

Is There a Unifying Alternative to the Empire of Chaos? A World Philosophy Synopsis

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This is the second half of the interview of Prof. John McMurtry specially conducted for the 15th Anniversary of "Geopolitika" a journal of geopolitical and cultural analysis in Belgrade which will be broadcast on Radio Belgrade by the weekly show "Silen" on March 24 from questions posed by Biljana Đorović.

You have explained 'globalization' as transnational money sequences multiplying through societies and environments and devouring life support systems. Given the current paralysis of unifying vision, what is the social alternative?



You are right about the 'paralysis of unifying vision'. Even philosophers reject any ultimate common value, while no party has a policy framework of alternative. The tacitly ruling morality is that everyone must compete harder to survive while economic systems are stripped everywhere to enrich the corporate rich. Business statistics show that the poorer half of the world has lost over 40% of its wealth in the last five years, while less than one-tenth of one percent of the world's population has multiplied its wealth and blames 'overpopulation' as the problem. But with even the opposition repeating masking slogans like "neo-liberal" and "austerity", there are no coherent policy drivers to reclaim the life capital base of humanity.

For years before global capitalism went carcinogenic, I thought Marx provided the unifying vision. But close examination reveals that technological determinism is the ultimate driver of society for Marx with *no grounding life-value base to control it* - Stalinist growth an extreme example of the problem. My research has concluded that *life capital* is the underlying ground eluding us, the real base of human society and development, and the only concept which unifies across social, ecological and organic systems. It is the unseen

foundation of alternative.

What exactly is life capital?

Life capital is an objective and quantifiable process whose criterion is intuitively self-evident, but not yet understood – *life wealth/capacity that produces more life wealth/capacity without loss and cumulative gain through generational time*. Yet it is crucial to emphasize that life capital does not presuppose a private possessor. It refers to the collective life capital of the planetary ecosystem and all the socially constructed conditions of humanity's provision of life goods which are reproduced and, at best, gain through time. All life capital, however, can also be run down by a life-blind economic system such as financial capitalism today. The collapse of the Easter Island culture is a paradigm example of this.

Can you illustrate how this 'unifying alternative' applies to our daily lives

Life capital is all that we continuously depend on to live and live well – breathable air, potable water, everyday knowledge, energy infrastructures, and life-serving regulations. There is nothing that is reproduced and developed through time that is *not* life capital, and there is no good of our lives not dependent on it to stay alive and well. In short, life capital is the daily enabling ground of everyone, even though the current system increasingly privatizes, poisons and loots it.

On the individual level, each one of us is also a bearer of life capital which we manage better rather than worse by developing rather than wasting or depleting it. On the micro as well as the macro level, our life capital is far deeper in value than what can be sold in the market. Yet we lack the concept for what ultimately matters to us, that without which every life is reduced, malnourished and dies. This is especially true for social and ecological life capital on which we depend without knowing it – for example, effective societal norms and infrastructures ensuring clean air, water, civil safety, electricity infrastructures, education, healthcare, income security, you name it.

The concepts of 'natural capital', 'social capital', 'human capital' and 'knowledge capital' have recently become familiar in name. Yet beneath recognition, they are all reversed in meaning when they are assumed as merely means of making private money in the market.

What has gone wrong at the most basic level?

Money becoming more money for private possessors has become the ultimate ruling value on Earth by corporate market indoctrination, treaty commands and armed force. The transnational money-sequence system selects only for more priced commodities without life standards, multiplies more money to the richest, and depredates life capital at all levels. The ruling value system here would be laughably absurd if not so eco-genocidal in effects.

Wall Street has now modelled control of all the water and land in the world for future profit to its 'investors', and anything else that can be bought and sold to spike private money sequences. These are called 'sophisticated financial instruments' of 'development' and invade everywhere with state protection by myriad-article treaties in corporate lawyer code contrived behind closed doors. Every plane of existence from which more money-value can be extracted is in the cross-hairs of this investment regime with no protection for the social and ecological life support systems of the world and a-priori impunity for destroying them. The crowning irony is 'austerity programs' for the rest of society, but never for the obese

and tumorous money party showing all the hallmark characteristics of a metastasizing global cancer system.

“With captive customers, the cash flows are virtually guaranteed. The only major variables are the initial prices paid, the amount of debt used for financing, and the pace and magnitude of price hikes – easy things for Wall Street to model.” Thomas Berry long ago said more directly, “corporate profit is the deficit of the Earth”. The money-sequence cancer system is how it works with ever more ‘freedom’ to hollow out societies’ life capital bases. Seek exception. We have lost our ultimate value ground without knowing it, and this is the reason people feel ever more helpless and meaningless.

What are the implications for public policy and recovery?

The first is that the life-ground of value is not created by the global market, and even less by individuals in money exchanges – the ruling delusion within which state policies and economic understanding are imprisoned. Our ultimate economic ground begins with reproduction of the planetary atmosphere itself, the oceans, earth’s hydrological cycles, soil cover, forests, fellow species, and so on – all basic forms of universal life capital ignored by the moribund model. So-called ‘Economics’ is geared towards eco-genocide without knowing it.

Yet life capital includes much more than the planet’s physical resources. It denotes all real goods that are reproduced and cumulatively advance through time, including scientific knowledge and human energy sources. Securing our collective life capital base to live by *entails policy and regulation to prevent every kind of life capital being run down, wasted or destroyed as it is now*. The binding Ozone Layer Protocol was implemented with success in 1989, but nothing binding since has been allowed by the life-blind system. Instead, the publicly deregulated and subsidized private money-sequence disorder keeps invading across borders with no recognition it is objectively evil as measurable by its laying waste of the collective and individual life capital of society, nature and citizens.

This is where moral and policy deciders must reclaim human purpose and life by binding life standards regulating international trade and investment. We have already significantly achieved these standards in public health and higher education, but these too are now undermined by the corporate profit driver that is alone protected and invades everywhere.

What role do the mass media have in paralyzing us within this carcinogenic system?

The mass media never question the global corporate market. It is assumed as natural and good as enslavement of other peoples and women once were. Mass homicide by system starvation and ecocide are indeed still called ‘development’. Problems of *systemic* life depredation and ruin are never raised, even as knowledge and information themselves are corrupted into what corporations can sell for profit. Instead, endless images, gossip and tales of fear, appetite and projections rule the public airwaves.

The latest designated Enemy like Putin or other stigma object is the release valve for pent-up hatred and frustrations – with total indifference to hard evidence as long as the story sells and the game keeps going. It is almost comical – the lead *New York Times* lying at will about the latest whipping boy – if it were not equivalent to a collapsed social immune system in the face of a macro cancer system. Some in the academy seek truth and stand against the perpetual big lies, but this resilient core of evolving human understanding is

embargoed in the corporate media.

At the most general level, the mass media are governed by three final goals - *selling corporate ads, glorifying money power, and blocking out ruin of life capital bases by the ruling disorder*. These are the unseen general laws of the mass media across the West and its allies.

Professional sports exemplify the global corporate system as the unseen but ultimate propaganda site. The more money you get as a star, the more the money-sequence system is glorified, the more ads are sold by the contest spectacles, the more public attention and wealth are diverted from real issues, and the more the ultimate struggle for better life on earth is displaced by sweater-logos fiercely competing for external money prizes.

Big-money sports are a media allegory of the system. Unending battle cries of "everything is at stake here" are the hysteria of the money-driven forces displacing all that really matters to our lives and the future of life on Earth. Even if a real public issue is allowed into the spectacle-sales agenda, like climate destabilization, it too is converted by corporate media into saleable profit opportunities and false images of collective action. The rising cataclysmic storm, sea-rise and weather extremes are themselves euphemized as 'climate change', and only market solutions are reported and promoted. No binding policy reduction is made, and ecocidal trends are not connected back to the system as common cause.

The media are also now controlled by monopolies which defund investigative journalism and increasingly strip newspapers for quick cash to their stockholders. Reduced to ad vehicles and infotainment, the media follow one underlying law of meaning. The truth is what sells. The only 'free' agency left is the money party behind myriad front names and business lobbies buying elections and minting laws beneath public accountability or glare of publicity on any step.

Yet it is not only the mass media that avert their attention from the objective destruction of life capital bases. There are state propaganda machines abroad like the US 'National Endowment for Democracy' and George Soros leveraging billions made from attacking sovereign currencies who together destabilize countries where the transnational media are not yet in control - as in Ukraine before the fascist coup, or the most progressive Latin American countries, or countless other victim societies like Serbia, now on the line for a new US-controlled media empire.

Meanwhile in the background once independent scholarly journals are all bought up by transnational corporations selecting and monopolizing academic knowledge for proprietary profit while bankrupting university libraries with multiplied book and subscription costs for the creations of faculty and scholarly referees paid nothing. Is there any limit to the invasion of even independent original research and dissemination?

Yet even the best known theorists blinker out the occupation. German social philosopher and scientist, Jurgen Habermas rules out any alternative economic order to the global market a-priori. The dominant American justice theories of Rawls and Nozick cannot get beyond self-maximizing agents in a social void with no life capital bases. Even socialist theory and doctrine provide little or no life-grounded analysis and policies for recovery.

What about post-modernism with thinkers like Foucault, Baudrillard and Lyotard who have exposed the inhuman in our institutions and language?

They express the problem by their abhorrence of any objective grounding structure or any universal life value. They proclaim the liberated, the particular and the insurgent in labyrinthine theories while ignoring the actual global command system and any alternative to it. Deleuze and Bourdieu may loathe capitalism, but they have no conception of humanity's universal life necessities as a grounding step to agreement and resistance. Indeed, any grounding in bonding values across differences is denounced as prescriptive or "terrorist universals".

Organising principles which bridge from the past through the present to the future by *objective* common life interests, like universal human life necessities, are effectively out of bounds. Never have integrating life coordinates been more stripped away in theory and practice at once. This is the ultimate crisis - the abandonment of life-coherent reason across domains. As a result, the locked paradigm of liquid mechanics goes on being mapped onto the living world. Not even ecologists connect life-destructive trends back to their common cause. They presuppose the global market system a-priori. Wall Street and NATO meanwhile keep advancing the private money-command system under mutating big lies - as Serbia knows well. After the 'shock therapy' of Wall-Street financial ruin and the 78-day bombing to enforce socialist Yugoslavia's destruction perorated by the show trial of the prior president, most people became afraid and servile to survive. A global terror system is built in beneath consciousness of it.

Where is there hope for countervailing understanding and action?

No system of life-blind oppression works for long once people awake to their common life bases and the enemy system subjugating and destroying them. Yugoslavia led the world in effective struggle against Nazism and in society-rebuilding afterwards across the extremest ethnic and political divides. In the first stage, the enemy was clear by the Nazis' armed invasion of another state, and the world's then-greatest military machine was defeated by anti-fascist forces. But the second stage of building an ethnically unified socialist formation was even more impressive to outside observers - at least those caring about humanity's future.

Yugoslavia's democratically socialist example inspired me and countless others a generation ago. Worker forces fought back fascist invasion, won, and overcame past divisions in a social state against seemingly impossible odds. Nazism was the clearly evil system to defeat. Yet today's financial fascism is becoming arguably more life-destructive overall. Here as always, life-grounded understanding of the situation leads effective response to it. Correct me if I am wrong. But it seems that every good step taken in this war against fascism and the non-Stalinist socialist state afterwards was for collective life capital defence and advance.

Can you give some examples of life capital meaning and application to steer by?

A paradigm example is herds of livestock. Their life capital continues so long as they reproduce or gain in collective life capacity of yield in meat, milk-production, pull-power, and hide material, all quantifiable through time. The same can be said in more advanced meaning without animals involved of socially constructed and regulated life capital formations today -public literacy and health systems, clean air and water, electric-light access, recycling garbage and sewage systems, life security in body and speech, book and film libraries, ecological integrity including noise bylaws, biodiverse pathways and surroundings. We find life capital meaning most incisively when we consider our lives

without any of them.

Public spending now increasingly going to serve and subsidize the private money-sequence system at every level is, in contrast, the major financial prop of the disorder attacking our life capital bases. Every public investment should be bound by capital standards instead, not only in public health and education, but in ensuring every enterprise is steered to life-coherent technology and regulation by licensing and taxing commodities accordingly.

The life capital base of developed societies is already very evolved beneath market phenomena without connective understanding. Our problem is that no unifying comprehension connects across ecological systems to the means to live as human to applied technology through time. On the contrary, the global money-sequence system destroys life capital and support systems without stop, and never builds them. It has no real life coordinates at all. Life capital provides the long-missing link. It defines the life-coherent set-point of policy deciders at all levels.

Today we have no way out. Heidegger may seem to recover the lost life-ground by his famous notion of our “forgetfulness of Being”. But he has nothing to go on but the “home of language”, like Wittgenstein with his “language games” in the analytic tradition. Economics itself strips even natural language out. We have lost life reason and science at the level of understanding *that without which human life capacities are destroyed over time*. That is what life capital is in all its forms. “Being” merely mystifies and empties the meaning to pre-Socratic abstraction. We see this on the life-ground of Greece today – a burning example at every step of the transnational money-sequence program devouring the collective and individual life capital of an historical nation . Heidegger saw the Nazi version with no opposition. Today global financial fascism rules with the moribund abstractions of the academy still towing the line.

At the moving edge of the US-EU-led system of dispossession and ruin today, refugees now flee in the millions from the places that NATO and allies have bombed since Yugoslavia. EU authorities then demand that Serbia and Greece, already bled dry by the terror-backed financial system, manage the catastrophic effects landing on them. How do we recognise the moving lines of system depredation by objective measure? The life capital measure enables an objective and unifying meaning of life-value loss throughout – the losing of life security in need, of housing and nourishing food supply, of adequate clean water and sewage cycles, of accessible learning and knowledge, of public facilities and structures of production, art and environmental integrity – in short, the real goods of life without which human capacities shrink, suffer and die. If life capital is *not* at stake, then the issue of opposition may be diversionary, as in promotion of hate against poor out-groups. Life capital invariably provides the life compass of value ground and direction to guide understanding.

Do Russia and China have a role in stopping the US-EU financial and armed juggernaut expanding on all fronts?

With many others, I felt relief at Russia’s Putin drawing the line on the US-led transnational-corporate occupation of the Ukraine and reclaiming the traditional Russian territory of Crimea given away under the USSR by Khrushchev, himself a Ukrainian. But such understanding is inconceivable within the US-led propaganda system. The inner logic and driver of the US propaganda empire across continents never stops: *Blame the designated Enemy for what the US itself is doing as the reason to hate and attack it*. Russia and China are no longer cowed by the propaganda line. A stop is being made to the money-sequence

cancer system at its fronts of Eastern expansion - which is reverse-projected as always onto those stopping the march.

China's "win-win" alternative of international development investment is also advancing without the US methods of war, destabilization and death squads. Public banking systems in place of a global financial cancer stem-celling from Wall Street are already established. New international development banks and initiatives are slowly advancing, China leads most successfully on the basis of having more US Treasury bonds and bills than the US can afford to have flooding the global market. Both Russia and China can defend themselves against military and internal attack unlike the always weaker victims helpless against aerial bombing and US-funded takeover from within. China and Russia's power of veto in the United Nations Security Council as well as on the ground can stop the compulsive US-led aggression, bombing and civil war construction which is built into its "full spectrum dominance" doctrine backed by both US governing parties. The Libya genocide by NATO with Security Council approval has left a lasting impression. Russia and China are in some ways joining to stop the US-led world money-cancer system that invades, subjugates and devours life on Earth.

Yet Russia and China today show no alternative of life-grounded democracy and freedom from want and oppression. It is their armed force capacity and, with China, dollar power which stand in the way of totalized US-led empire and subjugation as it declines. China and Russia, however, have no evident life capital base they ground in to lead out of the global money-sequence end-game. China in fact has already run down and polluted its own life capital bases of breathable air, water sources and rivers, biodiversity, and minimal public life security for all, as with the old workers' brigades now defunded. Both Russia and China lack developed constitutional rule of life-protective law.

Yet there are good signs - in Russia, investing in public pensions as a priority, repudiation of fracking and GMO degrading of ecological stabilities, and a bred-in-the-bone tradition of life collectivity. In China, a presidential war against corruption and massive green commitment and power production show statesmanship to lead. Most of all, public banking systems have allowed sovereign control over public investment, the secret to real economic development and non-bankruptcy for societies everywhere.

It is worth pointing out here that public banks were also the key to Yugoslavia's success before US-led foreign loans and compounding interest rates over 20% prime financially broke the multi-ethnic country's unifying social programs and life security baseline. At the same time, what Russia and China lack, Yugoslavia's self-governing worker enterprises, democratic processes, and joining of divided peoples together by life serving public programs led the world as example. That is why Yugoslavia was marked for ruin by a still-secret 1981 Reagan directive. Nothing is so abominated and attacked in this ruinous private bank and corporate occupation of the world as collective life capital bases *independent of* corporate market money sequences accountable to nothing but their self-multiplication. The public option of life capital investment and advance can lead the way beyond the cataclysm.

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