the myth of the self-regulating market, but the self-perpetuating market is another thing. The atomization of social bonds through modernity creates a need for a market (because we cannot meet needs through communal ties) and thus for a state authority. Once we have our needs met through the market, then we need the market to get our needs met, because the pre-existing channels have been eroded. We have unlearned the old ways. This should be no surprise because it is exactly what modernity is — a break from tradition with something new and just now. Eisenstein lists some examples of how the apparent advantages of the market erode relationships and thus make us more dependent on the market.

For example, the technology of the phonograph and radio helped turn music from something people made for themselves into something they paid for. Storage and transportation technologies have done the same for food processing. In general, the fine division of labor that accompanies technology has made us dependent on strangers for most of the things we use, and makes it unlikely that our neighbors depend on us for anything we produce. Economic ties thus become divorced from social ties, leaving us with little to offer our neighbors and little occasion to know them. (Eisenstein 2011:76)

Eisenstein's point lead into the previously cited point from Carrier on the opacity and arcane nature of modern products, which is also discussed by Matthew Crawford in his book *Shop Class As Soulcraft* (2009). He firstly argues that automobile engines had all of their parts visible under the hood and home appliances came with parts' diagrams, whereas now, the engine of a contemporary car is often covered by a sleek casing that conceals the inner workings and a household washing machine is more often replaced than repaired. Furthermore, an iPod is simple to use and a violin takes years of practice, an iPod can hold thousands of songs, an impressive catalogue but an iPod has no potential for creative agency, whereas the violin has that advantage and for that reason has an endless potential library of songs. Crawford's point with the example of the digital music player and the musical instrument illustrates the trade off between convenience and agency. Surely not everyone is going to be mechanically inclined and want to tinker with the engine of their motor vehicle, but Crawford's point is that with a Volkswagen Beetle, it was possible for the curious and adventurous to repair their car, but with a brand new BMW, one must plug it into an expensive diagnostic computer only available at authorized locations. The end user (the consumer) is thus beholden to a class of expert technocrats that fix mp3 players or BMWs. Returning to Eisenstein's point, we are therefore bound more tightly to the market by the greater complexity of the products and objects and things that we buy, because they are esoteric — understood by few. We therefore are less likely to turn to a neighbour or friend for help, less likely to play the fiddle with a neighbour, but more likely to talk to a stranger in a call centre on the other side of the planet to figure out why our music streaming software is not working properly. Again our real relationships of flesh and blood and intimacy are

supplanted by atomized interactions, mediated by the market, and predicated on squeezing a bit more profit margin out of the interaction.

As a final point, modern man must feel himself insignificant in order to be willing to subordinate himself to the market and elites. This point is argued by Erich Fromm in *Fear of Freedom* (1941). Only by internalizing an inferiority complex would someone consistently submit to demands at the behest of some boss or leader. This is a precondition for the acceptance of wage labour. Building on the arguments of the atomized individual who becomes increasingly dependent on the mechanisms of the state as his social relations are eroded, I return to Eisenstein for an explanation of his phrase *helplessly independent*.

When libertarians invoke the sanctity of private property, they unintentionally create a need for the very Big Government they so despise. For in the absence of community bonds, the atomized individuals that remain depend on remote authority — a legally constituted state — for many of the social functions that community structures once fulfilled: security, dispute resolution, and the allocation of collective social capital. The propertization and privatization of the economic realm leaves us, to coin a phrase, helplessly independent — independent of anyone we know, and dependent on impersonal, coercive institutions that govern from afar. (Eisenstein 2011:78)

A helplessly independent person is the perfect candidate to accept the working conditions of associated with wage labour: repetitive tasks often with little or no room for creativity or improvisation. It is necessary to subordinate oneself to the market and to a hierarchical structure because that is precisely the logic of wage labour. As Graeber argues, the difference between wage labour and slavery is a legal nicety at best.

The institution of wage labour, for instance, has historically emerged from within that of slavery (the earliest wage contracts we know of, from Greece to the Malay city states, were actually slave rentals), and it has also tended, historically, to be intimately tied to various forms of debt peonage - as indeed it remains today. The fact that we have cast such

institutions in a language of freedom does not mean that what we now think of as economic freedom does not ultimately rest on a logic that has for most of human history been considered the very essence of slavery. (Graeber 2009)

If Aristotle were around today, as Graeber is quick to point out, he would not distinguish between wage labour and slavery and would consider the majority of folk in capitalist countries, renting their time out, to be slaves.

## ***Money***

Similar to what we saw in the previous chapter on moral approaches, modern money is primarily a bullion currency. However, and importantly, there is a level of separation in modern money in which money becomes a sign and stands in for the real value. It is this indexicality that differentiates the moral from the modern approaches to bullion currency. Modern money is completely fungible, meaning the units are identical, replaceable, and can be exchanged for one another. A final big difference is that money itself can be commoditized, which, starting with usury, leads to the imaginative world of financial services.

### **Bullion and indexicality**

The clearest formation of the deictic quality of modern currency is paper money. Paper money is a sign standing in for the bullion, pointing to it, which is what I have been referring to as its indexicality. This means that there really is some specie, some gold bullion, somewhere that paper money, a dollar bill or a Dutch guilder, represents. The sign requires the referent to justify its existence but detaches from it; the sign is now more important than



what it represents. This is the state of modern currency.

The concept of a modern international gold standard can be said to have originated in the United Kingdom in 1821 when the Bank of England established the redemption of banknotes for gold bullion. By the end of the nineteenth century the main global powers (UK, USA, France, Germany, Russia, Japan) established a consensus on an international gold standard. This understanding began eroding with the beginning of the Great War (1914) and was all but gone by the 1930s.<sup>42</sup> There was a return to an international gold standard under the Bretton Woods system established in 1944. The US American dollar was convertible to gold at \$35 per ounce; all other currencies would be measured against the US American dollar. The logic is that this fixes the ratio between paper money and one commodity, thus creating a stable standard of comparison. During this time, although seldom in practice, paper notes could be redeemed for their equivalent in bullion.

We may see how this process reinforces the acceptance of the sign. If a paper note is redeemable in gold, it is effectively as good as gold, as the expression goes, although far more practical to pack around. Paper money only weighs a fraction of metallic bullion. In this sense, paper money is not really different from a deposit receipt, a pawn slip, or ticket at the coat check; provided that everyone wants my coat and no one actually needs to claim it and wear it, the ticket could circulate as currency. The knowledge that is possible to retrieve the gold combined with the convenience of the paper medium make the sign more relevant than its referent. We will turn, in the next chapter, to the postmodern twist of this, which is the logical removal of the referent entirely.

Modern money, as it detaches from its referent, it also detaches from personal

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<sup>42</sup> My home country of Canada abandoned the gold standard in 1933.

connections. Cash becomes anonymous, which is “diametrically opposed” (Graeber 2001:93) to the interpretation of value of heirloom artifacts. In contrast to heirloom items that collect a history and perhaps a pedigree of previous owners, cash flows and its slippery frictionless nature is precisely its desired quality when judged from the perspective of exchange-value. Although cash in its modern sense eliminates the need for a personal signature, witnesses, and attachment to specific persons, it retains national indexicality (Rotman 1987:90). It relies on the sovereignty of the state and the central bank, which is in effect the entity that makes the promise that the paper note represents (Rotman 1987:90). It thus relies on the existence of a central bank, a centralized authority within a sovereign territory, to issue the currency which is the de jure medium of the national economy. Modern paper money “insists on anonymity with respect to individual bearers but is deictically bound on the level of sovereignty” (Rotman 1987:90), since it has the name of the state printed directly on it.

The concept of a central bank goes hand in hand with a national economy and deictic paper money, and thus is intrinsically part of modern worldviews. The first modern central bank, or rather a precursor to it, is the Bank of Amsterdam (*Amsterdamsche Wisselbank*), established in 1609 (Rochon & Rossi 2015:4). Although the central bank of Sweden (*Sveriges Riksbank*) was founded in 1664, the pivotal moment in the history of central banking came with the establishment of the Bank of England in 1694, primarily motivated to raise funds to finance the war against France (Capie et al. 1994:126). The Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1690, became the first government to issue fiat paper money, meaning money decreed into existence and not directly exchangeable for bullion (Goldberg 2009; Rothbard 2002; Newman 1967). This innovation of the British American colonies may have been

influenced by the issuance of playing card money in New France in 1685. The colonial authorities had run out of specie with which to pay their soldiers, so Intendant of Justice, Police, and Finance, Jacques de Meulles, came up with the solution, a desperate and temporary measure, to simply print the denominations on playing cards. The cards began to circulate at face value and thus became a de facto fiat currency (Shortt 1986; Heaton 1928; Filteau 2003).<sup>43</sup> Although in China, there had already been a long history with fiat paper money and inflation, “flying money” (Chinese *fei qian* 飞钱) as it was known, from as early as the Song dynasty (宋朝 960–1279), it is the examples of paper money in the transatlantic axis that set the precedents for the capitalist world system and not the centuries of Chinese antecedents. Paper money and its obvious contemporary corollary, electronic money, may seem like a distinct departure from metallic currency, however, I argue, as does Eisenstein (Eisenstein 2011:162), that they are rather an extension of it. This is due to the deictic nature of the currency of sign; paper money is still bullion currency as long as it refers to a physical object.

Fungibility is another characteristic of modern money. Fungible means that things are mutually interchangeable. The fact that modern money is a sign, its aforementioned indexicality, makes it fungible. By being separated from a physical reality, by virtue of being a sign, and being anonymous in terms of its personal relationships, it can exist in an abstract and symbolic world in which one unit is exactly the same as another. This is a result of standardization of units, but is also more than that. It may seem plausible that apples are also fungible, one apple can be exchanged for another without much complication, but as we get

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43 What makes the card money not a fiat currency is that there was the clear expectation that the soldiers would in fact eventually be paid in French specie, likely silver, at some time in the future and the card money would be redeemed, fulfilling the promise of the sign to its referent in modern worldviews.

into particulars, it is clear that no two apples are alike. Graeber, citing Strathern (Strathern 1992) and Gewertz (Gewertz 1983), notes an example of infungibility of apparently like goods. Real things are never identical and thus never fully fungible, for example, “when women in a New Guinea market are bartering lumps of fish for taro, two apparently identical batches of fish will not be considered the same because of their different origins” (Graeber 2001:42). Modern money escapes this ostensible problem through fungibility.

The fungible nature of modern money also makes it anonymous. It becomes readily exchangeable because it is not tied to specific people. Graeber elaborates on this point.

At least in principle, it is absolutely generic, any one dollar bill precisely the same as any other. As a result money presents a frictionless surface to history. There is no way to know where a given dollar bill has been. Nor is there any reason one should care, since neither the identity of its former owners nor the nature of transactions in which it has previously been involved in any way affects its value. This is why transactions involving money can be said to be “anonymous”: the social identities of those transacting need not become part of the stakes of any transaction—in fact, they do not have to play a part in the transaction at all. (Graeber 2001:94)

What Graeber is describing here is very close to the “cash nexus.” However, I see an important difference in that the cash nexus implies that the transaction is the only point of contact between the two parties. What Graeber is describing, the indexicality of money, implies that even the medium of the exchange depersonalizes the interaction. The latter discursively informs the former: the “cash nexus” makes sense because money is a “frictionless surface” as Graeber (2001:94) calls it; conversely, money has lost all traceability to source or person because the nature of the interactions has necessitates a depersonalized approach.

Possibly the most important characteristic of modern money is its commoditization.

Once again, this is referenced by Polanyi as one of the three basic, yet false, commodities of modern economy: money, land, and labour. The indexicality, the deictic nature of modern money, actually allows for the commoditization and instrumentalization of money. This is the departure from Aristotle, that money cannot be a productive force, but since modern money is divorced from its physicality and begins to exist in the noosphere, in the abstract realm of signs, the signs can be manipulated without the moral repercussions. Being a sign facilitates its commoditization, and being a commodity allows money to be instrumentalized, which is bought, sold rented, bundled and repackaged, just as any other commodity. It makes usury reasonable because it is simply a charge for using a commodity. The perennial confusion that stems from this is that the thing that is loaned and the charge are both money, which is the peculiarity of modern perspectives that is not possible in other worldviews. As Rotman explains, “It thus has a dual relation to the system of monetary exchange, being both internal to the system as money able to buy goods and be exchanged for appropriate amounts of currency, and external to it – originating the very medium of exchange which allows money to be a commodity”

(Rotman 1987:25).

The wonderful thing about modern is that, as a sign, it is pure. It is an idea that has been separated from the impurity of the mundane. An ounce of gold or a thousand dollars in a bank account will not rust away. Inflation may change the purchasing power over time, but a thousand dollars in a bank account will always be a thousand dollars.<sup>44</sup> Its beauty and its elegance is that modern money is a symbol of eternity in a world of impermanence.

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<sup>44</sup> Barring, of course, an intervention such as a revaluation of the currency, which have been more common historically than one might expect.

## ***Environment***

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe and America witnessed the rise of Romanticism as a response to the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. Poets like Thoreau, Blake, and Wordsworth pined for simpler times of a communion with nature; it was the early rumblings of what would later be known as the environmental movement. It is, however, only possible to wax poetic on the virtues of a communion with nature with the prior existence of a dissociation from nature. Even to speak of “nature” or “the environment” already assumes a differentiation from it — a “not me.” This is possible through the identification of an individual perceiving subject and its dissociation from its surroundings. Modern perspectives perceive the environment as separate, outside, and subordinate.

Modern worldviews see the environment as being vastly non-sentient. That a dog or a cow is a sentient being is clearly acknowledged in modern worldviews, however, a chunk of bauxite is not. This can be contrasted with energetic perspectives that generally perceive everything as being endowed with some level of sentience, including stone, water, and wood. Modern worldviews tend to make a distinction between living organisms and inanimate, inorganic objects, the dreaded formless, genderless noun: thing. The term thing in English evokes the utility that modern worldviews ascribe to the inanimate world: it is an insult when applied to a person, implying that his humanity can be disregarded and the “thing” exists only to serve human interest. This orientation of utility extends to living sentient beings in a reification (in its literal sense of transmogrifying the perceived object into a *res*, a thing) of

the living world. It is by this modern reification that a forest can be seen as a mechanism for producing board-feet of lumber and cows can be lactating for years. Scientific positivism, that knowledge can only be derived from the observation of empirical facts, denies a spirit of things, since “spirit” by definition has evaded empirical observation, it thus denies not only the validity, but the very existence of energetic perspectives. The consequence is to perceive “things,” rivers and mountains, that are soulless, but also deer, salmon, and mosquitoes that are soulless.

Similar to moral perspectives, mankind is separate and distinct from nature. He maintains the position of privilege that he had in moral perceptions, over and above the beasts and herbage, as a steward who subdues the land, however, this position is not a responsibility granted by God in a divine hierarchy of mutually dependent relationships, it is a right that mankind has claimed for himself based on his faculty of reason, which sets him uniquely apart from the flora and fauna. Once again, this can be directly contrasted with energetic perspectives, which perceive all matter and energy as manifestations of divinity in a pulsating rhythm; a human life is a temporary fluctuation in the cosmic energy that manifests in tactile form. Modern man exists independently of any cosmic energy, being the result of eons of chance mutations of a handful of organic molecules that had the astronomically minute chance to form on this, the third rock from the sun. God has no place, since He does not stand up to the scrutiny of positivism, and man is not an immanent part of his surroundings but alone in a savage and dangerous world.

Modern worldviews see the natural world through the lens of rational utility. This means that we would be daft not to make the most of all the bounty of the world. This

connects back to how a forest can be reduced to a metric for producing a certain quantity of lumber; there is, certainly, a difference between a forest and a tree farm. The former is a biome, a living ecosystem, and the latter is a capitalized and commoditized means to an end that negates the myriad other lifeforms who inhabit the place. This difference between forest and tree farm, between a living biome and a commoditized production mechanism, is mediated by the state. Escobar argues that the state is a necessary interface between people and nature in modernity. “The capitalization of nature is greatly mediated by the state; indeed, the state must be seen as an interface between capital and nature, human beings and space. The capitalization of nature has been central to capitalism ever since primitive accumulation and the enclosure of the commons” (Escobar 1995:200). The interface of the state aids in creating a level of separation between folk and nature and it furthermore supports the notion that the market requires the state, since the state is mediating all interactions, even interactions with nature.

The extreme neo-liberal philosophy of promoting the private ownership of all of the earth is a sympathetic modern interpretation of the fundamentally energetic principle of connection to and reverence for the land. The logic is that the interests of that piece of land are safeguarded by the owner since, like any prudent functionary, the owner wants to protect his investment and secure a positive return. This reflects an inkling of the life-as-gift cosmovision of energetic perspectives, however, expresses it in the language of modern perspectives, which argues it in terms of utility, functionality, and self-interest, and posits the human being as a separate entity in a detached position from which it is possible to own the land. Stemming from a place of care for the environment, advocating private ownership of all



of the environment assumes a human subject who is separate and superordinate from his possession.

### ***Modern Peaces***

Modern peaces are primarily peaces out of justice and security. The traditional separation of these peaces has been that the peace of security was kept by the state and the peace of justice was kept by the church (or religious authority). As modernity is a secular understanding, the role of justice is transferred from the spiritual to the mundane, and then is thus assumed by the state. Furthermore, peace is largely perceived in contrast to war, negatively defined as the absence of conflict, correlating to Galtung's concept of a negative peace (Galtung 1964), and peace is conceptualized as a contract. As a contract and with the state as a guarantor of both justice and security, peace can be brokered with other legitimate nation-state actors; this is the philosophical underpinning of the United Nations' system. Finally, since peace is a contract, it can be built and maintained by rational and formulaic means.

The effects of the worldview of modern peaces can be seen through the spread of the neologism "peacebuilding." Peacebuilding got perhaps its biggest existential endorsement with the creation of the UN Peace Building Commission in 2005. The notion that peace can be built received the status of institutionalization in the UN system, thus concretizing modern prescriptive peaces. It assumes that the same faculties of objective observation and empirical analysis that are used to build a bridge can be applied to build peace.

Modern peaces logically require the institutions of modernity. They are based on the nation-state of Hobbes, representative democratic governance, the rule of law, written

codices, independent judiciary and press, and the international capitalist world system. They necessitate a universalizing ethic that converts and subsumes the rest of the world to the patterns and assumptions of the dominant culture which has propagated modern worldviews as the One Truth in the name of the emancipatory power of development. Development is then a catch-all phrase implying everything that is necessary to fit into modern worldviews and progress along the solitary prescribed path to peace and prosperity. The universal peaces of modernity translate inevitably into peace for some and unpeace for others. The fault lines basically follow the contours of the families of peaces because the universality of modern peaces presuppose unified epistemological basis.

### ***Conclusion of Modern Chapter***

We have seen that despite competing theories as to the precise nature of modernity, there is a broad consensus on certain tenets. Following the definition of modernity as a state of mind, modernity has been defined as a way of interpreting the world with focus on the Hobbesian nation-state, Cartesian reductionism, and Newtonian mechanism. Elaborating on the tenets of modernity, we looked at vectoral conceptions of time and how they reinforce ideas of scarcity and a belief in progress. That discussion led into modern interpretations of justice, which emphasize immediate secular and material satisfaction. Much of the chapter was dedicated to explaining how the nation-state is an institution that influences most aspects of human interaction. It creates and actively maintains a separate sphere of human activity that can be identified as the economy, which is an aggregate indicator for the well-being of the nation-state. We saw how growth and development supported by vectoral chronosophy are thus

necessary to progress towards the future goal of peace and well-being. Next, the discussion turned to modern money, defined as a bullion currency and the effects of deictic paper money. Modern man as separate and over and above nature was elaborated in the section on the environment. Finally, modern peaces were summarized with emphasis on their prescriptive nature.

Even if I personally disagree, I can appreciate the simple elegance of modern perspectives. I can imagine that everything would be work out alright if everyone had enough money. We could all buy the things we need, and not owe anything to anybody. There could be clean and conflict-free interactions of private and discreet individuals who function within clearly established rules that keep everybody safe. We need to grow the economy at any cost to make sure that everybody has jobs and access to money to be able to participate in this orderly civilization. People have the means to look after themselves and can be perfectly independent. There is a beauty of the libertarian trust in people and a faith for the market to provide.

However, if I take into account the perspectives on peace from Rengifo (2011) and Fasheh (2011), then the violence of the universalism becomes apparent. Entering into a worldwide industrialized and formalized economy is not a mere matter of a rational choice to increase marginal utility, rather it requires changes on personal, communal, social, and spiritual levels that may very well make me deaf to the voices on which my own cultural interpretation of peace is based. To that degree, changes is a mere euphemism for the complete annihilation of the existing social order. If that is the case, if modern peaces come at the expense of other peaces, then I would say, “No, thank you,” which brings us to the

starting point of postmodern perspectives.

## 5 Postmodern Economics

*Without an organizing center, postmodern man is lost, wandering in a wilderness of confusing plurality. But, paradoxically, being bereft of set moral landmarks, he is in a unique position to undertake a new journey.*

Keen 1991:111

“Postmodern” has become a somewhat cliché term, the precise meaning of which is often murky. In being applied to describe so many distinct and often contradictory phenomena, from architecture to literature, to philosophy, it borders on becoming a hollow and meaningless concept. This chapter will define and elaborate on postmodern approaches to peace and postmodern approaches to economics. As an initial broad stroke, postmodern refers to a reaction to, and disillusionment with, modernity.

This chapter focuses on what postmodern means as applied to economics. I will begin in the first section by defining what *postmodern* means for this work. I will be exploring a conception of a postmodern approach to economics that is essentially a reaction to and critique of the truths of modernity with some emphasis on the dissolution of the logic of the nation state. That will lead into a section on postmodern interpretations of time, discussing the inverse vector of linear time and space-time as a unified four dimensional concept. Justice will be discussed with emphasis on symbolic justice. Relationality will again be explained through the logic of the nation-state and post-development theory will be presented. Xenomoney will be argued as characteristic of postmodern interpretations of currency, being a sign that stands in for a sign. The section on the environment posits that the idea of man versus nature, of mankind being separate from and in opposition to the rest of the

natural world, is epistemologically wrong even within the terms of modernity, and will briefly discuss deep ecology. The chapter will end with a summary of postmodern approaches to peace and some concluding remarks.

### ***What is postmodern?***

One cannot talk about *postmodern* without talking about *modernity*. Therefore, this chapter is largely an extension of the previous chapter. Following Dietrich's observations, the *post-* postmodern does not mean an epoch that comes after modernity, but rather a concurrent reaction to modernity. Otherwise, it would be named not postmodern, but a new name that described the defining characteristics of the new paradigm (Dietrich & Sützl 1997:283). Postmodern thus refers to an orientation to life that is critical of modernity.

As far as the term "postmodern" goes, it stems back to Jean-François Lyotard who, in 1979, wrote a description of what he called the postmodern condition. As an intellectual current, many of those writers and thinkers who fall under the category of postmodernists were inspired and influenced by the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, who lived in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The joke is that the first postmodern philosopher was Descartes, because the first affirmations of modernity inevitably carry with them their own antithesis. What is known as postmodern is thus the extreme instances of modernity, as Giddens calls it (Giddens 1990), when the logic of modernity dissolves and folds back on itself.

One of the difficulties of pinning down what is postmodern is that many people avoid the label. Few self-identify as being a postmodernist; some who are clearly postmodernists

vehemently deny it.<sup>45</sup> What I consider postmodernism also goes by other names, such as critical theory. My reading of Zygmunt Bauman's "liquid modernity" (Bauman 2000) and Ulrich Beck's "second modernity" (Beck 1986) is that they are personalized names for postmodern theory. I have chosen to use the term postmodern primarily because it is what Wolfgang Dietrich uses in his trilogy on the families of peaces, and I am following and elaborating on his work and categories, and secondly because I deem it to be more widely used than others. My intention is not to gloss over nuanced differentiations that authors like Bauman and Beck have painstakingly elaborated, rather my purpose is to explore expressions of postmodern peaces in economics, not to stir up debate on whether this moment in human history should be called modern, postmodern, late-late-modern, or even something completely different.

In sum, postmodern refers to the fallen faith of the promises of modernity. Lyotard defined the postmodern condition as "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard 1979:xxiv); gone was the faith in grand narratives of nation, citizen, and freedom. Ken Wilber sums up postmodernism as a "worldview characterized by antihierarchy, social construction of reality, strong equality, multiculturalism and relativistic value systems" (Wilber 2000:50). From a modern perspective, this can seem disturbing, nihilistic, and impossibly relativistic, however, although those are valid fears, as we shall see, there is more to it than that.

### ***Post-modernity and Post-modernism***

It is important to differentiate between postmodernity and postmodernism. Simply put, postmodernity refers to the postmodern condition, which is to say the disillusionment,

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<sup>45</sup> Jürgen Habermas, for example, was highly critical of postmodernism (Habermas 1981).

anomy, and ennui that creep out of the cracks of a shattered worldview. Postmodernism is a philosophical standpoint that reacts to a postmodern condition, choosing to see it as socially constructed, antihierarchical, multicultural, and relativistic. Dietrich cites the publication of Lyotard's *La condition postmoderne* (1979) as the inflection point between “post-modernity and post-modernism or from the postmodern condition to the post-modern cognition,” (Dietrich 2011:7) because it made a postmodern wisdom available. It pointed a finger and named a phenomenon that many were sensing, a *Zeitgeist*, and made it possible to talk about.

It bears repeating that neither postmodernity nor postmodernism refer to an epoch that follows modernity. Dietrich outlines that postmodernism

is an aspect of the modern condition, because reasonable doubt about the values of modern principles was there from their very inception. In this sense, not even Nietzsche was the ‘founder’ of what we could call a post-modern philosophy. Long before him, philosophers like Rousseau and Hume thought in a ‘post-modern’ way, as did the skeptical empiricism of Hobbes. Only the political impact of post-modern thought became stronger when the emotional and intellectual condition of post-modern life, that is the frustration about the failed promises of modernism, became increasingly evident to more and more people. (Dietrich 2011:9)

Here Dietrich argues that postmodernism as a current of thought or a way of thinking can be found at many points in history, and it was because of an increasingly acute experience of postmodernity, which is again to say the failed promises of modernism, that the seeds of postmodernism fell on fertile soil.

Postmodernity is a modern response to the postmodern condition, whereas postmodernism twists (in the Heideggerian sense of *verwinden*) the truths of modernism. Postmodernism “challenges our minds by denying the legitimacy or even the very existence of any ultimate principle and reduces us to a relational, but rational, small and ‘weak’



multitude of social interactions” (Dietrich 2011:10). These dual reactions to the postmodern condition give rise to two prevailing postmodern conceptions of peace; one is a reaction of postmodernism, following weak thought (Vattimo 1984) and radical plurality, and the other is a modern reaction to the postmodern condition. Taylor describes how the former is a peace out of harmony and the latter is a peace out of security.

The first is derived from perceiving this crisis as liberation from static monological notions of the world to a much more flexible view of plurality and diversity. From an internal perspective of peace, this harkens back to energetic understandings of peace out of harmony. The second conception occurs as a backlash against the postmodern condition. When identities are collapsing all around, a deep fear or anxiety can arise producing a need to defend oneself against the threats which are actually internal but perceived as “all around.” This is a view found in many neoliberal conceptions of the world and perhaps most famously articulated by Samuel Huntington (Huntington 1992). (Taylor 2013:7-8)

To try to simplify, we begin with the tenets of modernity that promise peace and prosperity. Supported by mounting evidence from world events such as world wars, gas chambers, and atomic bombs, there is growing suspicion that there is something wrong with the promises of modernity; this is what Lyotard labelled the postmodern condition. In the face of this, that there is no god to save us, no final Truth to believe in, the modern reaction is to tighten the screws of modernity; the answer is more rationality and the defensive reaction to perceived threats on all fronts. Postmodernism is then a further reaction that perceives the world, not in monolithic, Manichaeian terms, but as a mosaic of shifting tiles, as a thousand plateaus, or as the rhizomatic network of roots in which every point is a potential centre (Deleuze & Guattari 1980).

## Postmodern approaches to economics

Returning to the model of Eros and Agape, Agape without Eros turns into Thanatos: Compassion for the many without Love for the one turns into Death. In postmodern approaches, as Dietrich provocatively asserts, Thanatos is rampant (Dietrich 2012:187). This sentiment is echoed by Jean Baudrillard.

But we know what these hidden places signify: the factory no longer exists because labour is everywhere; the prison no longer exists because arrests and confinements pervade social space-time; the asylum no longer exists because psychological control and therapy have been generalised and become banal; the school no longer exists because every strand of social progress is shot through with discipline and pedagogical training; capital no longer exists (nor does its Marxist critique) because the law of value has collapsed into self-managed survival in all its forms, etc., etc. The cemetery no longer exists because modern cities have entirely taken over their function: they are ghost towns, cities of death. If the great operational metropolis is the final form of an entire culture, then, quite simply, ours is a culture of death. (Baudrillard 1976:126-127)

As the rules that carefully govern the functioning of the national economy break down and retreat into symbolic gestures, the systems by which truth was assured are shaken, a relativistic death occurs. The currents of economic theory come to their own extreme expressions of modernity that contains their own death.

The Austrian School of economics is the foremost case of an extreme instance of modernity. Founded by Carl Menger in 1871, famous followers of the school include William Stanley Jevons, Léon Walras, Eugen Böhm-Bawerk, Ludwig von Mises, and Friedrich Hayek. The Austrian School expressed the peak of liberal economic thought in the twentieth century, and took it to its extreme zenith, thus dissolving it into postmodernism. Although there may have been traces in his predecessors (the indeterminate subjective nature of micro-

economics in the Austrian School from Ludwig von Mises, for example), the door to postmodern perspectives is opened with Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950)(Schumpeter 1942) who believed that capitalism would eventually collapse under its own weight.

What opens the door to postmodern approaches to economics are the inherent contradictions of modern economics. What makes these paradoxes of modernity especially interesting is that they are contradictory even in the terms of modernity; by its own logic they are not tenable. These chinks in the armour are where postmodern perspectives flourish. Wallerstein, building on Weber and Marx, outlines the inherent contradiction in modern economics (capitalism), especially on the psychological level, that what is good for capitalism is not good for the capitalist (Wallerstein in Balibar & Wallerstein 1988). The obvious example is monopoly: it is great for the capitalist and detrimental to the rest of the system.

To offer an elaboration of the contradictions of modernity, I will turn to the words of Immanuel Wallerstein to prove his point.

The basic problem resides in our imagery about how capitalism works. Because capitalism requires the free flow of the factors of production—of labour, capital and commodities—we assume that it requires, or at least that capitalists desire, a completely free flow, whereas in fact it requires and capitalists desire a partially free flow. Because capitalism operates via market mechanisms, based on the ‘law’ of supply and demand, we assume that it requires, or capitalists desire, a perfectly competitive market, whereas it requires and capitalists desire markets that can be both utilized and circumvented at the same time, an economy that places competition and monopoly side by side in an appropriate mix. Because capitalism is a system that rewards individualist behaviour, we assume that it requires, or capitalists desire, that everyone act on individualist motivations, whereas in fact it requires and capitalists desire that both bourgeois and proletarians incorporate a heavy dosage of anti-individualist social orientation into their mentalities. Because capitalism is a system which

has been built on the juridical foundation of property rights, we assume that it requires and capitalists desire that property be sacrosanct and that private property rights extend into ever more realms of social interaction, whereas in reality the whole history of capitalism has been one of a steady decline, not an extension, of property rights. Because capitalism is a system in which capitalists have always argued for the right to make economic decisions on purely economic grounds, we assume that this means they are in fact allergic to political interference in their decisions, whereas they have always and consistently sought to utilize the state machineries and welcomed the concept of political primacy. (Wallerstein in Balibar & Wallerstein 1988:144-145)

Wallerstein illustrates that modern economics actually requires these contradictions in order to function, which is perhaps the biggest contradiction of them all. It is the modern paradox: the system disallows anything outside the market economy and yet depends on these areas of exile (unpaid work, volunteerism) for its very survival. Modernity requires the commons and yet rejects its logic (Escobar 1995:198); it espouses universalist values but thrives off of racism (Wallerstein in Balibar & Wallerstein 1988:34). These contradictions, which are an intrinsic part of modern economics, are what allow for postmodern twisting.

This is inherently part of the postmodern condition: facing the facts that what is good for the goose is not necessarily good for the gander. The unofficial motto of the post-war boom in the USA was “what is good for GM is good for America,” however it was a leitmotiv that did not stand up to scrutiny: a pair of boots that lasts a lifetime is good for me but bad for business; a suit that is always in fashion is good for me but bad for the tailor. The contradictions seem to spawn endless intractable dilemmas. UN climate change conferences have run into this problem time again: I may sincerely desire to reduce greenhouse gases, but I do not want to reduce production — dilemma.

A feeling of being stuck between a rock and a hard place is perhaps the signature

sensation of the postmodern condition: contradictory; paradoxical; a double bind; damned if you do, damned if you do not. In an article on the new economy of the digital age, DeLong and Summers say it is clear that capitalism is in decline due to its inherent contradictions. Moreover, they maintain that it is not clear what will take its place (DeLong & Summers 2001:54). What is more interesting than their assertion is what they dare not speculate. This is the quintessential postmodern position: what we have is wrong, but I cannot tell you what would be better because I do not believe in grand theories, grand narratives, or solutions, thus to provide an answer would be to negate the only thing that I still believe in. I personally may find this an intellectually prudent position to take, to focus on description rather than prediction, to ponder reservedly rather than staking my reputation on a hopeful guess, nevertheless, it outlines clearly the limit of a postmodern perspective as a lens of enquiry.

The single clearest way of describing postmodern approaches to economics is that the vector is wrong. Instead of progressing continuously towards greater prosperity on the road to peace, postmodern perspectives see the world going the wrong way on a one-way track. This means that if expansion of industry means greater environmental degradation, then we need a contraction of industry.

Herein lies a key distinction between modern and postmodern approaches to economics. Since modern perspectives see growth as paramount, then any increase in throughput is for the best; postmodern perspectives, by seeing infinite desires vying for finite resources, see any increase in throughput as for the worst.

Kenneth Boulding offers an illustration of the difference between modern and postmodern approaches that follows this distinction. He refers to an open system economy as

a “cowboy economy” and a closed system economy as a “spaceman economy.”

The difference between the two types of economy becomes most apparent in the attitude towards consumption. In the cowboy economy, consumption is regarded as a good thing and production likewise; and the success of the economy is measured by the amount of the throughput from the “factors of production,” a part of which, at any rate, is extracted from the reservoirs of raw materials and noneconomic objects, and another part of which is output into the reservoirs of pollution. If there are infinite reservoirs from which material can be obtained and into which effluvia can be deposited, then the throughput is at least a plausible measure of the success of the economy. The gross national product is a rough measure of this total throughput. (Boulding 1966:9)

Boulding’s critique continues:

By contrast, in the spaceman economy, throughput is by no means a desideratum, and is indeed to be regarded as something to be minimized rather than maximized. The essential measure of the success of the economy is not production and consumption at all, but the nature, extent, quality, and complexity of the total capital stock, including in this the state of the human bodies and minds included in the system. In the spaceman economy, what we are primarily concerned with is stock maintenance, and any technological change which results in the maintenance of a given total stock with a lessened throughput (that is, less production and consumption) is clearly a gain. This idea that both production and consumption are bad things rather than good things is very strange to economists, who have been obsessed with the income-flow concepts to the exclusion, almost, of capital-stock concepts. (Boulding 1966:9)

In modern perspectives, increasing throughput is essential and unquestioned, however, in Boulding’s perspective, it is rather unrestrained, unfettered, loose-rein throughput that is seen as bad because resources are finite. The vector of progress is wrong and yet we are stuck in an apparent dilemma of either forwards or backwards on a one-dimensional timeline.

One of the consequences of a postmodern approach to modern secularism is to see modernity (there included scientific positivism) as a religion. From such a perspective, free-

market capitalist ideology is clearly a religion, complete with its caste of high priests (Chicago educated economists), ritual sacrifices (adjustments of prime lending rates), and an omnipotent disembodied deity (the economy). Since in the transition from moral to modern paradigms the word of God no longer sufficed to keep the populace in line (Smith & Max-Neef 2011:28), God's word had to be redressed as Adam Smith's invisible hand. John McMurtry (McMurtry 1998:57-84; McMurtry 2004:151-182) argues that the belief in a self-regulating market is a transmogrification of God into a pseudo-secular package, which may explain how Adam Smith's passing comment in *The Wealth of Nations* became a defining metaphor for the next two centuries.<sup>46</sup> Polanyi also picks up on this thread arguing that the market is a substitute for God.

Labor should be dealt with as that which it was, a commodity which must find its price in the market. The laws of commerce were the laws of nature and consequently the laws of God. What else was this than an appeal from the weaker magistrate to the stronger, from the justice of the peace to the all-powerful pangs of hunger? To the politician and administrator laissez-faire was simply a principle of the ensurance of law and order, at minimum cost. Let the market be given charge of the poor, and things will look after themselves. (Polanyi 1944:122)

Polanyi argues here that the creation of a labour market (and therefore capitalism) was a way to deal with pauperism by equating God to market; faith in the market replaced faith in God.

David Graeber makes an interesting and almost satirical comparison of postmodernism to neoliberalism (or globalization as it appears in the text). He claims that they both followed three key themes. Firstly, they both simply occurred as the result of

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<sup>46</sup> Although the invisible hand is the most memorable image and widely associated with him, Smith only mentions it once in the entire work. My analysis of it is rather phenomenological in that it matters little at this point what Adam Smith meant to say, but just as Hamlet is reduced to a skull and soliloquy or Don Quixote to battling windmills, Adam Smith is reduced to an invisible hand.

inexorable processes but by the fault of no one and must be accepted as the new state of reality. Secondly, everything is broken and fragmented and there are no possible unified dreams of changing society. Thirdly, we are left with some agency in our personal and behavioural choices to be both subversive and democratic (Graeber 2001:x-xi). However, he points out that they differ on one important point.

There is, of course, one enormous difference between the two arguments. The central claim of those who celebrated postmodernism is that we have entered a world in which all totalizing systems—science, humanity, nation, truth, and so forth—have all been shattered; in which there are no longer any grand mechanisms for stitching together a world now broken into incommensurable fragments. One can no longer even imagine that there could be a single standard of value by which to measure things. The neoliberals on the other hand are singing the praises of a global market that is, in fact, the single greatest and most monolithic system of measurement ever created, a totalizing system that would subordinate everything—every object, every piece of land, every human capacity or relationship—on the planet to a single standard of value. (Graeber 2001:xi)

This points to the difference between postmodernism and a modern response to postmodernity. Claiming the universality of the market, as Graeber describes, in the face of the crumbled edifices of the postmodern condition, is clinging to the last vestiges of the absolutism of modernity. It is the final toehold of certainty in the face of the prospect of eternal relativism.

I have been clearly focusing on the families of peaces as atemporal states of mind that have occurred across cultures and throughout history, rather than historical epochs. That being said, I have also introduced time frames during which a particular family of peaces was the dominant mode of thinking, although certainly not the only one. Postmodern peaces were conceived along with modernity and thus can hardly be said to exist independently. For the



purpose of delineating postmodern approaches to economics, I do want to point out a crucial turning point. The dissolution of the international gold standard by the USA in 1971 marks that divergence. It is no coincidence, as Waswo posits (Waswo 1996:9), that post-structuralist analyses of textual indeterminacy, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and Julia Kristeva, arise around the same time as the abolition of the gold standard.

### ***Space-Time***

The summary of postmodern interpretations of time is simply that the vector is wrong. Modern interpretations see time as a line along which we humans inexorably progress, however, the postmodern twist of that view is that we are heading in the wrong direction. Time, in this sense, is linear and infinite, however, the human experience is finite and time is therefore running out. This existential pressure was discussed in the previous chapter on modern perspectives, however, the reactions to this pressure change in postmodern perspectives — from working hard to engineer a paradise on earth to questioning the basis of what constitutes truth. The nature of time, as finite and fleeting, may not have changed, however, the orientation to it is shifted 180 degrees. Furthermore, the scientific discoveries in physics of the twentieth century reposition time as a fourth dimension of a cohesive whole of space-time. I place this cosmological assertion in the family of postmodern perspectives because, following general relativity, space-time is non-absolute and pliable, perhaps in a way similar to the twisting of Heidegger's *Verwindung*.

Zygmunt Bauman sums this up succinctly. Bauman is writing neither about peace and conflict nor economics, nevertheless, his reflections are topical and poignant. His reflections

are on the transition to postmodern perspectives.

The first is the gradual collapse and swift decline of early modern illusion: of the belief that there is an end to the road along which we proceed, an attainable *telos* of historical change, a state of perfection to be reached tomorrow, next year or next millennium, some sort of good society, just society and conflict-free society in all or some of its many postulated aspects: of steady equilibrium between supply and demand and satisfaction of all needs; of perfect order, in which everything is allocated to its right place, nothing out of place persists and no place is in doubt; of human affairs becoming totally transparent thanks to knowing everything needing to be known; of complete mastery over the future — so complete that it puts paid to all contingency, contention, ambivalence and unanticipated consequences of human undertakings. (Bauman 2000:29)

He describes the problem of modern justice, which projects justice to some future date and is therefore not available here and now, and that the said justice promises to bring peace (“some sort of good society”) in the future. Above all, though, this passage draws attention to the potential malaise that the disillusionment of the “*telos* of historical change” might bring about.

Since modernity seemed to be creating more atom bombs than materialist Utopias, it is then perhaps easy to sympathize with feelings that more progress is the opposite of what is needed. Social movements on issues from nuclear disarmament to environmental protection are rooted in this postmodern interpretation of time as the progression of history heading in the wrong direction. It both bolsters Marxist ideology, by encouraging potential revolutionaries to alter the status quo, and contradicts it, by rejecting the idea that history follows an inevitable trajectory. The clarion call of the environmental movement is that civilization is doomed and action must be taken now, in fact, yesterday would have been better because time is running out. This is of course not to deny or minimize the immediacy

of the concerns of the environmental movement; it is rather a description of the perception of time of postmodern perspectives. Kenneth Boulding was an early voice making this call as well as John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* (Galbraith 1958), the thesis of which captures the decadence of modernity and the postmodern twist, basically saying that more is not better. A further notable turning point was the publication of *Limits to Growth*, the report to the Club of Rome, by Meadows *et al.* (1972). In the sphere of economics, the vector of time becomes the vector of growth and as such postmodern interpretations of time call for the reversal of growth.

Questioning growth is a basic part of postmodern approaches to economics, however, in the mainstream of contemporary society it is controversial at best. Even in the wake of millennial financial crises, criticism of the growth paradigm is reserved for, as Jackson quips, "lunatics, idealists and revolutionaries" (Jackson 2009:14). Throughout the global financial crisis of 2008 it appeared non-negotiable that growth must continue (Jackson 2009:21). It was furthermore commonly argued to justify the 2008 bailout in the USA that the alternative, letting the banks fail, was simply unthinkable (Jackson 2009:19). This attitude shows the enduring power of modern perspectives in that the truths must continue even in the face of the postmodern condition by which they have been demonstrated to be false. To claim that alternatives are unthinkable denies dreaming and nips any new thoughts in the bud before they have any time to unfold; it stymies argument, innovation, and alternatives. In fact, thinking about alternatives might not nearly be as bad as the fears of those who caution not to. Not thinking about it allows the possibility to imagine much worse and feeds our own fear and paranoia.

The arrow of time pointing the wrong way is itself and further creates a critical stance on the concepts of economics. Clearly, environmentalism becomes an imperative movement because more economic growth equally means more environmental degradation and if the economic progress is not stopped, then every last hectare of forest will be logged and milled. The arrow of progress points to globalization and consolidation of resource supply lines, so therefore postmodern approaches embrace local and decentralized production. Since development is the mechanism for economic growth, then development must be deconstructed because it is promoting policies that head in the wrong direction and thus post-development as a field of study is born. For the most part, the very idea of prosperity without growth in GDP is a complete anathema (Jackson 2009:4), however, postmodern approaches are open to that possibility and, moreover, scream that it is absolutely necessary.

Whereas modern approaches presuppose the law of scarcity, postmodern approaches flip the arrow and focus on abundance. Postmodern approaches see that a presumption of scarcity no longer makes sense, which discursively foments the desire to reverse the arrow of time, and since technology may allow for such abundance, there is no rational reason why we could not live in a paradigm of abundance. This is the position that Jeremy Rifkin has taken in *The Zero Marginal Cost Society* (2015). One of his arguments is that technology permits the satisfaction of many needs at zero or near-zero marginal cost. This can be quickly demonstrated by Internet file-sharing. Once the fixed costs of recording and producing a song are covered, the marginal cost of the millionth compact disc may only be a few cents, however, the marginal cost for the millionth download is dramatically less. Rifkin makes the case for massive online courses and 3D printing, which are already examples of near-zero

marginal cost services. Court cases and legal battles are being waged over this topic since file-sharing opened a world of abundance but was attacked at every turn when that worldview came into conflict with the assumed model of scarcity.

The idea of shifting from a paradigm of scarcity to a paradigm of abundance is a postmodern endeavour because it is exactly the same as saying the vector is wrong. Baudrillard's critique is that neither scarcity nor abundance refer to anything in reality "because neither retains a reference, nor therefore an antagonistic reality, and therefore because the system is indifferent to which one it employs" (Baudrillard 1976:33). Both are terms divorced from the signified that can be equally and meaninglessly attributed to the postmodern condition. Furthermore, Baudrillard asserts that the economy "needs this dialectical tension between scarcity and abundance" in order to reproduce itself (Baudrillard 1976:33). "For the system to reproduce itself, however, it now requires only the *mythical operation of the economy*" (Baudrillard 1976:33).

As is the state of affairs for postmodern approaches, shifting from a perspective of scarcity to a perspective of abundance just swaps one pathology for another. Perceiving these two twinned concepts as polar opposites secures an ontological perspective of duality and binary choices. Again, this is the fundamental problem with many aspects of postmodern approaches: by leaving a dualistic framework intact, they condemned themselves to dilemma. This is the critique from a transrational perspective which holds true that, by holding two simultaneously contradictory truths, Lederach's "haiku attitude" (Lederach 2005), it is possible to perceive a greater truth beyond the paradox. The perspective on time, therefore, that progress is digression, entrenches linear thinking, thus closing possibilities.

Since postmodern perspectives on time see the path of progress marching in the wrong direction, it opens up the possibility of understanding time as a human and intellectual construct. Time perception can be seen as a physiological filter that allows us to sequence and compare events that may or may not be occurring at the same time in some other frame of reference, but are perceived through the possibility of relativistic time dilation to be separate or simultaneous. The idea that time is not an empty container in which events occur but rather conjured by the observer can be seen in the philosophy of Leibniz (Vailati 1997) and Kant (Kant 1781). Although Kant is a pillar of the Enlightenment pantheon, in this case his rather post-structuralist view on time appears appropriate for postmodern interpretations.<sup>47</sup> Heidegger's interpretation of time is that we do not exist inside of time, as if it were a container like the modern interpretation of spatial dimensions, rather we *are* time (Heidegger 1927). Following this same logic, the concept of finite (as opposed to infinite) does not mean an end, a limitation, or a cut-off, but that which can be brought into being (Rotman 1993:158). Therefore, the finite nature of space-time is limited by the sensibilities of the human observer.

The idea of a unified theory that encompasses and explains all phenomena is a modern dream. Space-time, postulated in 1905 by Hermann Minkowski, is an example of the realization of that sort of dream that unites two radically different human experiences under one mathematical model. In some ways then, the proposition of space-time is a modern undertaking since it is inline with the science of the time, the early twentieth century, which

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47 This only further illustrates two key points: firstly, that postmodernism is a reaction to modernity, not a historical epoch following modernity, and therefore all modern thought contains the seed of its own postmodern critique; secondly, that all the families of peaces exist simultaneously and at all times, only some patterns can be observed as to which one is the dominant or guiding principle in a specific demarcated object of analysis.

reduced everything to simple explicable phenomena: quarks, electro-magnetic interactions, and four-dimensional space-time. Minkowski's space-time creates the non-Euclidean geometry necessary for Einstein's Special relativity, which concludes that space and time are not absolute quantities depending on the reference of the observer. I therefore count a modern concept of space and time to be two absolute and empty vessels in which things exist and events occur. Space-time thus implies a subjective observer who is, by the act of observing, affecting the object of observation. This is the unavoidable twist of space-time.

### ***Postmodern Interpretations of Justice***

Justice means that others must change before I do. If modern interpretations of justice focus on changing external factors so that I may experience peace, postmodern interpretations of justice focus on the internal world. This shift of focus from the external to the internal is a fundamental difference between modern and postmodern approaches to peace and justice. Since justice is an internal experience, it therefore can be found in our relationships with others. The maxim that justice is paying one's debts is no longer tenable because postmodern perspectives do not see debt as a moral question. Therefore, for postmodern interpretations of economics, justice is an ephemeral concept with no concrete grounding.

In the previous chapter on modern interpretations of justice, I made the case that the nation-state was the arbiter of relationships and the guarantor of justice. Justice is an institutional concept, relying on the religion or the state for its execution. The nation-state, or at least the belief in the mythology of the nation-state, crumbles in postmodern perspectives, which I will go into in a little more detail in the following section. There are many other

examples, to be sure, however the atrocities of the twentieth century in Auschwitz and Hiroshima are the lightning rod moments of modern history. The calculating rationality, scientific innovation, and improved efficiency of centralized authority, the results of the faculties that set us humans apart from beasts, were supposed to bring us the good, the true, and the beautiful, but instead harnessed the human shadow and brought suffering to millions of souls. There is little wonder that faith would founder. Ultimately the postmodern critique stems from the failure of the state to guarantee social justice.

Under these conditions, the truth of the tenets of modernity is thrown into doubt and incredulity and thus there is a cognition that these truths are receding. Lyotard describes this as a transition from the postmodern condition to a postmodern cognition (Lyotard 1979), shifting from living under postmodern conditions to realizing that one is living under postmodern conditions. Since, under modern conditions, the state was the institutional home of justice, being doled out by legislatures, courts, and economic policy, if confidence in the state were eroded, evaporated, or sublimated, if its authority and monopoly on justice were called into doubt, then a new way of interpreting, of even conceiving of justice, would have to be found.

This is where postmodern interpretations of justice enter. The absolute justice of the state is replaced by the smaller justice that we can find in our interpersonal relationships. Under such an understanding justice (just like peace) cannot be seen as a final state, but rather as a relationship that must be constantly renegotiated, recalibrated, and is in constant flux. A judge can rule according to the law, but is powerless to affect the myriad strands of the web of relationships that brought the case to the courts. Postmodern interpretations of



justice are therefore personal, local, temporal, and constantly shifting.

It may appear as an insurmountable problem that justice is not absolute, and from a uniquely moral or modern perspective, perhaps it is. It creates a dilemma when my justice is not your justice. Postmodernism acknowledges that justice is a subjective experience and as such there are billions of justices on earth. If the subjective experiences of justice of two individuals are mutually exclusive, what possibility is there of peace? This question is always in the background questioning the grand narrative of an absolute peace, and yet, postmodern approaches to peace say, yes, it is possible to reconcile apparently contradictory interpretations of justice. It is done in our interpersonal relationships, in small, contextualized, and impermanent circumstances. We can imagine a mosaic of Deleuze and Guattari's shifting tiles (Deleuze & Guattari 1980), in which there is never a rigidly structured whole, yet within the mosaic, the fractured surfaces, our contact boundaries, can come together in some surprisingly beautiful ways.

Justice is often equated to what is fair, and in modern economics, material justice is equivalent to a fair distribution of resources. This of course gives rise to various competing theories as to how is it best to allocate resources to everybody in a fair and just manner. This ultimately covers all of what we understand as economics, from Marxists to the Austrians, that they are seeking (or believe to have found) the path to a more just society. As development is the key concept in modernity, pushing growth to be more equitable, then its demise requires a new engine to get to fairness. Sustainable development, a popular and successful variation of development, became the quick answer to the critique of development not delivering on its promises of prosperity and social justice. Sustainable development will

be discussed at greater length in the next section, but for now it is important to see it as an attempt to recapture an understanding of justice in a world in which the the fairness that was supposed to come from the expansion of capitalist economic endeavours never materialized. Along these lines, the themes of postmodern interpretations of justice will reemerge in further discussions in this chapter.

It has already been touched on that a defining factor of postmodernism is the erosion of the nation-state. Thus, everything with the epithet “international” leans towards postmodern understandings as they imply a world system akin to Wallerstein’s understanding rather than the primacy of the sovereign nation-state. The international financial system is therefore an expression of postmodern perspectives as money is fluid and crosses national borders unhindered and beyond reference to a single central bank. This has effects on the ability of individual nation-states to manage their internal economic justice. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the state to collect taxes when capital flows worldwide with little hindrance and consequently the welfare state has less resources with which to fulfil its function as the guarantor of material justice. Therefore, calls for a stricter and more equitable (to be understood as more just) tax regime that cracks down on multinational corporations exploiting loopholes to evade paying their fair share is a throwback to a modern response to the postmodern condition. A modern economic system depends on fair taxation but postmodern conditions allow the whole practice to be a collegial game of wits, seeing who can better outsmart the other, or which lawyers can more eloquently twist the law to their favour. As such, the ability of the state to act justly is compromised and even the concept of what is just is drawn into question.

Following from this, the ideals of modern economic systems are based on a premise of fair play. We all know the formula for investment, it goes something like this: I have a plan that could do something more easily and efficiently but I do not have all the materials I need, so, I borrow from someone who has surplus capital, in cash or in kind, and put my idea to the test. It works, and I am able to make more widgets in less time, so I now have surplus capital of my own. I pay back the capital investment plus the interest that we agreed upon. This is the linear formula of principle  $\times$  rate  $\times$  time which has been a staple in loan transactions for centuries. A difference in postmodern interpretations is that now the debt can be totally separated from whomever originally held it. The debt can be repackaged, bundled, resold, futures, and swapped, which allows for heretofore unseen financial inventions such as Collateralised Debt Obligations and Credit Default Swaps, which were the instruments that precipitated the 2008 global financial crisis. None of these ideas or instruments are unjust of themselves, and it was additionally loathsome that the practices causing the subprime mortgage crisis in the USA were all in fact legal, however, this all leads to a break from what is deemed as just from traditionally modern understandings. If Boeing makes good airplanes, their stock has a good value, but speculation in the market is all about assessing what a stock might be worth in the future; therefore, Boeing might still be making excellent aircraft, but their stock could plummet due to a hedge fund selling off a big chunk, a change in management, an aeroplane crash, or a change in fuel prices because of a decision by OPEC or a war in a petroleum-producing country. A consequence of interconnected global markets is that the so-called rules of the game have changed, and as such there is no absolute authority to appeal to in order to determine what is just.<sup>48</sup> We can only hope to have a limited

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48 The WTO, which is the authority on justice in international trade, is of course a modern response to

justice in our own personal dealings.

Just as in other aspects that we have seen, postmodernism defies and deconstructs the concept of justice inherited from modernity and refuses to propose something new. There is no overarching concept of postmodern justice, only a small justice, a weak justice. It is a justice that emerges from the concerted efforts of the parties engaged, and not a justice that is handed down from a divine source or from a political authority. To reiterate, it is a justice that is found in our relationships rather than in the court halls.

Restorative justice is an example that spans the gap left at the end of postmodern perspectives. Restorative justice overlaps the transition from postmodern to transrational families. In short, it is an approach to justice that takes a systemic approach to a crime and a holistic approach to the people involved and attempts to reconcile the hurt amongst the actors of the crime and the community in general. This kind of framework acknowledges that a single event does not happen in a vacuum and that there are numerous historical and cultural factors that lead up to a putative crime. Moreover, it also attempts to address the repercussions of the perpetrator's actions on the victims and secondary actors such as families and other people in the community whose lives have been affected. This approach can be seen as postmodern if the focus is on the institutional frameworks. For the most part, when a crime has been committed the state authority must be involved and therefore the process happens within or parallel to the existing apparatus of the state, such as the police, the courts, and social workers. As an extension, despite attempts and using some neutral or less value-laden language, the process is often bound by the terms of a crime, perpetrator, and victims. As such, the process is whirled back into an eddy of modernity in which it is in the

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postmodernity.

act of twisting, yet remains stuck inside, modern binary thinking. Restorative justice has transrational elements in that it begins to address the whole person. The systemic and holistic perspectives espoused by restorative justice place it in a philosophical camp that sees the central actor in the incident as a multilevelled and multifaceted person who is inextricably embedded in the constellation of his or her family of origin and community relationships. Furthermore, the process of reconciliation requires more than simply looking at the facts as it inevitably has emotional and spiritual dimensions. Restorative justice as a discipline is open to the transpersonal aspects that this implies but as this is slightly beyond its focal point, full membership to the transrational family is at times tenuous.

### ***Postmodern Relationality***

The section on relationships in the chapter on modernity regarded the nation-state as the main mechanism for interactions and the ostensible ultimate arbiter of identity. This section deconstructs all that and starts over again. The effectiveness of the model of an international system comprised of nation-states is based on the sovereignty of the nation units. Postmodern approaches to economics have created fluid international financial systems that erode the ability of the state to exert its sovereignty. Thus the bedrock of the nation-state is undermined. This section starts with the twisting of the nation-state and discusses postmodern metaphors of relationality and critiques of development.

Zygmunt Bauman describes postmodernity as being a time of disengagement between the participants in power relationships and frames it in terms of being post-Panoptical, in reference to the prison design by Jeremy Bentham made most famous as the quintessential

metaphor for power in Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975).

Whatever else the present stage in the history of modernity is, it is also, perhaps above all, *post-Panoptical*. What mattered in Panopticon was that the people in charge were assumed always to 'be there', nearby, in the controlling tower. What matters in post-Panoptical power-relations is that the people operating the levels of power on which the fate of the less volatile partners in the relationship depends can at any moment escape beyond reach — into sheer inaccessibility.

The end of Panopticon augurs *the end of the era of mutual engagement*: between supervisors and the supervised, capital and labour, leaders and their followers, armies at war. The prime technique of power now is escape, slippage, elision and avoidance, the effective rejection of any territorial confinement with its cumbersome corollaries of order-building, order-maintenance and the responsibility for the consequences of it as well as of the necessity to bear the costs. (Bauman 2000:11)

Bauman's list of examples alludes to the implications for postmodern approaches to economics and to the nation-state. In the roughly two-hundred years since Bentham dreamed up the idea of the Panopticon prison, technological changes have brought closed circuit television (CCTV) into broad usage and the premises of Panopticon are largely among us in urban areas. As Bauman calls the defined territory of a nation-state cumbersome, we can see that what was formerly its greatest asset and defining attribute becomes, in postmodern approaches, a hindrance for those in power to maintain. Bauman's picture that he paints here is one of absentee landlords, fluid international capital, and class stratification, all of which can be effectively argued are occurring now under these post-Panoptical conditions. It reflects a sanitized view of reality, in which elites from afar, or even absent, can maintain near absolute control. All this adds up to erode the sovereignty of the state, when hedge-fund managers, drone pilots, and imperialist politicians can change the fate of a nation-state from thousands of kilometres away.

This is ultimately the state of affairs in postmodern perspectives regarding economics. People look to the state, to government, to pull levers and adjust interest rates to regulate the national economy. Within modern cosmologies this is ostensibly possible. There is a wide range of tools available to governments such as devaluing currency, raising or lowering interest rates, running a deficit, legislating, changing tax policy, and so on. However, in the postmodern state of affairs, a small nation-state can do little in front of a hedge fund that has a capitalization greater than its GDP. An organization like OPEC can make decisions that derail all the fiscal planning of even the most responsible government. Governments are then in the awkward position of being rather impotent but needing to be seen to be doing something to remedy a situation, the complexity and scope of which is out of hand. A postmodern approach to this situation is to focus on the personal acts of individuals as political acts rather than the grand gestures of governments.

## **Dissolution of the Nation-State**

Alternatives to the nation-state have always existed and postmodern approaches, informed by an acknowledgement of radical plurality, actively embrace this diversity. Modern worldviews created a static constellation of actors that perpetuated the form of the nation-state and rejected all other forms. It thus determines what are legitimate and illegitimate patterns of social organization. The state system “has led to a specific categorization of what is to count as internal or external violence and who may exercise such violence. The state claims a domestic and external monopoly of force. As a consequence, nonstate actors are stripped of coercive means—mercenaries and privateers thus have disappeared” (Spruyt 1994:16). City states and city leagues, such as the Hansa, have largely disappeared in the face of the

dominance of the nation-state. To me personally the map of the modern world has seemed immutable, which is in line with modern perspectives, and changing the existing political borders seems virtually inconceivable. The nation-state is but one of many forms of social organization; it just so happens that it is the one that is prevalent now. As the passage from Spruyt implies, it is a system that pushes all others out, which reflects the monological nature of modern discourses.

One direction of dissolution has been from what we might metaphorically call above. Supranational unions, by definition, limit some part of national sovereignty and the European Union (EU) is the obvious example. As it emerged out of the European Coal and Steel Community, the EU is primarily a trade union, and it should be no surprise that the prime driver of this supranational union is consequently economic growth. The international framework of the UN system, the IMF, World Bank, and the WTO have created the framework for global governance that authors like Boulding (1946) and modern-minded internationalists advocate. Granted, in *de jure* fashion, the UN and the other institutions do not have the devolved and pooled sovereignty of a supranational institution, however, the trend does suggest that the international peace of security requires its own Leviathan to monopolize violence. The Bretton Woods system, and later the WTO, supplanted partial sovereignty of the state in mediating the economic affairs of their countries.

The creation of supranational institutions further implies the breakdown of personal engagements because they are enforced by the impersonal bureaucracy — ruled by offices rather than by folk. If we return to the idea of the spot trade from chapter two, swapping one thing for another, as being indicative of relations between strangers (or people who might as



well be strangers), there appears a conundrum when we see, through modernity, the spot trade come to define human interactions and become the base mechanism of commerce. Credit relationships require trust and spot trades are what are conducted when there is no trust and no assumption that a relationship of trust could be built. From the modern impetus of always maximizing, the question would inevitably come up of how it might be possible to have commercial relations with the maximum amount of people, which would consequently imply establishing a credit relationship with strangers about which one knows nothing, with whom one is neither willing nor committed to fostering a relationship, and yet one might be willing to take a calculated risk on. If only known people interact, how is it possible to ascertain the trustworthiness of strangers? It may be easy to see where this goes: create an institution. In steps the credit rating bureau, and then I do not have to know or trust anyone because I can outsource that aspect of my relationship to a third party. Credit-rating agencies like Standard & Poor exist so that there can be an objectively verifiable and easily comparable metric of trust (credit-worthiness) even between complete strangers. As a logical and rational facilitation of economic life, it comes at the price of stockpiling information on people (arguably an invasion of privacy), and devolving into a numerical assessment of my value and worthiness as a person with the uncreditworthy becoming subhuman: bad credit = bad people. Thus, one's reputation and trust, an intensely personal and subjective interpersonal aspect of human relationships, becomes alienated from real human interactions and is mediated by an objectified institution.

The modern nation-state is largely imagined around an arborescent model with a centre-periphery divide. The city or the capital is the trunk and branches of the tree and the

hinterlands are the roots. Just as a tree cannot survive without roots, a city cannot survive without its hinterlands that supply it with the food that the bourgeois need. There is a delicate balance of power between the city and the countryside on which it depends, as the state requires the periphery to support the centre and the periphery requires services from the centre. A Marxist or an anarchist might argue that the periphery does not need the centre, which spurs on the postmodern twisting of this concept. Cities are specifically designed according to this arborescent model with commuter trains, argued as a public good, facilitating the travel of the working poor from the periphery into the centre and as such the exploitation of a labour class that must return to its home on the outskirts. As was pointed out in the paradoxes of modernity, modern societies espouse notions of the equality of citizens, and yet thrive off of stratification. Even in the most socialist-minded countries there are marked divisions between a managerial class and a working class in a neo-feudalist model. Add the factor of debt and the worker is an indentured labourer. Postmodernism as a stream has argued that these discursive structures of modernity can be usurped, or twisted, by small personal acts of identity and choice. This can be seen as the dissolution from below.

The subversion of small personal acts is the dissolution of the power of the state from below because everything is political. Postmodern approaches embrace all of our actions as political statements; it is not just voting or belong to a political party. How I dress or my gender are profoundly political statements. The kind of car I drive, the brand of cigarettes I smoke (or not), or whether or not I buy organic bananas are all examples of seemingly innocuous daily decisions that, through a postmodern lens, are radical political acts that have the potential to usurp the grand power structures. In short, our decisions as consumers are

political actions. Recalling Graeber's comparison between postmodernism and globalization at the beginning of the chapter, individual consumption decisions in fact "are democracy; indeed, they are all the democracy we'll ever really need" (Graeber 2001:xi).

The idea that we can vote with money is a postmodern concept. Our dollars are our votes and the market is the ballot box; marketing is the hustings and multinational corporations are the political parties. The astute observer will notice that it is not a single voter system, and, arguably undemocratically, some people get more votes than others. Ludwig von Mises was the first economist to make the claim of this parallel (von Mises 1922), perhaps foreshadowing Schumpeter and the zenith of the Austrian School as it unwittingly opened up to critical theory and postmodern perspectives. If this position is accepted, that our consumption choices is the only kind of democracy we really need, then it is the pinnacle of postmodern approaches. The *raison d'être* of the state dissolves and is subsumed by the economy under its assumption of freedom and fairness.

Zygmunt Bauman argues that postmodern society engages its members primarily in their capacity as consumers rather than producers (Bauman 1996). On the surface, this does not reflect so much on the dissolution of the state as it does on the general orientation of society. The statement on its own is not particularly shocking in our times because it is a common trope and I personally experience myself much more as a consumer than as a producer in the market. Recalling Marx, however, it is a realization of what was probably his worst nightmare: a docile population of consumers anesthetized by the satisfaction of their material needs yet completely alienated from the means of production and therefore their own sustenance.

Postmodernity has reversed producers and consumers. The argument is that modernity is focused on production, as it is the thinking that came up with the industrial factory, the assembly line, and the vertically integrated supply chain in order, finally, to be able to have a lot of stuff. Postmodernity therefore is focused on consumption. There is already a plethora of stuff available and the creative energies of life in postmodern perspectives is to find new ways to consume and new desires that need to be filled. Recalling Bauman (Bauman 1996), a sign of a postmodern perspective is identifying oneself more as a consumer than as a producer. However, a postmodern consumer is not a passive object in a game of global capital, a victim, as Marx might have imagined, of the cruel bourgeoisie. Postmodern consumers engage with producers in a dance of co-creation of meaning, blurring the lines between producer and consumer, observer and observed, advertisement and entertainment, and they find their freedom in subverting the market rather than being seduced by it (Firat & Venkatesh 1995:251; Brown 2003:21). The greatest victory of postmodern capitalism has been to create products that counter-culturalists want, however, postmodern consumers continue to bend and shift in an endless game of creating and dodging the latest fashions and trends.

As a result, postmodernism is proposing radically new metaphors for social interaction and engagement. The image of the nation-state as a stalwart and stoic oak tree, as much as it is strong and steadfast, can also be oppressive in that it is stiff, inflexible, unadaptable, and prone to rot from the inside. The metaphor of a rhizome, with its centre everywhere (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:3-25); a hammock, decentralized and flexible as it moulds to the shape of the occupant (Esteva 1995:9-44); and flexible platforms, combining

the structure of institutions with the the adaptability of serendipity (Lederach 2005:126-129), are just a few examples of new metaphors that have arisen out of postmodern perspectives. Trees still have their place in the world and roots and branches serve their purpose, but just as arborescent models are also only one way of cellular organization in the plant kingdom, their metaphorical equivalents are only one in a wide array of possible ways of social organization.

## **Variations of Development**

With postmodern critiques gaining traction in the 1980s, the concept of development began to come into question. This spawned various nuanced versions of development. For the most part, these ideas never even went to the length of removing the word “development” from their name. They were thus not radically different proposals. The version of “development lite” that accrued the greatest following has undoubtedly been sustainable development. The greatest contribution to come out of critical development studies has been the acknowledgement of diverse epistemologies and the recognition of development discourse as only one among a multitude of ways of knowing. This radical plurality is the postmodern twist of development.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the metaphorical thought pattern of progress marching along a time line towards economic growth and greater prosperity is a defining characteristic of modern cosmovisions. Being so, it is so much a part of the psyche that its truth is self-evident and can hardly be questioned. Even in the face of postmodern upheavals, openly opposing the concept of development was barely imaginable heterodoxy.

Even those who opposed the prevailing capitalist strategies were obliged to couch their critique in terms of the need for development, through concepts such as “another

development,” “participatory development,” “socialist development,” and the like. In short, one could criticize a given approach and propose modifications or improvements accordingly, but the fact of development itself, and the need for it, could not be doubted. Development had achieved the status of a certainty in the social imaginary. (Escobar 1995:5)

Development is thus so entrenched in modern perspectives that it cannot be questioned and is not up for debate. Critics can only argue over what kind of development and all failures can be passed off as the wrong kind of development. Even other critical voices follow this same pattern: Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef calls for Human Scale Development (Max-Neef, Elizalde & Hopenhayn 1991) and Amartya Sen calls for development as freedom (Sen 1999). There is value in their critiques, to be sure, however, the fact that their critiques are couched in the language of development, that there is no deviation from this pattern, plants their orientation amongst postmodern perspectives. “We find ourselves at a crossroads,” Max-Neef writes (Max-Neef 1982:166), “We know *what* should be done but we still do not know *how* to do it, because we lack a convincing alternative development theory.” Although his answer, human scale development, is a postmodern answer that eschews grand theories and is flexible and adaptable, it sums up the frustration of postmodern perspectives in the face of development: we know what to do, but we do not know how to do it because we need a new grand theory and that itself is against the philosophical worldview of postmodernism.

What has been a boon of the movement of postmodernism is the appreciation of diverse epistemologies. In a pluralized and decentralized world with multiple weak truths, there must be just as many paths to those multiple weak truths. This realization points the way to the conception of a framework of families of peaces from which peace depends on the ontological and epistemological orientation of the subjective observer. In this sense, this

research, the theory of many peaces, and indeed peace studies as an academic discipline, starts from a decidedly postmodern place. Development, however, “has relied exclusively on one knowledge system, namely, the modern Western one. The dominance of this knowledge system has dictated the marginalization and disqualification of non-Western knowledge systems” (Escobar 1995:13). Therefore, a critical stance on development is intimately interlocked with a philosophical aperture that accepts diverse, perhaps conflicting, epistemologies.

It seems redundant to say it explicitly but an epistemology is a foundational aspect of a cultural worldview. Culture is characterized “by rules and values but also by ways of knowing” (Escobar 1995:13). Many cultural groups have paid the hard price when their worldview collided with the hegemonic worldview of development. However, Escobar argues that some worldviews have survived the collision with modernity through hybridization. “Rather than being eliminated by development, many “traditional cultures” survive through their transformative engagement with modernity” (Escobar 1995:219). Although hybridization implies that two (or more) pure concepts are blended together, a deconstruction of this concept can render it impotent if it is acknowledged that nothing is pure to begin with and everything is already a hybrid of something else. Nevertheless, hybridization is a key concept in how postmodern approaches are able to twist the apparently static and monological intellectual edifices with which they are confronted. Engagement and hybridization of traditional culture with development discourse is a postmodern approach to dealing with the conflict posed by duelling and ostensibly incompatible epistemologies.

Despite my concerns over the existence of purity, hybridization is a useful mindset for

postmodern approaches to peace. It allows for the possibility of merging and thus modifying static or stuck mental patterns. It perhaps opens the door to thinking about alternatives as more than just modifying adjectives to development discourse. Escobar argues that most people are stuck in the established semantic categories of development and the existence of an underdeveloped third world.

Nevertheless, even today most people in the West (and many parts of the Third World) have great difficulty thinking about the Third World situations and people in terms other than those provided by the development discourse. These terms—such as overpopulation, the permanent threat of famine, poverty, illiteracy, and the like—operate as the most common signifiers, already stereotyped and burdened with development signifieds. Media images of the Third World are the clearest example of developmentalist representations. These images just do not seem to go away. This is why it is necessary to examine development in relation to the modern experiences of knowing, seeing, counting, economizing, and the like. (Escobar, 1995:12)

Thus, Escobar is suggesting that a postmodern deconstruction of modern epistemologies (ways of knowing, seeing, counting, and economizing) is a possible way of dismantling the linguistic structures of development and third world that appear so rigid and so objective. The hybridization of worldviews that Escobar mentioned is an example of this postmodern deconstruction of rigid categories and as a variation of development, what development is is invariably transmogrified through its encounter and engagement (the hybridization) with so-called traditional cultures.

Capitalism has seemingly solved the problem of production, producing more food and more goods than ever before. We live in a time of unprecedented wealth. Recalling Manfred Max-Neef's lament, that we know what to do, just not how do it, it appears to be the postmodern irony to modern success. We have the answers to wealth and prosperity, but



along the way seem to have forgotten the question. Even from the very beginning of the age of development this painful truth has been known: in order to follow the prescribed path of development, one must discard one's own worldview and adopt the worldview of development. Luckily for some, this has proven too painful and too high a price to pay. Quoting a document produced by the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs in 1951.

There is a sense in which rapid progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to burst; and large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated. Very few communities are willing to pay the full price of economic progress. (Escobar 1995:3)

This is in effect the answer to the question of why the whole world is not rich in an egalitarian world of industrialized nations. The cost of abandoning tradition, scrapping philosophies, leaving people behind is just too high. For all the laptop computers, smart phones, or broadband internet access, it is just not worth it — it destroys the social cohesion of communities, isolates people into individuals, alienates humans from the language of plants and animals, and demands that our beliefs be changed.

## **Early Critiques of Development**

I personally find it difficult to imagine that even the most ardent modernist Utopian could believe that consumption, production, and development could continue forever. Prescient was Kenneth Boulding's imagination of the omega point of development. "Presumably the flood of accumulation is to go on until the whole earth is covered with concrete! It is obvious, however, that beyond a certain point investment is stupid, and that the encouragement of

investment is no *permanent* answer to the problem” (Boulding 1946:168). Boulding made this presumption in 1946, right around the time that the majority of the world became underdeveloped, and decades before development critique got its feet under it in the 1980s. Boulding constitutes one of the clearest early dissenting voices who criticized development.

The concept we know today as development can be said to have a clear starting point in the aftermath of the Second World War. Development, though, was little more than piggybacking on sentiments of colonial domination and reframing military conquest in terms of economic conquest. Taken as different historically and culturally inflections, variations of the net result of vectoral chronosophy, then critiques of development are as old as linear perceptions of time. Every question of a growth paradigm is parallel to questioning development. From such a viewpoint, every Indigenous movement has been a critique of development. It has been a shout to say, “no thank you,” to a universalized and hegemonic worldview in which there is but one standard of linear historical evolution from barbarity to civilization.

The passages from Kenneth Boulding and the UN admittedly demonstrate that only a few years after development became a common word in the halls of power, it was already being questioned. Despite this being a defining characteristic of what is postmodernism, that every modern thought carries with it its own antithesis, there are some notable precursors to what would later be known as post-development. The work of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich, around the time that Liberation Theology emerged, criticized vectoral understandings of development even before there was any organized backlash against economic development.

In my research I came across a book entitled *Aid as Imperialism* by Teresa Hayter

(1971). Her thesis, as the title suggests, is that aid and development have the general role of “preserver of the capitalist system” (Hayter 1971:10). I found this book worth mentioning for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it is a relatively unknown early critique of development aid, originally written in 1968, refused publication, and then later published in 1971. Secondly, its criticism of development was crystal clear. *Aid as Imperialism* was saying that aid is imperialism. It came from an overtly Marxist perspective, yet was bold in that Hayter was not fooled by the new robes of development in which imperialism was now dressed. Thirdly, its creation and reaction have an interesting story. Hayter worked for the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the World Bank, the biggest target of Hayter’s criticisms, commissioned the study and then refused to publish it. More interesting for me than the content of the paper itself was the inclusion of an appendix which chronicled the institutional battles that she encountered and which finally led to her research not being published by the ODI. The complete rejection of Hayter’s arguments and the religious fervour with which her findings were dismissed can be taken as a demonstration of the tyranny of the one Truth of modernity; it is the unpeace of Eros without Agape. She was not alone as an early critic of development, but she was taking a position that would be outside the realm of legitimate debate for about twenty more years.

## **Sustainable Development**

As was mentioned, many different kinds of development came into being as practitioners and theorists grappled with the new concept. Theorists debated what the best approach to development was, but up until the 1990s, open critiques of the fundamental assumptions of development were lone wolves. Although sustainable development is an acknowledgement of

limits in a worldview that seems to perceive infinite expansion around it, the value of restraining growth that its founders envisioned was co-opted to enable economic growth.

The Brundtland Report<sup>49</sup>, *Our Common Future* (1987), was the watershed moment for sustainable development. The literature on sustainable development inevitable comes back to the definition put forward in the report: “it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UNWCED 1987:24). As important as the Brundtland Report was, marking it as the beginning of sustainable development negates the countless generations of human beings who lived by the spirit of this principle for millennia. As clear as the report was, that the intention of sustainable development was to promote industrial practices that did not deplete resource stocks, however the practice of sustainable development came to mean that development was sustained — what was sustained was capitalist market expansion, the sustained increase of GDP, and done in such a way as not to piss off the tree-huggers, hippies, and Indigenous populations who were illogically against progress.

Escobar outlines how sustainable development seemed to be the grand unifying theory that reconciled the economy and the environment, two concepts that continue today to be perceived as in direct opposition.

By adopting the concept of sustainable development, two old enemies, growth and the environment, are reconciled (Redclift 1987). The report, after all, focuses less on the negative consequences of economic growth on the environment than on the effects of environmental degradation on growth and potential for growth. It is growth (read: capitalist market expansion), and not the environment that has to be sustained. Furthermore, because

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49 The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) was established by the UN General Assembly in 1983 with Gro Harlem Brundtland as the chairman, hence the the commission was commonly referred to as the Brundtland Commission and the final document it produced, *Our Common Future*, is commonly the Brundtland Report.

poverty is a cause as well as an effect of environmental problems, growth is needed with the purpose of eliminating poverty, with the purpose, in turn, of protecting the environment. (Escobar 1995:195-196)

Sustainable development seemed to be proposing a theory by which we could have our cake and eat it too, as the expression goes. By tempering economic progress just enough to allow for some parks and protected areas, then the capitalist world system could carry on promulgating its epistemology and worldview.

Escobar further argues that the consequences of sustainable development have been quite detrimental. As simple as the formulation of its principle was, as a concept, it did not deliver the moderation for future generations that it promised.

The resignification of nature as environment; the reinscription of the Earth into capital via the gaze of science; the reinterpretation of poverty as effect of destroyed environments; and the new lease on management and planning as arbiters between people and nature, all of these are effects of the discursive construction of sustainable development. (Escobar 1995:202)

Introduction of a new interface, a class of development experts that mediate interactions with the environment. As much as the intention of sustainable development was conservation, the result was further commodification because even more factors needed to be measured and assessed.

When I first heard about sustainable development, probably in late 1990s, it seemed a given premise that any newly created economic activity would take into account a holistic perspective including maintaining the natural resources for generations to come. This just makes sense. In fact, sustainability is just a baseline, which is where the postmodern nature of sustainable development really becomes the most salient. Sustainability is obviously just a

starting point for something else, a new vision, but that is neither imagined nor proposed. Would I describe my relationship with my partner as sustainable? It is loving, nurturing, rewarding, deepening; sustainable is the bedrock underlying even the foundation. Pregnancy is a beautiful and magical time of a woman's life, as Eisenstein points out (Eisenstein 2011:249), but it is not sustainable: all things must pass. Eisenstein suggests speaking of "transition" rather than sustainability (Eisenstein 2011:249), since, as he proposes, sustainability ought to be the first step (again, a baseline) in a larger process of transitioning to an economic system and approach to natural resources that has yet to be concretely envisioned.

Sustainable development is a concept that challenges the ferocity of development and attempts to harness it. I believe that sustainable development, in its essence means that any new industrial or economic projects, development in other words, should not be undertaken unless their levels of material throughput are sustainable. It acknowledges limits in a real and finite world. What sustainable development misses, though, is that it is not radical enough. It is not a departure from development, rather a continuation of it; it is a slight lateral shift. Following Escobar's critique, sustainable development even encouraged and strengthened development discourse as it appeased some of the detractors and put a figurative "certified organic" stamp on capitalist expansion. It is thus a postmodern interpretation of economics as it criticizes modern perspectives diametrically without even departing from the trajectory.

## **Post-development**

Post-development is a term that encompasses critique of development. Sustainable development was a critique of development in its own way, but operated from within a strait

modern understanding because its express purpose was to amend development. Post-development, as I use it here, is a further step back and refers to critique that begins with a postmodern viewpoint. As was covered in the previous chapter, the concept of development became so widespread, so pervasive and as such a self-evident imperative, and equally therefore unquestioned, that it became meaningless. It is a further example of modern ideals being extended to their zenith point, to their apogee, a point of absurdity where they turn around on themselves and come crashing down to Earth. Yet this effective meaningfulness is only one facet of the post-development critique, which also grounds itself in the diversity of epistemologies and doubt towards vectoral chronosophy.

Post-development is, if nothing else, the utter rejection of linear time. This view was discussed earlier in this chapter in the section on space-time. As it refers most specifically to post-development, the structural trap of linearity is that by subscribing to a worldview based on a vectoral chronosophy, the world is always divided into categories that can be expressed in terms of development. Development discourse asserts, rather insists, that there is a singular prescribed path to betterment and just about everything can be expressed in terms of that path: ignorance to education; sickness to health, poverty to prosperity; backwards to civilized. The path is defined by the hegemony of modernity: scientific positivism, reason and rationality, vectoral chronosophy; in short by the epistemological worldview often dubbed “western.” Post-development is a rejection of binary categories with a straight line of progress between them.

The publishing of Wolfgang Sach’s *Development Dictionary* (1992) and Rahnema and Bawtree’s *The Post-development Reader* (1997) were clear seminal moments when

intellectual voices were assembled around organized and consensual critiques of development that were scathing to say the least. The latter is of particular interest here because it included the conscious use of the label of “post-development.” It appears to have been some kind of trend at the time to add the prefix “post-” to all kinds of concepts, thus, in typical postmodern fashion, implying that the concept was dead and we were living in some new times without that previous concept, but with no new beacon in the fog to take its place. I will use an example of a postmodern approach to development to elaborate on some of the points of post-development.

Amartya Sen’s idea of *Development as Freedom* (1999) posits that development should be seen “as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy,” rather than focusing on solely increasing GDP or per capita income (Sen 1999:3). This in itself is a postmodern twist that we have seen before in our discussions; Sen asserts that GDP is not an accurate measure of “real freedoms.” A turn to freedom over GDP differs little from proposals to calculate the value of ecosystem services (Costanza *et al.* 1997), meaning putting a dollar value on the amount of erosion prevention a tree’s root mass is worth, or the value of a stream, assessing the value of pollination or of decomposition. The article by Constanza *et al.* mentions seventeen ecosystem services and values their services at an average of \$33 trillion USD per year. This kind of assessment makes sense in a postmodern frame in which speaking the language of the empirical measurement is the only way to present proof. In both cases, for freedom or for ecosystem services, the underlying assumption is that the modern tool is not enough, and a new tool is needed: the postmodern answer is more modernity. Ecosystem services suggests that more things need to be



quantified; Sen suggests that the wrong things have been quantified.

Sen's focus on freedom seems to spring forth from the discourse of an individual with rights. According to him (Sen 1999:3), "Development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states." With Sen, the vector is not even wrong, there is still the inexorable march towards progress, it is just that the means and how progress is assessed that are wrong. All his arguments, even the title of the book, are couched in the language of development, assuming that development must continue. He continues to see underdevelopment all around. Sen says, for example (1999:6), that African Americans in the USA can live in a developed country but still be underdeveloped in terms of freedom. It is a reframing of Galtung's structural and cultural violence (Galtung 1969) in terms of development.

In putting it in the best light, I do agree with Amartya Sen's assertion (1999:10-11), in my paraphrasing, that agency is the means to foster the unfolding of human potential. This is my interpretation of what development as freedom means. Sen's thesis does attempt to overthrow the accumulation of wealth as its own end and he furthermore states that wealth is always a means and we must know our ends. To know what we want in life, that is the freedom and that is also the postmodern twist, because it is not so easy and requires great emotional and spiritual maturity to know what one wants. On the flipside, Sen also states that it is better to be rich and happy than poor and traditional. I believe this to be the hubris of modernity; the intellectual trap is believing in this dichotomy. Fundamentally it assumes that traditions do not have their own internal logic that makes them work in a prosperous way

themselves. Sen's way of reconciling it to his thesis of development as freedom is to say that it is a question of freedom. Choices of which traditions to keep or not, which aspects to modernize, are choices that only a free individual can make, and any made under duress or coercion are not real choices. Although, again I agree with Sen insofar as a support of agency, however, his focus on choice is a naive and facile approach in my mind, as it does not address the systemic trauma the results from the shock between modernity and subaltern worldviews. It furthermore subsumes it all under a modern frame of simple rational choice.

A circular trap is created in post-development by, on one hand rejecting a teleological process, and on the other hand, continuing to perceive poverty in terms of development. Post-development critiques are thus trapped in circular logic of using the language of poverty and economic disadvantage to describe the development they are criticizing (Benítez-Schaefer 2012:166). This is why Sen cannot escape from cognizing a linear projection of development, because even as he is reframing the question as one of agency and human potential, he is comparing it to the teleological process of development. Even the name itself is a paradox because the prefix reinstates the linear concept of time which is being rejected (Nederveen Pieterse 1998:366).

Post-development is furthermore characterized by challenging the fundamental assumptions of modern economy. The law of scarcity is questioned, the idea of economy as a sphere of human activity excised from everything else is challenged, and poverty is deconstructed. In her critique of legal development Benítez-Schaefer says, "Problematizing the concept of 'poverty' as an instrument created under specific circumstances, and not as a given fact, is a main element in the post-developmental enterprise" (Benítez-Schaefer

2012:168). Post-developmentalists say that poverty as a concept, as a threat that demands to be mitigated, is created by modernity; institutions such as poor houses turn those that do not fit in to the model of sedentary labourers into their wards, where they are labelled as deviant and poor. Poverty is the result of a quantitative statistical comparison; as such it cannot be said to describe any particular quality until after the subject at hand has internalized the messages of inferiority of development discourse that inevitably accompany the statistical comparison.

Baudrillard (1976) says that in the postmodern condition production has been replaced by reproduction. This means that a car company does not produce a satisfactory number of cars and stop, it must continue to reproduce itself to continue making cars forever. One labours only to produce more labour and when striking, workers receive strike pay in order that they may continue striking. This circularity is equally present in development. Development ostensibly aims at getting to an end, but really only enables further development. It is a project that perpetuates itself. Moreover, as more and more people are employed by a development sector, it becomes a business with many stakeholders depending on its reproduction for their livelihood. A development worker requires the continued existence of the poor and destitute for his or her job.

The whole endeavour hinges on the perception of poverty. It is easy to think of development critique as coming from callous and egotistical academics in the ivory tower, playing word games of mental masturbation without considering the problems of the majority of real people. However, the calls that “your help is not helping” often came from critics who were not in the centre of the power structures. The idea that a non-market society is poor and

ignorant recalls the hubris of modernity and the perception or acceptance of the validity of worldviews that differ from the tenets of modernity is a radical departure that was facilitated by feminism, post-colonial studies, and post-structuralism. Arturo Escobar's answer to Spivak's polemical question (Spivak 1988) of whether the subaltern can speak is yes, but they speak softly and few in power take the time to listen (Escobar 1995:223).<sup>50</sup> A non-market society is always poor in terms of GDP calculated in US American dollars, but says nothing about depth of human relations, patterns of resilience, intimacy with nature, or fecund cultural heritage. The success of development, and its tragedy, has been its ability to convince people of their poverty, thus creating a power imbalance between perceived rich and perceived poor. Once the categories of this dichotomy have been established (rich-poor, developed-underdeveloped), then there will always be a poor and underdeveloped that requires help and speaks to moral arguments to create an imperative to help. Since it is a circular logic, no matter how much it is critiqued, some form of development will always be needed because there is a persistent perception of some people being left behind in poverty and ignorance on the road to development. The moral view of this conundrum is that critique is fine and it is good to have a critical mind, but people are still starving and poor and we have to do something to help them. There is a tension between the felt moral obligation to help and the malaise of no longer being able to believe in the technocratic power of modernity. Post-development approaches suggest that poverty is a social construct and thus exists more in our internal worlds than in the external physical world.

In typical postmodern fashion, post-development fails to propose anything new.

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<sup>50</sup> "The subaltern do in fact speak, even if the audibility of their voices in the circles where "the West" is reflected upon and theorized is tenuous at best" (Escobar 1995:223).

Nederveen Pieterse, who classifies post-development as belonging to “the neo-traditionalist reaction to modernity” (Nederveen Pieterse 1998:366), asserts that “Post-development parallels postmodernism both in its acute institutions and in being directionless in the end, as a consequence of the refusal to, or lack of interest in translating critique into construction” (Nederveen Pieterse 1998:361). Although modern critiques will see it as a shortcoming, rather cop-out of postmodernism, it is perhaps one of post-development’s strengths that it is reluctant to take another spin on the wheel of samsara, proposing yet another development that will inevitably be open to the same critiques.

### ***Xenomoney***

On August 15<sup>th</sup> 1971, the current economic era began when then President of the USA Richard Nixon officially suspended the convertibility of the US American dollar into gold, thus creating a virtual currency. I reiterate that I am treating postmodernism as a state of mind and not as a historical epoch, however this aspect of currency does have a clear beginning in the recent history of our times. The result of this symbolic change by Nixon, as Brian Rotman describes it (Rotman 1987), is that “a dollar bill presented to the US Treasury entitled the holder to an identical replacement of itself. As a promissory note it became a tautological void. The dollar became, in other words, an inconvertible currency with no intrinsic internal value whose extrinsic value with respect to other currencies was allowed to float in accordance with market forces.” Following Graeber’s categories of bullion and credit money, in postmodern approaches to currency, the pendulum has swung back to credit currency. As we have journeyed through the families of peaces, this marks the return of

symbolic exchange. Money is a symbol and I have chosen to use Rotman's term, xenomoney, to describe postmodern money as a symbol that stands for another symbol and is separated from reference to an acting subject.

Following our thread of currency through the families of peaces we have seen a process of abstraction of money from moral perspectives to postmodern perspectives. In the energetic family, it was the act that was reciprocated and physical objects were symbolic representations of the act of giving. Starting from the moral family, money is metal, and in the modern family, a more fluid representation, the prime example being paper money, stands in as a symbolic place holder for the metallic bullion currency. In this postmodern family, xenomoney refers firstly to a symbol that stands in for another symbol. Rotman argues (Rotman, 1987:5) that "the familiar modern conception of money, that is paper money whose value is its promise of redemption by gold or silver" is replaced "by a money note which promises nothing but an identical copy of itself." He calls this xenomoney.

This line of argumentation on currency, money, and mathematics depends on interpretations of subjectivity and objectivity. For the most part, through the influence of modernity, we have been understanding economics expressed in mathematical language as a description of an objective reality out there somewhere in a real world confined in a container bound by three-dimensional space and existing at a given set of points along an imagined timeline. From modern perspectives, mathematics thus gives a position of objectivity. Postmodern perspectives place a number of caveats on this assumption of objectivity rendering it effectively impossible, as Rotman explains.

Exhibiting mathematics as language and putting the Subject—the historically contingent, culturally produced, intentionally structured, always embodied, sign-creating and

-interpreting agency—into the center of our picture make it possible to overturn the whole ideological and rhetorical pretense of mathematical objectivism. (Rotman 1993:156)

Thus, taking Rotman's postmodern, post-structuralist approach to mathematics, we can therefore no longer assume that mathematics is absolutely objective, and must interpret it as a subjective symbolic language like any other. Our money system, inherently mathematical, is therefore also a symbolic language system.

As a brief recap of some of the previous discussion, we will turn again to the work of Rotman. He describes the decoupling of physical objects from a personal pronoun, which corresponds to what I have been describing as a transition from moral to modern perspectives.

This attachment of bank money to particular persons arose from the fact that it, like any promissory note (as well as bill of exchange, receipt, IOU, note of indemnity, cheque, and so on), was an inherently deictic, that is to say, indexical sign. Its meaning as a money sign pointed to and was inseparable from the physical circumstances of its use. One can say that its utterance as a sign was governed by a demonstrative personal pronoun tying it to the concrete particulars of a temporally located, named individual, since in order to circulate as money it needs to be turned over and endorsed, that is written to a payee by its owner through a reference, a date, and a signature. The presence of such a pronoun sharply separates imaginary money from money in currency. Indeed, it was in relation to the signs of currency – the circulating gold coins – that imaginary money appeared as a meta-sign indicating, through this pronoun, a mercantile subject who was not present, and indeed could not be mentioned, within the code of exchange determined by circulating gold money. (Rotman 1987:46-47)

Rotman further argues that the concept of zero, an original meta-sign, was the necessary conceptual invention to allow for the invention of imaginary (paper) money (Rotman 1987:27), and then later xenomoney, which is a further example of a meta-sign. Xenomoney is a meta-sign because it is a sign representing a sign and it therefore can be both commodity

and medium allowing money to be bought with money. The anteriority of goods breaks down because money, then, “instead of being a representation of some prior wealth, of some anterior pre-existing quantity of real gold or silver specie, becomes the creator, guarantor and sole evidence for this wealth” (Rotman 1987:50). “Within such a tautological exchange,” Rotman muses (Rotman 1987:53), “paper money becomes flying money that can never land.”

The second characteristic factor of xenomoney is in connection with the postmodern disillusionment with the nation-state as the elemental unit of sovereignty. As we saw in a previous section, a defining characteristic of postmodernism is the multifarious usurpation of the nation-state.

[there is] a loss of deixis, a reduction in the indexicality [*sic erat scriptum*] of money signs. Recall how in an earlier shift paper money differed from the imaginary bank money it displaced precisely in terms of such a reduction. But though it dispenses with the apparatus of signature, personal witness, and attachment to an original owner, paper money retains its domestic, national indexicality; it relies as a sign on its use within the borders and physical reality of the sovereign state whose central bank is the author of the promise it carries. In contrast, xenomoney is without history, ownerless, and without traceable national origin. If paper money insists on anonymity with respect to individual bearers but is deictically bound on the level of sovereignty, xenomoney anonymises itself with respect to individuals *and* nation states. (Rotman 1987:90)

This argument further extends the discussion from the previous two chapters on the transition from moral to modern currencies, and thus explains a transition from modern to postmodern currencies. Japanese yen, Thai baht, and Pakistani rupees are all anonymous with respect to individuals in that they do not keep track of a list of who held them or in whose bank account they sat and for how long, but they are bound to the identity of the nation-state. Rotman’s



concept of xenomoney is the true frictionless surface of commerce that has further dispensed with its own nationality.

Rotman explains how perspectives on time tie into the perception of xenomoney. It requires quantifiable, commoditized, and linear time.

As a sign one can say that xenomoney, floating, and inconvertible to anything outside itself, signifies itself. More specifically, it signifies the possible relationships it can establish with future states of itself. Its 'value' is the relation between what it *was* worth, as an index number in relation to some fixed and arbitrary past state taken as an origin, and what the market judges it *will* be worth at different points in the future. For what it signifies to be a market variable, and for it to be 'futures' in this sense as a continuous time-occupying sign, xenomoney must be bought and sold in a market that monetises time; a market in which there exist financial instruments that, by commoditising the difference between the value of present money (spot rate) and its future value (forward rate), allow 'money' to have a single time-bound identity. In the early 1970s, the appropriate instruments, that is tradeable financial futures and options contracts, came into prominence in the Chicago Financial Futures Market. (Rotman 1987:93)

Although this passage may be a little dense, what he is saying is that xenomoney derives its value from the speculation between its arbitrary value now and the imagined (likely) arbitrary value of a copy of itself in the future. Both of these points on the time line are labelled as "arbitrary" values because they are determined by largely psychological processes, and not by, as in the past, reference to a fixed object.

A consequence of xenomoney is that the concept of currency is once again in our analyses in the realm of symbolic exchange. Money is, as Eisenstein asserts, a ritual talisman, a blank slate of potential onto which we can project our fantasies and desires, and it is a physical representation of such potential that brings our desires to fruition. With a fractional reserve banking system, the removal of the referent is already nearly accomplished — it is

only fractionally present. The postmodern twist of xenomoney is that as long as confidence can be maintained, the distant referent (the gold in the vault or even the suitcase of polymer bills), already out of sight and equally out of mind, can vanish with no change to the functioning of the economic system. This is precisely the situation that Jean Baudrillard describes in *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (Baudrillard 1976:6-7).

The structural dimension becomes autonomous by excluding the referential dimension, and is instituted upon the death of reference. The systems of reference for production, signification, the affect, substance and history, all this equivalence to a 'real' content, loading the sign with the burden of 'utility', with gravity — its form of representative equivalence — all this is over with. Now the other stage of value has the upper hand, a total relativity, general commutation, combination and simulation — simulation, in the sense that, from now on, signs are exchanged against each other rather than against the real (it is not that they just happen to be exchanged against each other, they do so *on condition* that they are no longer exchanged against the real). The emancipation of the sign: remove this 'archaic' obligation to designate something and it finally becomes free, indifferent and totally indeterminate, in the structural or combinatory play which succeeds the previous rule of determinate equivalence. The same operation takes place at the level of labour power and the production process: the annihilation of any goal as regards the contents of production allows the latter to function as a code, and the monetary sign, for example, to escape into infinite speculation, beyond all reference to a real of production, or even to a gold-standard. The flotation of money and signs, the flotation of 'needs' and ends of production, the flotation of labour itself — the commutability of every term is accompanied by speculation and a limitless inflation (and we really have *total liberty* — no duties, disaffection and general disenchantment; but this remains a magic, a sort of magical obligation which keeps the sign chained to the real, capital has freed signs from this 'naïvety' in order to deliver them into circulation). Neither Saussure nor Marx had any presentiment of all this: they were still in the golden age of the dialectic of the sign and the real, which is at the same time the 'classical' period of capital and value. Their dialectic is in shreds, and the real has died of the shock of value acquiring this fantastic autonomy. Determinacy is dead, indeterminacy holds sway. There has been an extermination (in the literal sense of the word) of the real of

production and the real of signification.

Baudrillard's assessment sums up postmodern approaches to economics and expresses that xenomoney both demands and perpetuates the divorce from a referent. Thus Baudrillard would agree with Eisenstein's description of money as a ritual talisman, since Baudrillard refers to capital as the secularisation of the power of the imaginary (Baudrillard 1976:129). Eisenstein offers up a postmodern interpretation of money in the image of the ritual talisman that represents the imagination and the stored potential wonders of human creativity. Its power is its symbolism rather than its objective form; the numbers on the bills are not nearly as important as the human capacity to dream and money stores that creative potential to make dreams come true.

When we pair these insights with the primacy of consciousness and the perceiving subject as insights from twentieth century physics have taught, we get a picture, not just of money, but of so-called reality in which the solidity of materialism fades away. This is to say that the realization that we live in a world of signs means that numbers can be created that we cannot count to, which means that a person could accrue a debt that is beyond the human possibility to pay off. Rotman further explains the connection between signs and physical materialism.

In other words, the simple picture of an independent reality of objects providing a pre-existing field of referents for signs conceived after them, in a naming, pointing, ostending, or referring relation to them, cannot be sustained. What gives this picture credence is a certain highly convincing illusion. Once the system is accepted, on the basis of a perfectly plausible original fiction, as a mechanism for representing some actuality, it will continue to claim this role however far removed its signs are from this putative reality; so that, for example, numerals can be written which name 'numbers' that are unrealisable by any conceivable process of human counting or enumeration, pictures can be painted that depict

purely imaginary, non-existent, or visually impossible 'scenes', transactions can be drawn up that price humanly unachievable relations between 'goods'. (Rotman 1987:27-28)

The idea is that when money becomes a meta-sign, it represents itself and has no bearing or connection to physical reality and can be extended beyond any ability to be concretely equivalent. Beyond the initial implications that it enables the possibility to write cheques that could never really be cashed, there is another level of existential ponderings on the nature of reality itself.

Not only is it debatable whether these kinds of postmodern financial transactions even exist in any kind of traditionally physical way, following Baudrillard's logic, they cannot exist. The referent must be removed. If I acquire some money through leveraging and invest it in the stock market in a company whose value increases due to speculation (and not because it produces any more or less), it is hard to say that anything physical is really happening, yet I can cash out, pay back my creditor, and pocket the profit a richer man. At every step of the way I am exchanging a meta-sign for another meta-sign until the end, when I exchange the cash for some food, but if I instead buy a motorcycle, I am likely purchasing a vehicle for feeling youthful and free, again a symbolic exchange. To say that it is all symbolic does not mean that anything goes; one does need the correct symbols in order to play the game, and not possessing them guarantees exclusion. However, it does paint an absurd picture of human beings creating and playing elaborate video games with each other in order to collect as many digital gold coins as possible that have no connection to a real world referent.

This brings up a two-pronged point. Firstly, although I have been using it as a point of comparison, the idea of a materialist real world is controversial and dubious within

postmodern perspectives. Therefore, and secondly, it should not even matter if a sign is divorced from any referent because even that referent is no more than an array of potentialities that are brought forth into being through their interaction with consciousness. For example, carbon offset payments are a symbolic exchange to reduce guilt from flying. True, it would be nice if there were a tree planted somewhere, but that is not the real service being sold and traded. What is more, from a strictly postmodern perspective, it does not even matter if there is a tree.

As is the nature of postmodernism, there is a reaction to xenomoney to reverse its perceived deleterious effects. The postmodern condition has spawned many proposals for what are known as alternative currencies. The epithet “alternative” does carry a pejorative connotation as it implies that they are less serious possibilities because they are up against the hegemony of the state. That aside, David Boyle draws the distinction that alternative currencies can be placed along one broad division: those who see the medium of exchange function as the most important (Gesell’s *Freigeld*), and those who see the store of value function as the key factor (so-called real money) (Boyle 2002:4)<sup>51</sup>. Boyle further muses that behind this distinction between medium of exchange and store of value “lies the age-old conflict between debtors and creditors: the former want to keep the value of their debt intact, while the latter want it to become irrelevant” (Boyle 2002:4).

By proposing their alternatives in the form of currencies the authors of such proposals are acting in a postmodern way. An alternative *currency* keeps all the existing rational framework of the economy in place and questions the vector. A great example of this is

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51 Irving Fisher appears to be simultaneously on both sides of the dividing line advocating increased flow of money in *Stamp Scrip* (1933) and then urging to ground money in reality in *100% Money and the Public Debt* (1936).

negative interest that was discussed in the previous chapter on moral perspectives since it keeps all other things equal and changes the direction of interest; it replaces positive growth with negative growth. Seen from this angle, Silvio Gesell's theories of *Freigeld* can be interpreted as postmodern rather than moral. Digital currencies thus follow a similar pattern, in effect extending logic of bullion. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Eisenstein argues that paper and electronic currencies are an extension of metallic currency, not a replacement of it (Eisenstein 2011:162). In that regard they are a postmodern twist of the concept of currency that reproduces its logic. Alternative currencies, such as bitcoin or LETS (Local Exchange Trading System), are just the same in that they challenge the vector, they change some of the details, but leave the meta-structure of economics intact.

The absentee referents of xenomoney seem to leave many observers feeling uneasy. There are therefore calls "to back" money, which is to say tie it to the value of something concrete. This sentiment seems to bifurcate into two parallel proposals. On the one hand, there are those who in the face of financial crises and instability advocate a return to the certainty of the gold standard. This is a clear modern response to the postmodern condition that attempts to ground ephemeral reality in the stuff of materialism. On the other hand, there are proposals to have currency backed by a bundle of commodities, such as wheat, steel, oil, and various other resources, as opposed to a single commodity, which would reduce price fluctuations because the currency value is an average of the constituents of the bundle. This is a postmodernism approach because it clearly identifies the vector of progress as being wrong but sticks to the bulk of the established paradigm. The former offers a course reversal, whereas the latter offers a twist of what exists.

The case of bitcoin is a unique example. It is Chartalist, in that it is a fiat currency; it is not tied to anything physical. However, it is not regulated by any state, which is the other condition of Chartalism. The standard for creating demand for a currency is to demand it in taxes or tribute punishable by the full extent of the state authority, which is a mechanism to turn anything into money, however, that process is not present in bitcoin. Bitcoin is in fact a great example of postmodernity because it is a Wild West of unregulated speculation. It is upon first glance the perfect xenomoney because it exists virtually beyond the purview of national borders. However, bitcoin preserves the record of transactions in the block chain, which is akin to a digital public ledger recording all transactions. Therefore all digital transactions on the bitcoin exchange are traceable. This is against Rotman's definition of xenomoney that is anonymous with respect to individuals and nations. The anonymity returns, however, when bitcoins are cashed out as a national currency. Although some products and services can be bought and sold with bitcoins, what ultimately underwrites its value is its fungibility with national currencies. It is the ability to cash out of the exchange that makes the currency valuable. This assessment may prove to be inaccurate, however, for now, I see bitcoin as a proxy currency that operates on the extreme fringes, yet firmly inside the existing economic paradigm.

The pattern that alternative currencies, and even innovations in mainstream currencies, recreate and extend the logic of bullion currency may have profound consequences for our times. Graeber's concluding remarks on debt intimate that much of the confusion about money in our times, in postmodern conditions, stems from credit currency being treated like a bullion currency. Graeber states that the historical trend is that during

periods dominated by credit-based money systems, institutions are created to protect debtors from creditors (Graeber 2011). Xenomoney is a credit-based money, and if it is just a meta-sign, if it is just a promise, then what is to stop us from making more promises than we can keep? The perennial question of the credit-based system is just that: what is to stop people from just printing money and ending up in debt traps? For that reason, times of credit-based money created institutions such as the jubilee, clean slates, and debt amnesties. However, our times of credit-based money is overseen by institutions such as the IMF, the purpose of which is to protect creditors rather than debtors. If Graeber's analysis is to be believed, we should see the opposite. The situation that we have is some kind of anti-jubilee. By treating credit as if it were bullion, we still end up with the same recurring question of how prevent people from making promises they cannot keep. By ensuring that a creditor will always be paid back through an institutional arrangement that protects creditors and allows them to collect their pound of flesh, what incentive is there to make a prudent loan? Under such conditions, the greatest profit would be to make loans to everyone and their cat, and if they cannot pay, they are your debt peons. Furthermore and finally, what underpins all of this is the moral perspective that paying one's debts is the moral thing to do and the definition of virtue, which therefore allows for the perpetuation of institutions to protect creditors, because of the assumed moral impropriety of being in debt, even under a monetary system that is based on credit.

Postmodern perspectives do not have a judgment around debt like moral perspectives do. There is nothing inherently good or bad about carrying a debt or being in debt to another. As we saw in energetic perspectives, we all always owe favours to everyone with whom we



come in contact. This is just the way of life. Taken from this perspective, we can see a shift from morally-bound perspectives based on an equivalence of debt with guilt over recent generations for which it is perfectly normal to carry a mortgage, a line of credit (or several), and credit card debt. Personally, my grandparents perished at the thought of such things that are commonplace today. The decision to carry debt and how much is brought to a rational choice depending on the price of money; for example, times of low interest rates are a good time to carry debt. As in all things, the greatest asset of xenomoney is also its flaw: anonymity. The fluidity of the anonymity disguises the face of who holds the debt. Since it is a meta-sign one never has to see the face on the other end. The fluidity is gained at the expense of personal ties, and ultimately responsibility.

### ***The Eco Shift***

Postmodern approaches to environment see the vector of modern progress heading in the wrong direction and therefore invoke a rational imperative to preserve and protect the environment. Without this call to action, it is assumed, perhaps very rightly so, that every bit of green space will be industrialized. In short, Joni Mitchell's lament from *Big Yellow Taxi* (1970) would be true: they paved paradise to put up a parking lot. This impassioned protest is, however, expressed in language of utility that modern rational mindsets can compute, which is to say framed in terms of what the environment can do for me.

“As the term is used today,” says Arturo Escobar (Escobar 1995:196), “environment includes a view of nature according to the urban-industrial system.” This should recall the previous line of discussion explaining that the essence of the concept of environment

presupposes a human separation from it and encouragement to “get back to nature” further underscores this assumed pre-existing state of separateness. As such, postmodern perspectives on environment are oriented to perceive it, as Escobar intimates, through the lens of an urban-industrial system. Even if the environmentalists involved both believe in and viscerally experience the intrinsic value of a forest without having to reduce it to terms of ecosystem services expressed in US American dollars, postmodern mindsets force the discussion into a rational framework. At the root of a concept like ecosystem services is an aesthetic or superficial appreciation of energetic perspectives, yet as it is hammered into a postmodern form, the “energy” of the energetic is lost.

Building in this central definition, this section briefly explores four related topics. The idea of the environment as a commons will be discussed. Secondly, we will briefly revisit and recap postmodern perspectives on capital as it pertains to environment. Next, we will move into a discussion of the term *glocalization*. Finally, paving the way for our journey into the next chapter, we will touch on Arne Næss’ *deep ecology* (Næss 1989).

If the *Tragedy of the Commons* (Hardin 1968) is a leitmotiv of modernity, then a comedy of the commons is the postmodern twist. To be sure, the critique that rational self-interest is beneficial to the individual and harmful to the interests of the group is itself in the spirit of postmodernity. It uses modernity’s own terms of rationality to point out the obvious logical flaw that, if left unchecked and unregulated, unfettered rational self-interest would devour the commons to the detriment of all. This point has been well stated in Polanyi’s description of the enclosure movement (1944). However, the tragedy of the commons opens the door for postmodernism. The postmodern rebuttal, Carol Rose’s *Comedy of the*

*Commons: Commerce, Custom, and Inherently Public Property* (Rose 1986), argues that, contrary to modern predictions of inevitable tragedies, many peoples around the world have successfully managed public and commonly held property without falling into the dilemma of the tragedy. The idea was expanded upon by Elinor Ostrom (Ostrom 1990) who became the dominant voice in advocating for a renewed commons. The comedy of the commons refers to networked and collaborative organizations, following an emphasis on decentralized arrangements characteristic of postmodern thought (Deleuze & Guattari 1980). A comedy of the commons glorifies that which has been seen to have fallen from grace. It is not my intent to claim that voices like Carol Rose or Elinor Ostrom are presenting unrealistic and romanticized versions of the world, rather it is to place them in the context of intellectual currents that point out that the trajectory of modern thought is heading the wrong way. Therefore, if modernists warn of a tragedy, postmodernists reframe it as a comedy. In this way, the comedy treads into the epistemological traps into which postmodern critique is bound to fall. By rebutting the assertion of a tragedy as a comedy it is challenging the conclusions on the surface, and it is also solidifying the epistemological limits of the debate by using the same framework, the same metaphoric language, and the same Hellenistic origin stories. By using the rhetorical device that it is not that kind of Greek story but rather this kind of Greek story, the debate continues to revolve around what kind of Greek literary form best represents the commons. This would be seen from the modern perspective as meaningless philosophical acrobatics, and from the transrational perspective as a missed opportunity.

Any householder or business owner knows that you cannot spend more than you

make. There are circumstances in which this rule can be bent, if one has capital reserves (savings, for regular people) or credit. No one with any kind of business acumen would continually run a business spending more than they bring in and dipping into their capital reserves. For sure, one is more likely to finance a loan for such a deficit before burning through the capital stockpile. However, this is precisely what Schumacher argues that we are collectively doing as a species (Schumacher 1973): natural resources, particularly fossil fuels, are our collective capital and we are burning through it, mistaking capital reserves for a revenue stream. This is what Boulding argues in his example of the spaceman economy that we saw in the section on postmodern interpretations of the growth paradigm.

The essential measure of the success of the economy is not production and consumption at all, but the nature, extent, quality, and complexity of the total capital stock, including in this the state of the human bodies and minds included in the system. In the spaceman economy, what we are primarily concerned with is stock maintenance, and any technological change which results in the maintenance of a given total stock with a lessened throughput (that is, less production and consumption) is clearly a gain. This idea that both production and consumption are bad things rather than good things is very strange to economists, who have been obsessed with the income-flow concepts to the exclusion, almost, of capital-stock concepts. (Boulding 1966:10)

Once again our discussion comes back to the direction of the vector of time. De-growth is thus favourable, if it preserves the total capital stock of the planet. Conversely, increased production may or may not be good, but is definitely bad if it uses up irreplaceable capital. It is placing finite limits on a human psyche that is hypnotized by the power of the infinite. As a further point, Eban Goodstein argues that natural and created capital are complements (McKibben 2007:29), an idea that can be traced back to Schumacher. This notion that the capital of natural resources and manmade capital are not at odds but are complementary

aspects is a transition point to transrational approaches to economics.

*Glocalization* is a neologism that amalgamates globalization with localization. It is used to describe the apparent paradox of the simultaneous trends of universalization and a glorification of the particular. The typical example is the spread of a given multinational corporation all over the globe (a globalizing and universalizing trend) that offers particular cultural nuances to tailor its product line to the target market (a localizing trend). The term was popularized by critical theorists such as Roland Robertson (Robertson 1994; Robertson 1995) and Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman 1998).

As the trend of globalization, and the usage of the term, swept the globe, postmodern voices pointed out that it was not a monolithic trend towards the the universalization and homogenization of world culture. Additionally, it became so ubiquitous as a term that its meaning became convoluted; it became, like development, a plastic word that could bend to fit the needs of the orator. Globalization was seen as no one's fault, it just happened, and here we are in a globalized world. It is the twist of postmodernism to head in two ways at once; the more there is the thrust of Eros with his love of a universal One, there is Agape with compassion for the multiplicitous and the mundane. Whether it is a counter-revolution, a balancing act, or an intrinsically entangled phenomenon, they are emerging together like the gaping mouths of a hyperbola.

As much as multinational corporations spread their influence around the world, there is a push back for local control. For every fastfood franchise that opens up, there is also a new farmers' market or community supported agricultural coop. As Molson and Labatt, the two largest breweries in Canada, are now owned by SABMiller and Anheuser-Busch InBev

respectively<sup>52</sup> (both with profits in the billions), it seems that more and more local, independent craft breweries are popping up. It is fashionable to eat garden-grown vegetables rather than canned peas with locavore<sup>53</sup> movements and the 100-mile diet (Smith & MacKinnon 2007). These examples, although anecdotal and locally bound to my own experience and observations, illustrate clearly the opposing forces of glocalization.

Phobos once again rears its ugly head. Every yang without its yin is in imbalance and runs the risk of spiralling off in sickness and chaos. Globalization, protestors of the 1999 WTO conference in Seattle, USA feared, would stamp out the vernacular in its love of the perceived one true path to unity and prosperity. Localization, it is no surprise, also has its shadow side. The danger of glorifying and romanticizing the local is manifested in extreme right-wing politics that have emerged, particularly in Europe, based on an exclusionary pride in the local. The local, or rather, an essentialized version of the local, is touted as superior to all others. It fans the flames of tribalism under the guise of protecting a pure nation, culture, language, or whatever may be *la cause du jour*. This is the postmodern condition falling into a modern mindset; there can only be one “Truth” and it is the truth of the particular. The Agape, the compassion for the many vernacular understandings is usurped by a new Eros, the love of my way above all else. Without the balancing power of compassion, this turns to the fear-mongering of identity politics — the universal One is replaced by the local One.

Deep ecology is the transition point from which postmodern interpretations of environment begin to overlap with transrational approaches. The term comes to us from Arne Næss, the Norwegian founder of the field, and the concept is based on his writings (Næss

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52 SABMiller announced a joint venture with Molson in 2008 and Labatt was purchased by Interbrew in 1995, which is now the behemoth Anheuser-Busch InBev.

53 Another crafty neologism combining *local* with the suffix *-vore* meaning ‘to swallow’ as in carnivore, devour, or voracious.

1989). Deep ecology positions itself in contrast to postmodern environmentalist movements and reinstates elements of energetic perspectives of an immanent divine and interconnectedness of all existence. It assumes a human embeddedness in the natural world, therefore a systemic worldview, and moves beyond the need to advocate on behalf of a voiceless nature in terms of rationality and utility. The importance of this can be more clearly seen when juxtaposed against other postmodern concepts such as ecotourism and ecosystem services, the advocacy of which is characterized by an anthropocentric view of what nature can do for me. Sam Keen, a US American philosopher writing on masculinities, captures the spirit of this juxtaposition.

The ecological perspective is not about stopping dams to save a few snail darters, or preserving forests to protect spotted owls. It is not noblesse oblige, doing nice things for “brute” nature, or conserving “dirt, rock, and gunk.” It is not providing reservations for quaint creatures such as pandas. Ecology is a new code word for destiny-vocation-identity. (Keen 1991:119)

To follow Keen’s analogy, environmentalism is equivalent to protecting some dirt and trees because an endangered species of bird nests there. It is seeing nature as a resource that can be exploited. Deep ecology recognizes the innate, inherent, and intrinsic value of nature because human separateness is only an illusion of the mind.

Deep ecology can be placed amongst postmodern perspectives when it is seen as a reasonable and logical interpretation of objective reality. As was taken up in earlier threads of this text, it is simply true that human beings are part of their environment. We have semi permeable contact boundaries that bring in and push out materials in a constant and cyclical basis and if these processes halt, even for a short period, we perish. The perception of an individual depends on the frame of reference and where the human being stops and the rest of

nature starts is an ambiguous question. Are we to differentiate ourselves from the bacterial flora of our guts, from the mites on our faces, or the mitochondria in our cells?<sup>54</sup> Human interconnectedness with nature can be argued rationally. Acceptance of this fact has transpersonal implications and that is where deep ecology folds into transrational approaches. Firstly, a human being is just another node in a massive autopoietic system that maintains its patterns far from equilibrium. A realization of this perspective is a transpersonal experience, that is, experiencing the self as permeable and interconnected. Therefore, a postmodern perspective on environment can set in motion a deep inward search in human identity, as Keen notes.

Men's identity since the industrial revolution, on the other hand, has been so closely bound up with exploiting natural resources that creation of an earth-honoring ethic will require men to make a fundamental change in our self-understanding. Not just our actions must change. Our identity must also change. (Keen 1991:120)

Deep ecology does not demand, but opens the door, for this kind of transpersonal shift. As such it moves from postmodern understandings to transrational approaches.

As I am writing this, climate change and the economy are the hot issues of the time. More often than not they are positioned as antagonists as if someone who wants clean water and a job too is a naive Idealist. I would like to underline the common argument that both economy and ecology share the same Greek root. Both share the first three letters *eco-*, from the Greek *oikos*- meaning 'house.' The difference comes in the *nemein*, the 'management,' or the *logos* of the house. As a good postmodernist might say, the contradiction lies not in the reality of things, but in the categories of the mind that have been constructed in order that we

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<sup>54</sup> It is estimated that the average human has hundreds of distinct species of enteric bacteria in his or her digestive tract; *Demodex folliculorum* is the name of the human face mite that likely lives on every single human being; mitochondrial DNA, inherited exclusively from the mother, is different from nuclear DNA, suggesting an ancient symbiosis with bacteria that later became ensconced in the cellular structure.



may see the management of our house as separate from the logic of our house.

### ***Postmodern Peaces***

Postmodern approaches to peace are characterized by peace out of harmony and peace out of truth. Truth in this case refers to an unconditional truth or a weak truth in the sense of Vattimo's weak thought. The modern response to the postmodern condition is to increase security. It is to wall oneself off from the threats that are perceived all around. Postmodern approaches switch that around recognizing that threats perceived on the outside are reflections or manifestations for unease felt on the inside. There is no absolute and perpetual peace, peace does not descend down upon us from heaven, it can be found in our relationships with other people, but only temporarily, locally, and contingent on the context. As a transition from modern perspectives that need to fight and build walls to create peace, the prospects for postmodern peaces really are not that bad.

If I have a row with a good friend or an intimate partner, it is likely that we can see eye to eye again, understand where the other was coming from, have compassion for the hurt in the other, and forgiveness for the hurt caused to me. This happens all the time, especially in primary intimate relationships. However, outside the foundation of trust upon which intimacy is built, with for instance an acquaintance or stranger, there is seldom any reason to believe that there would be the openness and willingness to gaze upon each others' souls. In that case, it is more likely to take an external route, become defensive, tighten one's emotional armour, become petty and indignant. It is our internal wounds that demand security and justice; the emotional hurt that feels unsafe that cries for security all around.

Habermas believed that one could never know the subjective experience of another, and basically he is correct (Habermas 1985). Buddhism has two millennia of experience teaching practices of compassion that overcome the divide that Habermas perceived. All mystic traditions point to transpersonal experiences in which the participant experiences an awareness that is beyond herself. This is the beginning of transrational approaches, by which, through inducing non-ordinary states of consciousness it is possible to approach an appreciation of the subjective experience of another, and truly have a lived experience of non-duality with other people. Since these practices push the boundaries of scientific positivism and transcend the limitations of rationality, they are not accessible to someone who is firmly planted in a postmodern worldview. Postmodern approaches to peace repeatedly come up against the fear that we cannot know the internal world of another. When this is compounded by working cross-culturally, with people who have fundamentally different ontological and epistemological assumptions about the nature of reality, then Samuel Huntington's prediction comes true: there is a clash of irreconcilables. The reaction is security, build a big fence to keep them out, or justice, eradicate them. This trope appears so often in popular culture that it is rarely even noticed. The space alien invasion genre is the extreme expression of this fear of the Other. The space alien is in fact the perfect vehicle for our collective fears of the Other. More often than not they are depicted as insects which builds the perception of irreconcilable subjective experiences. Eradication is the only alternative since communication and understanding are ostensibly impossible.

## ***Conclusion of the Postmodern Chapter***

The adage that war is politics by other means comes from Carl von Clausewitz (von Clausewitz 1832). Foucault turned this around with a postmodern twist, saying that politics is war by other means (Foucault 1978:93). Bauman further plays with this meme stating, “War today [...] looks increasingly like a ‘promotion of global free trade by other means’” (Bauman 2000:12).

We have seen that postmodern perspectives on economics are characterized by a critique, rejection, and twisting of the tenets of modernity. Fundamentally based in perceptions of space-time, postmodern perspectives perceive the vector of history progressing in the wrong direction, which in turn destabilized ideas such as economic growth and a belief in justice. We saw that postmodern approaches to justice believe that justice can be found relationally in small, local, and contextually specific pockets, and there is no such thing as an absolute justice, neither in this world nor the next. A prevailing belief is that the freedom of the market place is in itself the most perfect form of democracy and justice so far conceived by mankind. Since our personal relationships are foundational for any lived sense of justice, postmodern perspectives on the nature of relationships is key to understanding their worldviews. Relationships are seen as a complex and multidimensional web which invoke the metaphorical language of rhizomes, hammocks, and networks, which consistently evade and usurp linearly oriented hierarchical power structures. In the face of these aspects of postmodernism, the state, the institution that creates and maintains a market system, is constantly undermined by small, personal, political acts. Postmodern understandings of money are characterized by meta-signs in which a note of currency stands in for another note

of currency and there is a complete dissolution of the referent. I use Brian Rotman's concept of xenomoney to describe this phenomenon. We further discussed that postmodern perspectives on the environment are characterized by an imperative need to protect it that is expressed in anthropocentric and utilitarian terms, rather than for its inherent value. We also discussed deep ecology, which is a bridge from postmodern approaches to transrational approaches to the environment. As postmodern peaces are relational, we see in the final discussion that a fundamental question of postmodern peaces is whether it is possible and how can we bridge the gap from one individual to another. Postmodern perspectives say it is difficult and it is possible. Transrational approaches say that there is no gap and any perceived separation is an illusion of the mind.

## 6 Transrational Approaches

*It is time to ask ourselves what collective story we wish to enact upon this earth,  
and to choose a money system aligned with that story.*

Eisenstein 2011:170

Wolfgang Dietrich describes the transrational shift in international peace work (2013:152-199) with focus on development policies (2013:175-186) and political economy (2013:187-199). My analysis and description is to be seen as continuing and expanding upon Dietrich's outline of the transrational shift. Transrational approaches to peace is clearly Dietrich's idea, moreover I would be remiss not to point out that he does not hold a copyright on perceiving the world in a transrational way; people have been living transrational approaches to life for centuries and will continue to do so. It is therefore neither something new nor is it a proposal; it is a description of existing philosophical currents that can be found all over the world. Transrational approaches include the previous four families and hold their precepts in a dynamic balance. Transrational approaches are an orientation and not a doctrine.

I should stress that transrational approaches are not inherently superior to any of the previous four families of peaces. My first purpose is not to convince anyone that a transrational approach is somehow demonstrably better than any other approach, it is to describe what a transrational approach to economics is or might look like. It is a hallmark of dualist thinking to posit a hierarchical relationship between any one of the five families of peaces, which is precisely a mode of thinking that is incompatible with a transrational approach. What should be clear though, even if it appears problematic, is that each of the four families has contradictions that can never be resolved, but can be twisted or transcended by a

perspective that holds them all at once — including their contradictions.

The first section of this chapter will define what is meant by transrationality. We will once again pick up our threads and look at time as a subjective experience. From there we will turn to transrational approaches to justice. The section on relationality will discuss the full spectrum of human interaction, contact boundaries, and transpersonal experiences. The following section will discuss transrational approaches to currency. The section on environment will revisit sentiments outlined in energetic perspectives and bring them to into a transrational fold. Transrational peaces will be briefly explained before a summary of the precepts of transrational approaches to economics.

### ***Outlining Transrationality***

The most obvious starting place to explain and define what transrational means is the word itself. Rational, we should recognize, means ‘logical’ or ‘reasonable’ and derives from the Latin verb *veri* ‘to calculate’ or ‘to reckon.’ The Latin prefix *trans-* means ‘through’ or ‘beyond’ and for our philosophical purposes, transrational quite literally means ‘beyond the rational.’ A transrational approach to peace or to economics means, in its simplest interpretation, one that includes, however is not limited to, rational enquiry.

Dietrich summarizes three key insights of transrational approaches (Dietrich 2011:14). Firstly, everything is made up of relationships and networks. There are no objects that exist out there in a physical objective reality, sitting in the container of space and existing in the container of time, that are independent of the relationships that brought them into being. I am always an expression of my parents’ union for without the network of

relationships that brought them together, I do not exist. Secondly, I am part of the Cosmos. There is no Cartesian separation between the observer and the observed and I, as much as every fish, fly, or blade of grass, am an integral part of the fabric of the Cosmos. Thirdly, everything pulsates in a dynamic equilibrium. There are no static structures. All physical matter, as much as it can be said to be something solid, is in a perpetual dance at its smallest level. I should point out that these are insights as seen from a modern perspective; from a transrational perspective or for the most part from energetic perspectives, these are not insights at all, but merely assumptions about how the world works.

As I already posited, the transrational shift in peace politics is a new idea, but living in a transrational way is old. I can appreciate that the key insights I just listed may to some readers conjure images of a New-Age-ism and radical religious cults, however, I argue that there is a deeper human experience at play here. I would argue, in the vein of Kant, that it is human self-awareness, our perception of separateness, that empowers our capacity for reason and critical analysis, which truly makes us unique among the known life forms of Earth. Some cultures foster habits that cultivate transpersonal experiences and self-actualization, thus tempering rationality, while others foster habits that train the mind to perceive of itself as separate from the body and thus lead to the project of modernity that has spread from mind to mind over the last five hundred years to become a dominating discourse. The question of whether this happened, what we might call, by accident, or by choice is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however, my personal inclination is that it was a choice that was constantly chosen. On either side of these extremes and every place in between, I believe that there is a common human experience of needing to, trying to, rein in the rational mind as its tendency

is to pull the human consciousness away from oneness. This theory is supported by Terrence McKenna who cites Aldous Huxley: “One of the first things that *Homo sapiens* did with his newly developed rationality and self-consciousness was to set them to work to find out a way to by-pass analytical thinking and to transcend or, in extreme cases, temporarily obliterate, the isolating awareness of the self” (Huxley 1956 in McKenna 1993:139). With or without the assistance of our relatives in the plant kingdom, I believe this to be true, and as such, I see transrationality as a perennial struggle of humanity. I would further argue that the idea of transrationality only becomes novel in the face of the extreme imbalance toward rationality as the path to a singular and universal Truth that we find in modernity. Otherwise, transrational approaches are just another mundane part of daily life, learning how to be critical, and learning how to shut it off and feel in tune with others without the machinations of the monkey mind running the show.

Transrational approaches are known by other names or very similar ideas have been presented. Ziauddin Sardar has written about his idea of transmodernity (Sardar 2006; Sardar 2007), which speaks to the same idea of having gone through modernity, forever marked and changed by the experience, but not being confined to the limitations of modernity. In the 2007 piece, he makes a call to reconnect the moral to the (post)modern, however, as this is an essay rather than a trilogy, Sardar’s analysis is understandably not as thorough as Dietrich’s. Bruno Latour’s compositionism (2010) reflects an assumption of divine immanence, human embeddedness in the Cosmos, and dynamic structures, thus aligning with Dietrich’s key insights. As Wolfgang Dietrich recounts his own influences, transrational approaches are profoundly influenced by the tantric principles of many indogenic philosophical traditions



such as Tantric Yoga and Vajrayana Buddhism (Dietrich 2012; Dietrich 2013).

The postulates of transrational approaches to economics are that they encompass the whole of being. They see human activity, our creative energies, as simultaneously socializing each other, teaching the young, expressing our identity and sexuality, and reproducing something we could call society. From such a viewpoint it is clear that what is generally understood as economics, a (post)modern delineation of some aspects of human activities as something called the economy, is only one fraction of the human experience.

Thus, the transrational turn points to economic practices that are not primarily oriented toward growth, supply, or justice, although growth is allowed if required in the context; innovations are allowed if useful in the context; and justice is addressed as an issue of systemic balance. I am neither arguing in favor of leaving such foundations of political economy behind, nor for eliminating, let alone outlawing, them; instead, I advocate a twist of the related epistemological ruse. (Dietrich 2013:198)

Therefore, as Dietrich expresses, there is no need to dismantle the economy; transrational approaches attempt to hold the modern economy in balance with the other aspects.

Additionally, Ernst F. Schumacher's Buddhist Economics from *Small Is Beautiful* (1973) fits with a transrational frame. Work, in addition to satisfying "the goods and services needed for a becoming existence" (Schumacher 1973:58), has the purposes of unfolding human potentialities and sublating the ego. Work, production, and the satisfaction of human needs are something that we cannot escape from, and in fact, seeing that preference of leisure over work, a duality of one being good and the other a necessary evil, is incompatible with a transrational framework and denies the joy of labour and the bliss of leisure. This is to reiterate the point that transrational approaches differ greatly from postmodern perspectives in that they are not oriented towards rejecting modernity but rather neutralizing the most

deleterious effects of unchecked rationality by putting it in its place within a holistic view of the human experience.

Transrational perspectives, therefore, attempt to take the best from each of the other four families of peaces, while mitigating their shadow sides. This is done with a mind that is not searching for a final truth, but is pliable, dynamic, relational, and contingent on the context. Energetic expressions offer an appreciation of interconnectedness, immanent divine, and life as a gift for all to share. Moral perspectives offer the sacredness of human life; precepts and norms are constructed in order to help safeguard that sanctity. A moral norm like the prohibition of usury is to protect the delicate balance of human life. Modernity offers the logic of structure and order, which helps with the efficient use of resources and of our time and efforts. Postmodern perspectives offer respect for plurality and diversity, which implies openness to different kinds of economies and different ways of knowing. From here we will pick up the threads that we have been following and pull the warp through one final weft.

### ***The Nature of Time***

The interpretation of time that I would like to offer up as pertaining to transrational approaches is that of time as a subjective experience. We have seen several different metaphysical interpretations of time of the course of this work: cyclical and non-linear models from energetic perspectives; linear projections from worse to better in moral and modern perspectives; reverse trajectories from better to worse in postmodern perspectives; time as a container; and as a phenomenon that is brought forth by consciousness. Transrational approaches seek not to attain a final answer. The nature of transrational

understandings is that time can be rationally quantified and a pliable subjective experience without such an apparent contradiction being an unworkable paradox that destroys the space-time continuum.

A defining characteristic of modern perspectives, which was developed through scientific positivism, was that of the measurability of the universe. All phenomenon could be thus reduced to quantifiable measurements, which consequently eliminates the possibility of subjective interpretation. However, as Schults asserts, the measurable is twinned with the immeasurable: “Alongside the discovery of the susceptibility of the world to measurement arose the discovery of the concept of the immeasurable, which invites questions about spirituality and religious awareness” (Schults 2010:247). Modern perspectives have the tendency to suppress the mystery of immeasurability, whereas transrational approaches invite that ancient viewpoint back in. By focusing on time as a subjective experience it is possible to hold simultaneously the measurable and the immeasurable.

There is no doubt that we humans share a common experience of this ostensible paradox of measurability. Time, on one hand, can feel like a container in which our life events happen and it is an inescapable cage of mortality. On the other hand, time is an experience that is totally subjective. It is a basic human experience that time flies when you are having fun and a watched pot never boils. In addition to the common wisdom contained in those English adages, the Icelandic word for ‘fun,’ *skemmtun*, derives from the adjective *skammur* meaning ‘short’ as in ‘shortening the time.’ These linguistic examples point to a well established acknowledgement that human perception of time is plastic, even if the mythology of modernity might inform us that time is immutable. However, Albert Einstein

pierced the notion of immutable time with the *épée* of relativity. Despite the pliable nature of time, we have the ability to measure it minutely; we can create train schedules that operate down to the second and even the effects of relativistic time dilation have been experimentally verified since the 1940s (Ives & Stilwell 1938). In our common experience, time is irreversible, however, in Feynman diagrams describing quantum phenomena, the arrow of time is completely reversible at the sub atomic level (Gleick 1992:118-119). My point is not to make grand metaphysical assertions here, rather to lay out a special place for transrational approaches which allow for the immeasurability of time, which is the chink in the armour of rationality that allows the mystical to enter.

Ervin Laszlo once pondered whether we were condemned to witness the Cosmos through five slits in the tower or whether it is possible to tear the roof right off and gaze upon the sky (Laszlo 2004:113). Some drugs can have such an effect and, as such, can provide a glimpse into the extent to which the previously described notions of time are mental projections that are refracted through our physiological (sensory) filters. If those filters are changed, by our mental state or by the introduction of chemicals, a new perception of the Cosmos is possible. Here I must tread lightly and state the subtleties of my position clearly as I am not advocating the use of illicit substances, although I do theoretically support the skillful (and I repeat for emphasis, skillful) application of entheogenic compounds, such as dimethyltryptamine or psilocybin. I will say that transpersonal experiences or extraordinary states of consciousness, induced by meditation, breathwork, or entheogenic chemicals, help human beings straddle the paradigms of the five families of peaces. Doing so can create tremendous cognitive dissonance, yet in that place of embracing paradox, is the place of

deepest creativity, innovation, and I would hazard, spiritual revelation.

## **Here-and-now and the long present**

It is in this discussion of transrational interpretations of time that we see a bifurcation in the state of the art of elicitive conflict transformation. I will label the divide as between the here-and-now and the long present. To sum it up, Dietrich argues that the key to conflict transformation lies in our relationships which can only be experienced in the present moment. Any discussion of justice reaches into an unjust past and projects into the future, thus rupturing the experience of the present *Erlebnis* which is neither past nor future, just nor unjust, but a meeting place for human contact boundaries. Lederach argues that conflict transformation requires a long-term perspective on time including one's ancestors and descendents, which considers the history that brought us here and the intergenerational consequences of our actions. My context as an author has lead me to favour the long present, which is where I differ from Dietrich and rather lean towards Lederach.

In being both polemical and reconciling in the same stroke, I would like to offer that these two perspectives are but two sides of the same coin. Dietrich adds that Lederach himself suggests that “the linear concept of time in modernity must be reconsidered from a relational perspective” (Dietrich 2013:198), which is likely to make moot the whole point of any distinction. To offer an analogy, Dietrich's approach is like Zen meditation and Lederach's approach is like Yogic meditation: Zen meditation is practiced with the eyes open, sharpening the practitioner's focus for the present moment; Yogic meditation is practiced with the eyes closed to go inward, connecting to all things. As the way inward is also the way outward, both are rivers that fall to the ocean.

Personally, I favour the long present because my spiritual teachers have consistently advocated a perspective that includes seven generations before me and seven generations after me. It is the nature of such teachings that I cannot point to a book like the Vedas or the Talmud to say, “there it was written.” My single biggest influence, although not the sole, has been my spiritual teacher John Christian (JC) Lucas, who has been informed by his own cultural heritage from the Hesquiaht nation and from Sioux and Lakota traditions which he weaves with his Bahai’i faith in a seamless syncretic approach. As such, the origins of the seven generation approach, as it has come to me, are undoubtedly multiple. In my own cultural heritage there is a precedent in the aforementioned Egil’s Saga which begins with the story of Egil’s grandfather Kveldúlfur and ends with Egil’s grandchildren, thus the saga is the story of Egil’s 200-year present.

I may temper my position by conceding the point to Dietrich that the pivot of conflict transformation, the crucial moment in which feelings of animosity flow into new sensations, is only ever experienced in the present moment, moreover, with a honed concentration on the present moment. Nevertheless, I maintain that this is to be balanced with a solid overview of one’s place in the long present. In my mind it becomes especially relevant under the gaze of economics. Some of the existential fears that brought me to write this dissertation are a consequence of the atomization of the long present; environmental degradation and market speculation are outcomes of worldviews based on separate individuals who live short and finite lives, which creates an imperative to seek the greatest short-term gain, regardless of the cost. The long-term cost can be easily disregarded as irrelevant by the temporal terminus of mortality.

John Maynard Keynes, in response to the accusation that his economic theories did not work in the long run, famously quipped, that in the long run, we are all dead (Keynes 1923:80). Kenneth Boulding also tackled this problem of conservation in the face of our own human mortality in his essay on spaceship Earth.

It may be said, of course, why worry about all this when the spaceman economy is still a good way off (at least beyond the lifetimes of any now living), so let us eat, drink, spend, extract and pollute, and be as merry as we can, and let posterity worry about the spaceship earth. It is always a little hard to find a convincing answer to the man who says, “What has posterity ever done for me?” and the conservationist has always had to fall back on rather vague ethical principles postulating identity of the individual with some human community or society which extends not only back into the past but forward into the future. Unless the individual identifies with some community of this kind, conservation is obviously “irrational.” (Boulding 1966:11)

I read this passage from Boulding as meaning the difference between rational and transrational modes of interpretation. Appealing to “vague ethical principles” is using rational argumentation to make the case that caring about others or future generations might be important. Identification “with some community of this kind,” as Boulding puts it, is rather akin to energetic or transrational interpretations of non-duality between I and Other, or in other words, between the perceiving subject and the perceived object. The problem that Boulding presents, of why not extract, pollute, and make merry, only makes sense, that is, it is only a question, when seen from the eyes of a discreet, separate, and temporally bound individual. Someone truly living in the long present *is* extended back into the past and forward into the future.<sup>55</sup> As one node of the Cosmos gazes at and recognizes itself in another

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<sup>55</sup> My use of back and forward here is to parallel Boulding’s grammatical construction in the cited passage. Equating forward to the future and back to past comes from our ambulatory experiences in which we generally face the direction of travel, and thus metaphorically transposes an embodied experience of movement in spatial dimensions to the temporal dimension (Lakoff & Johnson 1999).

node, so too is short-term economic gain at the expense of the environment an example of the old saying of cutting one's nose off to spite the face.

### ***Transrational Shift in Justice***

The question of justice is, for the most part, an extension of the interpretation of time. Justice is thus a second bifurcation point between Dietrich and Lederach in Elicitive Conflict Transformation. Justice in transrational interpretations is an issue of systemic balance, and as such, draws upon internal, external, singular, and plural notions of justice.

As justice requires a linear conception of time, an injustice in the past that will be righted in the future, it is on ontologically shaky ground within transrational perspectives. The house of transrational justice can be built, but with full knowledge that the foundation is raised on shifting sands. That is to say that transrational conceptions of time accept that time can have a linear nature of progression as well as cyclical and subjective aspects that can appear both contradictory and complementary. Transrational perspectives may accept that past grievances shall be addressed, yet the foundation of sand implies that the truth is not absolute.

As we saw in the discussion on time, the respective perspectives of Dietrich and Lederach fall along these same lines. As Dietrich argues that all conflict transformation occurs in the present moment, the concept of justice, and its imperative of either a precondition for or a direct result from peace, fades into the same noetic space as past and future: a notion that exists concretely in the mind but is never lived. Apart from metaphorically, one can neither live in the past nor in the future, only in the now. Lederach



emphasizes the importance of justice in his concept of *justpeace*, which is “an orientation toward conflict transformation characterized by approaches that reduce violence and destructive cycles of social interaction and at the same time increase justice in any human relationship” (Lederach 2005:182). Lederach’s penchant for justice is consistent with his Mennonite Christian background (Dietrich 2013:195) and is thus furthermore consistent with moral perspectives in general. The inherent problems of justice as a definition or a prerequisite for peace have already been discussed, but as a brief recap, peace based on justice forms the logical basis for the fear-driven justification of violence and the preemptive strike.

A notion of being just, fair, and right is likely a universal human experience. Taken as broadly as possible, this is nothing more than the expectation that human beings will treat each other well, just as one jewel in the Net of Indra reflects all others. When this kind of energetic principle of systemic balance ossifies into a code of conduct, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Analects of Confucius (sometime around 500-200 BCE), or the Code of Hammurabi (1754 BCE), the code becomes rigid and behaviour can be divided into a strict duality of right and wrong ways of acting, and this ossification marks the beginning of a transition to moral and modern perspectives. Postmodern perspectives attempt to view such bones as shattered fragments or rubber facsimiles. Transrational perspectives require a process of deossification. Human experiences that break down the isolating awareness of self open folk to energetic experiences of fairness, of being treated as a human being, and not only as a norm dictates. Transrational approaches therefore only accept norms as guidelines since they must be pliable, discardable if they do not serve, and not rigid

structures that resist or shatter when force is applied. Thus are transrational interpretations of justice flexible, relational, context specific, and deriving from, yet not blindly adherent to an accepted normative structure.

As this applies to economics, the notions of material justice that modern perspectives promise need not be totally abandoned. Truly, abandoning them would be irrational and not *trans*-rational. Rather, just as the descriptors listed for justice, the structures of modern economics need to be pliable, relational, context specific, and based on, but not dogmatically enforced by, rules. If these descriptors are applied, it is possible to see the non-linear relations of modern material economic justice.

In its simplest, and admittedly caricatured, form, money equals happiness. If we assume the presence of a market and the satisfaction of needs as equalling happiness, then the more money one has, the happier he will be.

[T]he standard assumption is that, other things being equal, more choices mean a higher quality of life because people with choices can select courses of action that maximize their well-being. Because income correlates with number of choices, greater income is equivalent to higher well-being. This formulation is standard in economics, where income is seen as the essence of well-being, and therefore measures of income are seen as sufficient indices to capture well-being. (Diener & Seligman 2004:2)

The question of whether or not this is true misses the essential nuance: it is true sometimes and not others. Studies have shown that an increase in income is directly related to an increase in quality of life up until a certain point, after which it plateaus. This means that the premises of the growth paradigm are in fact beneficial up to this inflection point; after this inflection point, more is not better. The logic gets flipped on its head. This is known as the Easterlin paradox after Richard Easterlin whose 1974 chapter sparked the academic debate

on the economics of happiness (Easterlin 1974:89-125).

The Easterlin paradox, the idea that, contrary to expectations, increased wealth does not directly relate to increased subjective well-being, has been corroborated by numerous studies (Veenhoven 1991; Frey & Stutzer 2002; Diener & Seligman 2004; Clark, Frijters, & Shields 2008:123; Di Tella & MacCulloch 2008:17; Kahneman & Deaton 2010).<sup>56</sup> Frey and Stutzer (Frey & Stutzer 2002) calculated that worldwide, an annual income of around 10 000 USD was the inflection point, above which increasing wealth yields diminishing returns.<sup>57</sup> Diener and Seligman, analyzing the work of Frey and Stutzer, conclude that “above a moderate level of income, there are only small increases in well-being” (Diener & Seligman 2004:5). Kahneman and Deaton, in a study exclusively in the USA, put the threshold of the emotional dimension of well-being at approximately 75 000 USD (Kahneman & Deaton 2010).<sup>58</sup> Although curious and important from a policy standpoint, the precise calculation of the inflection point, measured in GDP per capita or average household income, is not what interests me. The key point for the larger discussion of transrational interpretations of justice is that the preoccupation on growth is understandable because it is true up to a point, and then, if continued beyond that point, it becomes pathological.

The metaphor of the dynamic equilibrium can help to imagine a transrational

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56 There are of course dissenting views, and Stevenson and Wolfers (2008), present one of them. They argue that there is no inflection point or threshold (satiation point, in their terms) beyond which the marginal utility of each dollar earned is negligible for happiness. Their argument is that the relationship is logarithmic, each dollar earned brings less increase in happiness to a rich man than compared with a poor man yet brings some more happiness nonetheless, and that there is no conclusive evidence of a satiation point. Although this may on the surface seem devastating to the case that I am trying to build here, it is not altogether incompatible with transrational perspectives.

57 They do, however, conclude that factors such as autonomy and direct democracy do increase happiness (Frey & Stutzer 2002).

58 Kahneman and Deaton differentiate between “evaluation of life” and “emotional well-being,” the former referring to “the thoughts that people have about their life when they think about it,” which they find to rise steadily with income, whereas the latter does not (Kahneman & Deaton 2010).

interpretation of justice. Clearly it would be a logical sign of fairness to optimize this inflection point of income. Such logic is found in centrally planned Marxist economies and the raise the floor, lower the ceiling orientation of the welfare state. However, as the limited success of these examples should attest, attempting to hone in on this one sweet spot is not enough. Adjusting for a given income per capita is a modern solution that relies on a singular prescribed method, which only addresses the physical realm. Money is only good for that which can be bought, and as the conventional wisdom goes, that includes neither happiness nor love. The idea of a dynamic equilibrium is that it is not essential and perhaps impossible to keep a system static at the optimal point, rather to perceive the optimal point as a strange attractor and to permit the system to fluctuate around that attractor point.

The literature on subjective well-being and the economics of happiness mentions some key psychological factors that income levels alone do not account for. Richard Layard suggests that folk are much more concerned about their relative than their absolute income (Layard 2005:45). This means that people are likely to judge their own happiness in comparison with their neighbours rather than some kind of objective criteria based on fundamental needs. In English, this phenomenon is colloquially known as “keeping up with the Joneses,” as Jones is a very common surname in Anglo North America; it implies that if my neighbours get a new television, then I will want one even more, and even try to out do them by getting a slightly bigger one. It thus becomes on never-ending race of Sisyphean proportions. This phenomenon is also known as the Hedonic treadmill, meaning that “aspirations increase along with income and, after basic needs are met, relative rather than absolute levels matter to well-being” (Graham 2008:77). It further implies that people

experience habituation that creates a new normal. Some goal that was seen in the past as bringing happiness, once achieved, is now ordinary, mundane, and no longer a source of happiness. These factors cannot be evened out by income levels because they are internal psychological phenomena.

In this roundabout way we come back to a transrational approach. Since a uniquely monetary approach to well-being does not address how to get a person off of the Hedonic treadmill, an integrated approach is needed. If the term justice is to be applied to a transrational interpretation of fairness and well-being, it is through an understanding of an integrated approach that includes all of the levels and layers of the human experience. Thus transrational interpretations of justice include aspects of material justice from structuralism and aspects of life satisfaction and well-being from internal and subjective experience, which is combining the inflection point of maximizing physical needs with the psychological needs, indeed the rest of the multi-layered pyramid. Although the analogy might not fit perfectly, I am reminded of the concept of the triple point in chemistry, which is a combination of temperature and pressure under which a given substance exists in three phases simultaneously (solid, liquid, and gas). Physical needs and psychological needs, two simplified aggregates, can be like temperature and pressure, and if they are applied in the right proportions, there is the possibility for an extraordinary state of matter.

### ***Transrational Relationships: The Contact Boundary***

Relationships within transrational approaches can be seen as a contact boundary at work. Neither is the relationship primary as was described in energetic perspectives, nor is the

individual the primary actor as was described in modern perspectives; we are neither alone and isolated nor lost in a collective like an ant. Transrational perspectives hold that both of these perspectives can be simultaneously true. A metaphor to describe this phenomenon can be found in Ken Wilber's concept of a holon, which is simultaneously a whole and a part (Wilber 1995). A human being, a holon, is a unit that has its boundary, but that boundary is semi-permeable and is in constant interaction with its environment and a steady throughput of energy and material.

When we start to take this idea and apply it to the conventional wisdom of economics, two main points emerge, which are fundamentally one and the same. The first is that the full array of human potential is present in every interaction. This is to say that even in a brief interaction in a hardware store buying a hacksaw blade, I am acting out every facet and layer of my being. Naturally, not every facet is going to be in the most noticeable, dominant position, nevertheless, denying that my purchase of a hacksaw blade is equally an enactment of my identity, my sexuality, my spirituality, and my role in society by reducing the interaction down to uniquely a question of calculating self-interest is to commit the cardinal error of reductionism. The second is the notion of embeddedness. In other words, the individual human being can never be analyzed separate from her context, implying the inclusion of all the things that can be glossed under terms such as culture, society, and socialization. I say that ultimately these two points are the same because if I assume that every interaction is an enactment of my identity and my sexuality then I have to assume that I am always embedded in my culture.

When we start meandering down this path of enquiry, it begins to lead to an

interpretation of economics that is very different from conventional views, yet with similarities to what we saw in energetic perspectives. What the economy produces, rather than automobiles, financial services, and other widgets, is people. I do not mean the production of babies (although that could be argued too); I mean that we perform the roles of our selves and re-create our relationships in everything we do. Since the economy is an institutionalized structure of human creative energies, it channels said energies into roles.

This sentiment is echoed by David Graeber:

I've already underlined that even the most workaday, least dramatic forms of social action (tending pigs and whatnot) are also forms of symbolic production: they play the main role in reproducing people's most basic definitions of what humans are, the difference between men and women, and so on. (Graeber 2001:82)

This understanding finds a parallel, and almost undoubtedly its inspiration, in post-structuralist feminist theory. As Judith Butler (1990) argues, our roles in society, gender being one of them, are performances that we always perform. This aspect of transrational approaches thus forms part of a philosophical lineage that draws from and transcends postmodern and post-structuralist thought. Gender may have broken the ground, but it is a clear extrapolation that class and culture and really all things that we can call identity are also performances.

Coming back to the idea of the holon, we can see these two forces, the whole and the part, working simultaneously. We are at once independent individuals and we are also fed back what we re-create in our relationships. It may even be more accurate to turn it around, placing the relationship first, stating that how we relate re-creates us. The result is that any search for an originary state, static base-point, or true nature will be reduced to a caricatured

simplification mired in contradiction and paradox.

A craftsman does not deny his feet shoes because he earns his living with his hands. We cannot be pure individualists because we are not pure individuals; we are bound together in a social web that permits none of us to be either completely independent of others or completely non-responsible for others. It is on this rock that the pure capitalist criterion splits. (Boulding 1946:112)

I am because we are and I have a nature, the side that is opposed to nurture in the old debate, and the two are wrapped in webs of feedback and discourse. The concept of the holon is a way of simply saying that we are context-nature, we have a certain given set of preconditions which constantly discursively interact with our environs and relations.

The individual does not disappear into the collective but exists within the collective. The re-orientation of the understanding of an individual shifts the parameters of how economics is perceived. Eisenstein lays out the apparent paradox of trying to understand transrational approaches from modern standpoints.

So here is a paradox: on the one hand, the obligation-generating function of gifts creates social solidarity and community. On the other hand, our hearts respond to gifts that seek to create no obligation, that demand no reciprocation, and we are touched by the generosity of those who give without expectation of return. Is there a way to resolve this paradox? Yes—because the source of obligation needn't be social pressure leveraging the self-interest of a discrete and separate self. It can instead arise naturally, unforced: the result of gratitude. This obligation is an autochthonous desire, a natural corollary to the felt-state of connection that arises, spontaneously, upon receiving a gift or witnessing an act of generosity. (Eisenstein 2011:360-361)

This ostensible paradox arises from the limits of rationality. Mauss' theory of the gift, which forms the basis of Eisenstein's assumption of socially obligatory gift reciprocation, rests in the assumption of the individual, for which Mauss has already been criticized (Weiner 1992).



There is no paradox in transrational approaches because they can accept openness and gratitude as compelling just as readily as coerced motivation. The *life-as-gift* orientation of energetic perspectives is also found in transrational perspectives and operates on the response of gratitude rather than debt.

Responding from gratitude is beyond the purview of modern understandings. Opening to energetically oriented ways of being changes the paradigm. Fundamentally, as was previously mentioned, especially in energetic interpretations of justice, gratitude allows for an open reciprocation, rather than one that is prescribed by a petrified normative structure. If I respond from gratitude, I have the choice of whether, when, how, and under what circumstances I want to reciprocate, which, at least in my mind, bestows a lot more agency, trust, and frankly respect, on the transrational participant.

### ***Money as Story***

Through transrational lenses, money is a representation of our relationships with other people. Despite much talk about gold standards and backed currencies, there is nothing more real about money than that: this makes the idea of money as “real” both a total fiction and at the same time the most real thing there is. Money is thus all stories that are collectively accepted. Money and the value that it represents are both just agreements amongst people. Our stories about money are just mythologies.

Throughout the families of peaces, I have been following a separation between credit and bullion currencies. In transrational perspectives, this differentiation is transcended by relationships. Bullion currencies are not more real than credit currencies since both a golden

nugget or a mark on a ledger are crystallizations of human relationships. I choose carefully to refer to relationships rather than debt. I could just as easily say that bullion and credit currencies are both crystallizations of debt because money represents the promises we make to one another. However, I also choose to use the neutral term relationship rather than encourage the negative ontology that debt implicates.

First realizing, then accepting, that these are but stories dwelling and enacted in the mind, frees up choice as to what kind of stories we want to agree upon. This is one of the conclusions that Eisenstein comes to regarding backed currencies.

Actual practical redeemability is not necessary to qualify something as a backed currency. Yes, the redeemability is a fiction, a story, but stories have power. All money is a story. We have no alternative to creating money within a matrix of stories. Nothing I have written disqualifies backed currencies. But if we are to choose a backed currency, let us be clear about the reasons. It is not to make the money “real” in a way that unbacked currencies are not. It is to imbue money with the story of value we want to create. (Eisenstein 2011:166)

I would classify the recognition of money as agreements to be a postmodern twist. Realizing that this is a choice and further to make a choice is the transrational shift because in order to do that, one must go through a transformational experience that deconstructs one’s identity narratives that create and bind one to those said agreements. Moreover, to agree with Eisenstein, there is nothing in transrational approaches that precludes currency backed by the gold standard, but let us be clear about the reasons. It is not to make money real but to agree on a satisfactory mythological story.

Transrational approaches accept that a widely accepted physical currency as a medium of exchange has very useful applications. The three traditional roles of money (medium of exchange, store of value, unit of account) can be maintained. They also accept

that such a currency does not have any inherent value but is a social convention. Therefore, it does not have to be gold; as some of the examples we saw showed, it can be pretty much anything: digital encryption like bitcoin, simple encryption like tally sticks, or shells, feathers, and stones.

However, transrational approaches also accept that seizing the goldmines or hoarding all the shells does not make one rich. Since the objects of money are symbols for the commitments of our relationships, our relationships perdure even if the bank account becomes magically empty. This has a two-fold implication. Firstly, I would argue that transrational approaches to currency maintain that any particular thing chosen to act as money should be rare enough to control the money supply. This is one of the historical attractions of gold because it is rather rare on the Earth's surface and the current increase in supply can be accurately predicted based on the projections from the mines. Conversely, it reflects the fundamental danger of credit based monetary systems because there is the danger of making more promises than one can keep, which in other words means that there is nothing to stop you from printing money or nothing preventing your mouth from writing cheques that will bounce. Secondly, transrational approaches must be able to see the energetic principle that lies beyond the physical form. In our day and age, control of the money supply has an enormous effect in the daily lives of millions of people. In the hypothetical case of my bank account suddenly disappearing (and such things do in fact happen), I may, on the surface, be stuck up a certain creek without a paddle. I cannot buy food or pay my bills and my basic services will be shut off and I will likely be evicted from my residence. However, in this scenario, imagine that it was only that my money magically

disappeared and my networks of relationships still existed. If I carried on my job everything would continue; money would be seen as a meaningless convention and a new medium would emerge. This is consistent with the historical record that shows that accounts have been kept in the units of old currencies centuries after the specie has stopped circulating (Graeber 2011:37).

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, there was a common joke that if the problem was confidence in the markets, let us just restore confidence and carry on with business as usual. The sardonic comment works because it is just that simple, yet the chasm to be crossed is the transrational shift. It does appear that such big events are causing many people to question the social conventions and the mythology of money. The works that I reference, such as Graeber (2011) and Eisenstein (2011), attest to that and I was up front about being motivated to undertake this dissertation by events such as the financial crisis of 2008.

The “how” of the question is a step beyond the scope of this dissertation but not an aspect that I shy away from. I firmly believe that transpersonal experiences are necessary to cross that aforementioned chasm from a rational island to a holistic human, in which heart, mind, and mouth are aligned. Without transpersonal experiences, we remain rational islands, prisoners of our own self-awareness. Temporarily obliterating the cognitive walls of separation allows a glimpse at the stories that have been constructed. As such, and bringing it back to a discussion of money, transpersonal experiences can open one to the illusory nature of money that has been outlined in this section.

Realizing and accepting that any form of currency is a convention would have many consequences. People could reimagine the obsession with gold that is a mainstay of market

speculation. Demonetization of gold could open up wider accessibility for industrial and commercial uses such as superconductors or microchips. As Kenneth Boulding pointed out already in the mid-twentieth century, “It is, after all, a moderately useful metal commercially, and the world’s gold stock would probably be more useful in the form of tooth-fillings, rings, and plate than in the form of buried bars” (Boulding 1946:191). Gold, just as anything, carries symbolic importance which is psychological. It is not to say that symbolism and psychology are not important, but it can be changed.

In sum, all money is a story, a narrative, an agreement. It can thus never be more important than our relationships and the promises we make to other people. The world around us will give us countless examples to the contrary, however, this is the challenge of transrational perspectives. If we do put a story, such as money, ahead of our relationships, it is only because we have lost our humanity.

### ***Connection to Nature***

For the most part, the precepts of transrational approaches to environment have already been covered in the chapters on energetic and postmodern perspectives. This refers to the fundamental non-differentiation between the human being and the rest of the world (subject and object) from energetic perspectives, and the trans-environmentalist Deep Ecology movement that was mentioned as an overlap from postmodern perspectives to transrational perspectives. Parallel to the concept of the holon that was introduced in the section on relationships, transrational approaches to environment can hold the ostensible paradox of oneness and separateness: on one level, I am clearly distinct from a blade of grass, but I can

also simultaneously hold true that what I perceive as separateness is an illusion — both I and the blade of grass are manifestations of the Cosmos, an originary energy, or Brahman.

As rational perspectives are characterized by an instrumentalization of the natural world, transrational perspectives live a deep connection to it. Again, I am rather stuck using linguistic forms dependent on the separation of subject and object which belie the gravity of the immanent connection. Even saying that there is a deep connection to the natural world presupposes this separation. Moreover, this is the fundamental conflict of colonialism as it was this incompatibility of worldviews that modernity rammed up against as the European mercantile empires began to spread around the world. As modernity is basically a European project, a deep connection to the natural world is, in other words, normal. The historical exception is now with the people living in concrete urban jungles; most people for most of history have had the former experience of living on the land.

It is hard for me to stress this enough. There is subtle yet profound nuance in truly transrational perspectives. Bill McKibben cites examples of how small farms can know the land better than large-scale industrial producers because they can walk the terrain and observe the changes. “Yellow clover leaves signify a sulfur deficiency; an abundance of dandelions means a shortage of calcium” (McKibben 2007:67). We can list some of the advantages of knowing the land, but that still keeps the discussion in the rational sphere, once again seeking justification in an instrumentalization. Really knowing the land is a vastly deep and transpersonal experience that connects us to the source of all life and to our ancestors. A deep transrationally based connection to nature is much more than efficient farming or berry picking; it is also knowing who you are, where you are, and where you come from.

This is not to say that no rivers will be dammed and no trees will be cut down. It does mean that in transrational perspectives, it will not be done in the name of growth and profit but rather for holistic well-being. Transrational approaches do not naively deny the necessities of subsistence or desire for creature comforts. The pollution of a river, or any form of long-term environmental degradation, cannot be dismissed as simply an unfortunate externality in the pursuit of maximizing efficiency and profit for in transrational understandings, such action is an affront to the order of things and ultimately a subliminal form of self-mutilation. Just as the way in is the way out, what we do to the world, we do to ourselves; how we treat ourselves is also how we show up in the world.

### ***Transrational Peaces***

It is a leitmotiv in the Innsbruck School that peace is for heroes. The hero's journey takes one into the darkest recesses of the human soul. Those brave enough to face the darkness alone, ultimately to face themselves, return to the surface with profound treasure. It is the wisdom that one gains from plumbing the cavernous abyss of the human soul that empowers one to live in harmony with transrational peaces.

Transrational approaches to peace understand that each moment is unique. The understanding of conflict transformation pivots on this ontological precept: the here-and-now, this moment, is a unique and sacred moment. To live in peace, we must act accordingly to this unique moment; we draw on our experience of the past but binding our actions to visions of the past responds to a moment that is no longer now and hampers our ability to respond to this unique moment — now. Transrational perspectives see nothing as absolute; rules only

work if it is assumed that every moment is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

That rational peaces are valid, yet incomplete, forms the rational justification of transrational peaces. Peace is only a relevant word with the perceiving subject interpreting peace; consequently, there are subjective experiences of peace that cannot be epistemically accessed by the rational mind. There is, therefore, so much more than rational interpretations of peace. Transrational approaches to peace acknowledge justice and security as forms of peace equally as harmony and truth. They are neither bound by the horizons of rationality nor exclusively focused inward. They take in all layers and levels of the human experience.

A source of inspiration for the academic exposition of transrational understandings has been the field of transpersonal psychology. By opening up our understanding of self and of metaphysics to transpersonal dimensions, many of the rigid structures that the rational mind imposes on us can be seen as illusory. For example, the very notion of a transpersonal experience is one in which the experience of self expands to include others. A worldview that is informed by such experiences cannot be motivated solely by a rational self-interest. Rather, it offers an explanation of how many symbolic relations, such as between a parent and a child, defy the logic of self-interest. It is simply because human beings all around the world at all different times in history have had profound transpersonal experience that dissolve the awareness of self and extend it outward. The effects can leave a lasting impression long after the peak experience has passed (Maslow 1964; Austin 1999). It is in this way that transpersonal psychology, and indeed mystical experiences, open the door for transrational approaches to peace.



## ***Reflections on Transrational Economics***

Where I grew up was in the rural outskirts of a small city. We had chickens; our neighbours had horses and pigs; there was a farm down the street. In my short lifetime I have seen the forests and fields around my home, my childhood stomping grounds and playgrounds, converted into strip malls, fast-food joints, condos, and cookie-cutter single family dwellings. This was often met by disapproving comments from friends and family, and yet a resigned acceptance followed by, “well, you cannot stop progress.” This was simply an established fact that there was some inexorable force called progress that many people actually disapproved of and yet complacently accepted. It was not until recently that I reflected on this and could see it not as a primordial fact of life, but the result of a particular worldview and the actions of a relatively small group of people who are posed to profit from the dubiously named profession of real estate “developer.” There was someone who believed that we would all be better off if there was some retail store that sold boatloads of plastic trinkets imported from China and a few people could get minimum wage jobs as salesclerks.

These musings revolve around a central point in my own changing understanding of the world. Inevitable laws began to appear as choices. None of the assumptions listed here about land usage or private property rights are immutable laws but choices based on worldview — and worldview, as this dissertation has intended to show, is always one of many. I offer these reflections as a challenge, foremost to myself, to dare to imagine new possibilities.

There is a modern myth that is perpetuated that for the majority of human history everybody was suffering in abject poverty until the industrial revolution. Because of the fall

of European feudalism, some forward-thinking industrialists have been the saviour of mankind, and since then we have been able to work less and have more. The truth is more likely the opposite. For most of history, people only spent a relatively small amount of their time in subsistence activities and the rest is the important stuff: teaching children, the production of people, recreating society, creating what we call culture. It is as if we know the dance of life but are performing the steps backwards; life, and the economy, is to create healthy and fully actualized human beings, and time in the factory or at the office is meant to serve that purpose. One can surely blame the Protestant work ethic for equating work with morality, wealth with spiritual piety, but it does not get people off the hook for the responsibility of their choices. The idea that you should spend forty hours a week doing something that you do not like and take it without a complaint, because if you do not, then you are lazy and deserve to be poor, is an aberration that is contrary to most human experience for most of human history.

I interpret Eisenstein's sacred economics as a call along these lines, that is, to reclaim something lost from an idealized pre-industrial past. His advocacy of gift economies, the reinsertion of energetic principles into modernity, is at times naive as a universal proposal because it tends to privilege the energetic quadrant of transrational approaches. Part of what transrational approaches embrace is that there are multiple levels interacting simultaneously, therefore, using the language of the peace families, an interaction can be using both moral and postmodern modes at the same time. An allopathic perspective, that problem "A" requires solution "A," will always run into this problem, because if I believe that this moment is unique, then one size never fits all.

Where I can once again agree with Eisenstein is in taking a perspective of Elicitive Conflict Mapping. The method of conflict mapping is to notice where in the conflict pyramid the imbalance exists and act accordingly. Eisenstein's diagnosis is that the imbalance of too much rational instrumentality and not enough energetic gratitude is to decrease one and pump up the other. I do agree and I furthermore become skeptical when it is not paired with a philosophical orientation of dynamic equilibrium.

The same perspective of conflict mapping can be used to explain why I favour the 200-year present as regards transrational approaches to economics. It is my assessment, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, that the imbalance is on the side of the fragmented and short-term side. What is needed to bring balance under current conditions is a view of eternity. Our lives are not our own but are part of the rich tapestry of space-time and as such are part of a cyclical forever. Recalling Graeber's example of the Iroquois village, there will always be another side of the village. Capitalism requires the anxiety of the end of days, which is to say the terminus of the vectoral chronosophy, in order to extract as much as possible now, which is one of Graeber's main conclusions (Graeber 2011). A focus on the long present is not an intrinsic aspect of a transrational approach to economics, but it is my assessment of where the current imbalance rests.

### ***Concluding Remarks on Transrational Approaches***

The goal of this research was to investigate what a transrational approach to economics might look like. This was undertaken by applying the lens of the families of peaces to the concept of economics. Since economics is a distinctly modern concept, it quickly breaks down under

this analysis. Granted, the moral and postmodern families cover many qualities that are recognizable as economics; the energetic interpretations depart from many of the ontological underpinnings of modernity and thus the idea of “energetic economics” is an oxymoron, or perhaps more like dividing by zero — undefined. Therefore, integrating these four perspectives into a dynamic equilibrium of transrational approaches equally means that “economics” ceases to be a useful category of analysis. This is exactly the kind postmodern dilemma that Immanuel Wallerstein argues: if all of our categories of analysis are only meaningful within the existing capitalist world-system, then what basis is there for comparison outside of it (Graeber 2006:65)?

The good news is that there is more to life than physicality. Although some, perhaps extreme atheists, might take issue with such an assertion, I believe that the evidence supports my claim. There is more to life than the economy and this has been proven for millennia outside of this aberrant historical blip we call modernity. There are ways of creating meaning that do not rely on the nation-state and the capitalist world system.

This chapter showed some of the characteristics of transrational approaches. Firstly, time is accepted with its paradoxes: it can be seen simultaneously as a dimension of space-time on the margins of comprehension and as an incommensurable subjective human experience. Justice exists in transrational understandings only in our concrete relationships as “subjective and communal satisfaction of needs” (Dietrich 2013:198). As such, material needs are only one part of any conflict episode and are not the cause of conflict. Human beings exist as holons, whole-parts, that are simultaneously unique individuals and part of a collective, having a distinct yet permeable contact boundary that is in constant interaction

with its environs. Money exists as a mutually agreed upon symbolic representation of human relationships. Development only exists in a non-linear understanding of transmogrifying from one form to another. Any kind of call for development (sustainable development, qualitative development, bottom-up development) as long as it is rooted in a teleological epistemology has no place in transrational understandings. I can cede that development as understood as changing from one thing to another, changing from linear understandings to holistic and cyclical understandings is compatible with transrational approaches, however, I would further question whether this could or should still be referred to as development. Human beings are an expression of the immanent divine and are inseparable from the dance of the cosmos. Finally, transrational approaches to peace are relational, pliable, and always inflected by the capricious changes of the unique present moment.

The next and final chapter will summarize the vast spectrum of material that was covered in this work and will offer some concluding considerations. It will review the main insights of each chapter and present the findings of the work as a whole.



## 7 Conclusion

The threads of time, justice, relationality, currency, environment, and peace have been woven through the five families of peaces into this text and now it is time to see what kind of tapestry they have created. This concluding chapter will offer a brief review of the families of peaces and how they respectively interpret economics. As writing a dissertation can be likened to climbing a mountain, an arduous journey into the unknown, I will also reflect on the vista that unfolds before me at this summit. I will outline some of the difficulties, shortcomings, and avenues for further enquiry and attempt to bring this leg of the journey to a satisfactory close while still leaving the questions open.

This dissertation attempted to answer the question of what a transrational approach to economics is by following the approaches to economics of the four constituent peace families. In my early naïveté I had hoped to arrive at more concrete answers and to feel emboldened by a certainty of the new truth that I had uncovered. In truth, If I had done so, I would not have learned anything about transrationality. It is only possible to cognitize and discuss transrational approaches to economics after having deconstructed the concept. I would furthermore return to my preamble in asserting that it requires a certain *decolonized* mindset. In fact, I frequently considered finding a new way or word for transrational approaches that did not use the perhaps misleading term economics. Although I am at times critical of a blind adherence to Hellenistic origins, I did not come up with anything satisfactory, and had I done so, it probably would have sounded rather presumptuous.

Following the threads of this dissertation, these are the postulates of transrational

approaches to economics. Networks of relationships is the fundamental organizing principle of transrational approaches to economics, which differs from the language of commodities and consumers with which we might be most familiar. Conceptions of time reflect the facets of the eternal, encompassing a multigenerational longterm overview and the timelessness of the eternal present moment. Justice, if the term can be used at all, is understood as a subjective and communal satisfaction of needs from the best of my ability and is an extension of our networks of relationships. Transrational currency combines the notion of spheres of exchange from moral perspectives, and recognizes that there are different moments for different means; cash transactions, favours between friends, symbolic gifts, and time spent together can all coexist in their own spheres of logic. They can maintain systems of formalized money where they are appropriate and can accept and embrace radically different arrangements if the need arises. Transrational worldviews see themselves as part of the environment thus implying a non-differentiation from the rest of the natural world, which is a sublation of the fundamental duality of *I* and *You*, subject and object. Transrational peaces require notions of harmony, truth, justice, and security to be present. By the same logic, transrational approaches to economics balance the inside and the outside, the singular and the plural.

The other question that this dissertation set out to answer was describing the interpretation of economics from each of the families of peaces. I will review the salient points from each chapter. The introductory chapter obviously sets the stage for the scenes that are to follow. In this case, the state of the art was given for all five peace families. Furthermore, a brief history and working definition of economics was presented. The



philosophical framework of the families of peaces and the Elicitive Conflict Pyramid was explained, as it forms the structural spine of this dissertation.

Energetic interpretations of economics are the most different from a conventional understanding of economics. They therefore require a deconstruction of economics and a beginner's mind to wipe clear the modern assumptions we might be bringing to them. Energetic perspectives are characterized by non-linear and cyclical conceptions of time. This has the consequence that life is seen as a complex of repeating cycles rather than as a teleological process. The chapter discussed gift economies, with a special look at potlatch ceremonies of the North American Pacific Northwest. The concepts of gift economies, human economies were discussed as expressions of energetic perspectives. A defining medium of exchange of energetic perspectives it is not a thing at all, but rather the act of giving.

Moral approaches to economics were explained around the idea of a pre-established divine hierarchy. The origins of linear conceptions of time were posited as stemming from the early Axial Age when male creator gods replaced cults of fertility in the Mediterranean basin. This was used to explain the origins of the concept of the loan at interest and the moral condemnation of the propensity of the concept to lead to the dehumanization of debtors. Mankind occupies a privileged position in the divine hierarchy and is imbued with the responsibility of stewardship of the land and its bounty which is a separation from and subjugation of nature. Money in this view is equated to bullion as physical objects are understood as wealth. Commerce is often understood as an extension of mutual aid to the brotherhood of mankind and as such as an example of divine justice being manifested on

Earth. In this vein, moral peaces are usually conceived as a peace out of justice, which is achieved by the maintenance of the divine hierarchy.

The idea that everything, in the end, boils down to economics, that all decisions and motivations can be reduced to a calculation of money, is a completely modern understanding. The chapter on modern interpretations of economics started with an exploration of the definitions of modernity and then explained vectoral chronosophy and its relations to the growth paradigm. As modern peaces are based on justice and security, modern perspectives view the nation-state as the guarantor of modern peaces by ensuring internal security against outside threats and justice of satisfaction of material needs through a national economy. Modern perspectives can be characterized by an instrumentalization of relationships, whether amongst folk or the relationship between people and the environment. Modern money is characterized by paper money being an extension of bullion currency and a deictic symbol of it. In its pure form, it is the triumph of reason over the divine that will create a just secular paradise on Earth.

From postmodern perspectives, the loss of truth makes it our own responsibility to find peace and to define it and redefine it in every encounter. The grand narratives of modernity are no longer tenable and the the conception of time, the teleological process towards betterment, is seen to be heading the wrong way. The chapter began by outlining some distinctions between postmodernity, modern responses to postmodernity, and postmodernism. In postmodern understandings, just as there is no peace other than the peace that we define in our relationships at any given time, so to is there no justice other than the justice that we experience in our specific encounters with others. In this way, postmodern

approaches to economics are relational and constantly redefined. Rotman's concept of xenomoney was used to describe postmodern interpretations of currency in which money only represents an exact copy of itself. Postmodern conceptions of the environment usually revolve around a rational appeal to the utility of conservation rather than the intrinsic value or immanent divine aspect of the natural world. Therefore, postmodern approaches to economics are bound to the modern rational paradigm by the language that they use to justify themselves and are thus trapped in a kind of circular logic.

One motivating reason that brought me to this topic was that I found the theory of the families of peaces to be a useful tool. It helped me to understand, by using its framework, what different people might mean by peace and why, even if they claim peace as a common goal, those peaces could be incompatible. In the end, I do feel the same is true for applying the families of peaces' framework to economics. It helps me have some kind of system of understanding. In the final stages of writing, I heard a radio interview debating economics. It was clear to me that the three guests represented moral, modern, and postmodern worldviews. One was using religious arguments to condemn usury (moral), one was advocating greater and stricter government oversight (modern), and one was advocating deregulation as the greatest expression of human freedom (postmodern). It was obvious to me listening that they would never agree or even get anywhere because they were coming from three distinct worldviews.

This categorization of ontologies has proven useful to me for peaces and the interpretations of economics that I have presented here. Nevertheless, I do wonder about the extent of the utility of this framework: for what and for how much is it really useful? At times

it seemed that the analogy of the families of peaces was stretched a bit thin in order to cover economics. This is not to say that I found any gross inconsistencies in applying this theory, rather some moments of doubt in which I considered whether a different approach might be better suited to the topic.

As far as economics goes, I find two frameworks that David Graeber uses (Graeber 2011) to be more useful than the peace families. They are the categories of baseline communism, hierarchy, and exchange as modes of interacting and the periodicity of credit and bullion. However, to return to a justification of my use of transrational peaces to explain economics, Graeber's analysis of debt starts with moral paradigms. The advantage that transrational approaches bring is the inclusion of energetic understandings. Graeber of course cites many examples of energetic interpretations of economics, but my reading of the work is that it enters into enquiry at the point of the moral confusion of debt.

In the spirit of concluding this dissertation, it is at this point that I wish to reflect on what I have learned about transrational approaches to economics. Rather than proposing concrete solutions to economic problems, this reflection on lessons learned from this journey will serve as signposts through the pathless land.

Firstly, inspired by Graeber, money is a manifestation of our personal relationships. It is unit of account that measures our faith in other human beings. It represents the promises that we make to one another. Therefore, if money is not reflecting the richness of our relationships, then there is something wrong with the collective story with which is imbued because it is no longer serving the role for which it was created. Echoing the opening epigraph from Master Ueshiba, founder of Aikido, that the best to trade commodities to trade

in are sincerity and love, the best investment is to invest in relationships because in the end, that is what money ultimately represents.

The assumptions of modern economics, armed with rational self-interest, recreate the isolated and alienated human beings that their normative systems attempt to guard against. Therefore, investing in relationships is a more radical proposal than I think it appears on the surface. The back-stabber who will consume the commons is only going to be the member of the community who is not tied by the bonds of relationships and mutual responsibility to everyone else. People that have deep, intimate, and nurturing relationships with family, friends, and community are the least likely to consume more than their fair share. The ones who feel that nobody cares about them have nothing to lose and everything to gain from being the cheater. If the cords of intimacy have already been severed, collective shaming is not enough to bring them back into the fold; empathy needs to be rebuilt from the ground up. Thus, investing in relationships is the timeless method of enforcing social norms.

We can imagine a foreclosed house to give us a contemporary example that has been sadly common in North America since 2008. One can make an offer that is well below the market value and scoop up real estate at a great deal. The alienation and anonymity of a big city make this possible. Since there is no relationship, there is no face to place on the previous owner and no details to associate with the family that just got kicked out of their home. It is thus easy to blame them as failures and having brought this fate upon themselves. It may be tempting to fall back on the logic that foreclosure is the consequence of not paying the mortgage. However, such an argument condones a system that might encourage people to take on too much debt, which is to say make promises that they cannot keep. It then becomes

a form of legalized entrapment. The scenario is a great way to profit from a slump in real estate markets, but could you do it in a small town? How does it go over if my neighbour falls on hard times and I buy up his house at below cost, flip it to someone else and make a profit while he is on the street or in some other way reduced from his former pride as a householder and landowner? And what if there were just the two families in town? Would I get pleasure from my monopoly position by taking the property of the only other person playing the game? Ultimately, from a transrational perspective, there is only one person: if I accept the postulate that separateness between individuals is a temporary illusion brought forth by my physiology, then I am kicking myself out of my own home.

In the sense of Amartya Sen's development as freedom, there is an important question as to what kind of promises free people make to one another. Although I have come to it by a different road, I wish to echo David Graeber's concluding question in analyzing debt: what kind of promises might people make if they are not encumbered by the internalized guilt of debt? If there were to be a society of strong relationships and actualized human beings, of transrational approaches to our *oikonomos* in the sense of running our household, what would it value? As silly as it may sound beside the boisterous rationality of Realpolitik, I am reminded of the words of the prophet Bahá'u'lláh (Bahá'u'lláh 1857): "My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart." With kindness is how free people treat each other.

This lens of kindness may help us to see an energetic principle in a transrational context. Life is a gift. From a transrational position, life is not a debt to be paid back, it is a gift that is to be given freely. This energetic principle can be found all over, which is why the

threshold moments are so often celebrated with gifts, and why childhood education is public in so many countries. Yet, in my home country of Canada, the modern perspective takes over at age eighteen: basic schooling is a gift from our elders, administered by the state, but for university education costs students a small fortune (this is while universities are in fact subsidized by the state). In Canada, the life as gift only goes so far and then the principle is lost, whereas many other nation-states elect to extend the gift to include a university education. I am not saying that everything need be a gift, a free ride, as some might see it; some things should be settled in exchanges. The question is where should the gift of life be? Following Eisenstein's ideas, the gift of life could probably be extended much further than it is currently. Parents generally do not present their children with a bill of expenses when they become adults, and if they did, they would probably never speak again, which is exactly what one would expect from a spot trade: to be able to walk away with no obligations and no responsibilities to the other. This is clearly understood in an example of familiar relations, but I would hazard that there are other places in which it could equally apply and yet it gets swallowed up by the logic of the market.

This example, silly and playful as it is, gets at a core question that transrational approaches bring up: how to integrate our internal and external experiences. It is easy to access energetic understandings of peace as there are many examples embedded in language with English as my most obvious point of reference. I would argue that there is an inherent understanding of peace as a subjective human experience, meaning everybody can imagine what it might feel like to be at peace. There is some parallel with energetic understandings of economics in that most people can appreciate that value of giving without expectation of

return and of gratitude as a motivator. However, there seems to be a schism between the internal and external experiences. It is as if finding my inner peace has nothing to do with the geopolitical stage; energetic experiences of peace are fine for the internal world, but the real world needs peace treaties. Truthfully, bridging that chasm, integrating all four quadrants of the transrational peaces, and all the layers, outside and inside, of the Elicitive Conflict Pyramid, is the central challenge of shifting to transrational worldviews. My experience as a seminar facilitator at the UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies in Innsbruck was such that even the most energetically oriented students turned into Hobbesians when discussing peace in the sphere of geopolitics. In conversation with my colleague and program coordinator Norbert Koppensteiner, he mentioned that this is a common issue with students: Shiva and Shakti are separated. It is difficult to see how the macro-political level can be relational, and conversely, how macro-structures bear down on one's intra-personal experience (Koppensteiner 2016).

When discussing economics from a transrational perspective, the same disconnect seems to be prevalent. After having researched this topic for close to five years, discussed and debated the issue, and cited many examples of gift economies and stateless societies, there is a persistent presumption that these ideas might be fine for some people living on a mountain in Melanesia, but would never work in the real world. The assumption is that Shakti cannot be brought to Shiva. This is a lack of imagination, but unfortunately, it is not only that. Energetic understandings of economics cannot be readily integrated because of the violence of the logic of the nation-state. Just as the Hansa were excluded from the Peace of Westphalia, forms of social organization that do not fit predetermined categories are violently excluded. This is not a defeatist lament claiming that transrational approaches will never be



realized, nevertheless, within the logic of the nation-state, they will consistently come into conflict with the monopoly of violence. This is of particular interest as part of peace studies because it asks the question then of what is done then?

This is the beauty of transrational approaches; there is always another ace up the sleeve. Transrational approaches are more than a clash of civilizations between modern and energetic worldviews. There are also the lessons of postmodernism to draw from. The perpetual twisting of ideas, the incomplete truths, the mosaic of shifting tiles inform how these apparent opposites can meet. It is precisely in the tension of this dilemma that the endlessly permutable twisting is found. Energetic understandings may be proscribed by the exclusionary violence of the nation-state, but people who live in a transrational way are not traumatized by the schism because Shakti and Shiva have united and mind, heart, and mouth have aligned. Problems that appear intractable from outside of transrationality have some possibility from within.

The answer to how is another story and maybe one that I will have the pleasure of reinterpreting one day. For now, there are three teachings that I wish to convey: invest in relationships; practice kindness; and walk in gratitude.



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