DRAFT

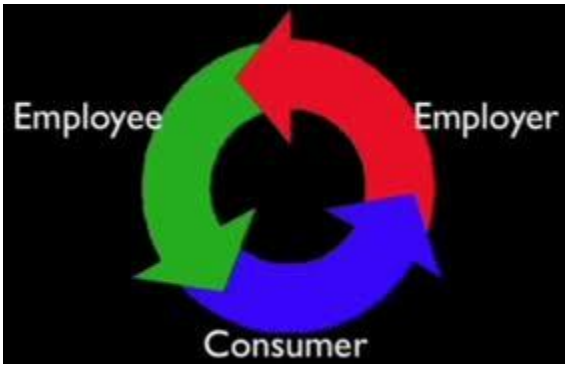
Zeitgeist: Moving Forward [Reframed]

Zeitgeist: Moving Forward [2011] by director Peter Joseph is a 162 minute film work which continues what the prior two films of the Zeitgeist Film Series started: a critical look at the "Zeitgeist" or 'Spirit /Awareness of the Time'. A prominent underlying thesis of the Film Series is that a great many notions, beliefs and practices currently engaged in today and assumed as "presupposed", "given" or seemingly empirical to our societal approaches and values are not only intellectually/historically incorrect but highly detrimental to our personal and social progress and sustainability. In fact these human-created systems are influencing us to make choices that are suicidal, genocidal and ecocidal – but they are the system we created and hence 'we the people' can change the system if we are able to educate ourselves, collaborate and exert the energy required to bring about change – against the opposition forces that are quite happy with the status quo (the 1% who are love to hoard wealth, property, power, etc.)

Zeitgeist: Moving Forward focuses on the very fabric of the social order: Monetary-Market Economics. Actually, it appears that humans are influenced by a complex overlay of systems in addition to the economic system Zeitgeist focuses on. While the majority of the world today have slowly come to see some basic flaws in the economic system we share, as large scale debt defaults, inflation, industrial pollution, resource depletion, rising cancer rates and other signposts emerge to bring the concern into the realm of "public health" overall, very few however consider the economic /political/legal/educational/spiritual/ethical system paradigm as a whole as the source. After all, we grew up immersed in it. The tendency is to demand reform in one area or another, avoiding the possibility that perhaps the entire system (i.e. economic /political /legal /educational /spiritual /moral system) is intrinsically flawed at the foundational level. ZMF presents the case that it is, indeed, the very foundational mechanics of this system that generates the patterns of behavior and unsustainable methods of conduct that are leading to the vast spectrum of detrimental consequences both personal, social, and environmental and the longer they go on, the worse things will become. Indeed.

For example, here are four of the more dominant points with respect to the current American economic system (as well as that of many 'developed' countries):

-The Market System is based on "Cyclical Consumption"



Let's go back and reflect on biomimicry. How do other life forms interact with the planet? What can we learn from our living cousins? There are at least 1.9 million documented species living sustainably today – and probably a thousand times that number that are now extinct[1] over the course of 3.5 billion years of evolution of life on this planet. Although diverse, all forms of life have certain things in common. They obviously are complex systems of systems of systems that self

[1] Life forms that did not adapt to the changing niches around them.

assemble (using an external source of energy) from the star stuff (basic elements such as C,O,H,N, etc.) that make up the planet.

Let's use a Tree as an example. There are a number of ways a tree can be born / begin life but let's use a type that emerges from a seed. The seed contains a cell that in turn contains all the instructions needed for self-assembly. Initially the seed draws energy and elements from 'food' that often surrounds the seed. Eventually the tree sprout emerges from the soil and is able to harvest sunlight to continue its growth as its initial supply of energy is depleted. Systems develop that are better able to extract basic elements and water from the ground and able to take in the basic building block of CO2 and harvest current sunlight as an external energy source. The tree matures, drops more seeds, eventually dies and all the materials it borrowed from the earth are returned to the earth.

Actually there is probably a peak point where the amount of ordered material peaks and begins to decline. There is probably a point where the functions of the tree begin to decline – it serves numerous purposes (shade, canopy, shelter, wind break, CO_2 sequester,O_2 generator, energy harvester, biomass maker, seed maker, nut fruit maker, flower maker, leaf / wood maker, etc.) At some point, the tree will succumb to disease, or be toppled by a strong wind but eventually it will no longer be alive and processing energy. It can remain in place for many years holding soil, and serving as a structure or hollowed out home for other forms of life – particularly small or micro organism that feast on the energy stored in the biomass of the tree – humans often will harvest the tree before allowing it to be consumed by these micro organism – and use the energy for their own purposes – to burn for heat or to use the structural properties of the cellulose (wood) for building things that have human utility.

The termite for example is a self-replicating system that recycles the basic elements assembled by the wooded plant into biomass back into basic elements. As a result, these basic building blocks (atoms) are returned to the commons and can be used by other life forms. If micro-organisms do not perform this recycling function, the tree could become petrified or even converted eventually into an ancient hydrocarbon (coal, etc.).

How do these observations of a tree help use adjust our human-created systems? We observe, through biomimicry, the concepts of "Cradle to Cradle" and would do well to emulate this in our own lives if we expect to learn to live sustainably.

Other life forms Borrow / Return and use the energy from the Sun to support their life. As a living system, they are in fact an assembly of star stuff that facilitates the flow / waterfall/ cascade of energy from a high quality (light) to a lower quality form (waste heat) – but in the process convert some of that original sunlight energy into mechanical work. Assembling numerous materials such as water, CO2, and trace elements into biomass requires energy. The tree assemblies / orders these randomly located materials into specific forms we can classify/ recognize as a unique pattern / species. But the tree conducts a purpose or many purposes - including the storage of energy for other life forms. The tree is an autotroph that looks directly at the sun.

Simply put, the life form is born, emerges by using energy (direct or indirect sunlight) to assembly Earth's basic elements (pre-assembled elements) into something more to serve a higher purpose(s) – to do work, to assist other life – to provide a niche for other life, to evolve into a more conscious being, to evolve in consciousness / awareness / adaptability / to see further into the future, to make the planet a higher energy level, to make a net deposit in the energy bank by harvesting sunlight for future generations of life forms. Each life form builds on its previous generation and leaves some excess stored energy behind.

Beings with a certain amount of consciousness appear to be able to serve as role models / and teachers so that the 'free will' of the species can be programmed in a life sustaining way – or in the case of a bad role model, in an unsustainable, detrimental way. Humans are certainly in this latter case. The older generation serves a role model, be it sustainable or unsustainable is TBD.

The cycle of a person: be conceived, be born, begin life-long learning, have off spring, mature, live sustainably and serve the greater good, then die (ideally the energy stored within our body upon death would be used but it is customarily buried to be consumed by micro organisms and returned to

dust many years later – particularly if the body is filled with formaldehyde – or not if the body is cremated). By consuming energy every day of one's life, the human being contributes to the planet with physical labor, mental activity, and leaves a legacy of evolved consciousness for future generations.

> *Novel Plot Line. Humans are here for a short period of time simply to recover the carbon that inadvertently got buried deep within the earth – Gaia wants the carbon returned to the atmosphere so it can grow more plants – animals did not prove to be a good idea – too much free will – too much consciousness - back to the drawing boards on that experiment.*
> .

So to get back to Cyclical Consumption – does the tree participate in such cyclical behavior?

> As a searching teen, over 3 score ago or more, I once wrote a one-page poem in meter, probably iambic pentameter, long since lost, entitled Sustentation. It was the simple story of a simple observation - the juxtaposition of four seasons on the cyclic life of a simple deciduous tree. Living at the time in a century old frame farm house surrounded by grown Mulberry, Maple and Black Walnut trees, this personal insight was nothing more than a lonely teenager's recording of what could be seen from a second story bedroom window. It was a story of Spring snow melt followed by life flowing from the Earth into the buds bursting into unblemished leaves that matured and rustled in the Summer wind to turn brilliant north eastern colors and then the Fall gently to and fro to the ground, covered by Winter's blanket to become one with the Earth – and then the Spring snow melt…. The verses, probably rhyming couplets are now gone. But the memory of that youthful epiphany lives on. Not knowing better, being in my youth, the story began in Spring to return to endless Spring. Still here three score plus 10 later, my story might begin at the end of fall with giving back, returning all of the borrowed Earth's resources for the next generation of spring leaves – except that stored as the last annual ring in the tree's commons – the past generation's legacy reflecting the memory of the abundance and absence of life's sustenance. Unfortunately in our case the pollution and environmental stresses of 'development'.

used to capture sunli : Borrows resources, Takes in energy, grows Assembles resources, matures, sows some seed, dies, returns all resources, makes some extra biomass (saves some food for others) ,

and in order for society to continue it's economic operation through "labor" as the basic starting point there must be perpetual turnover of goods and services and the rate of this turnover cannot be inhibited beyond a certain level.

The consequence is that strategic conservation (no waste / 100% recycling) and efficiency (maximum harvesting of current sunlight) AND evolving consciousness (currently not a consideration in an 'economic' system) (the true measures of the quality of an "economy") in the ecological, technological, evolutional and hence/scientific sense become detrimental factors to perpetuating the artificial need for Cyclical Consumption. In other words the less efficient the goods and services produced, the more eventual demand and the more turnover will occur in general to meet those needs. This is the exact opposite of what logic demands for a true sustainable economic system, which would need to be based on preservation and maximum sustainability/strategic longevity. The reduction of consumption and waste is a central need for ongoing human survival on a finite planet. We live in an "anti-economy," in fact.

-Similar to the above, the Market System's use of the immutable "Cost Efficiency" strategy denies the possibility that the most strategically advanced goods are created – particularly when the "cost" is not based in the Real World, but rather the human-created "real world" that externalizes inconvenient costs. It might be argued that IF the Real Cost were used in making choices, that reflect the complete impact on the ecosystem, then "Cost Efficiency" might come closer to influencing sustainable human behavior.

> For example: A sustainable economic system must demand that the extraction of ancient hydrocarbon include not just the cost of the extraction process, but other externalized costs – two come to mind immediately:

1) the reparation cost of re-sequestering the CO_2 , etc. dumped into the atmosphere by the indiscriminate burning of these hydrocarbons, and

2) the replacement cost of the energy that was stored in the hydrocarbon – that has now been released for current day purposes and must be replaced so it is available for future generations – the replacement cost is simply the cost to harvest current sunlight (or wind or geothermal energy) and convert it into a like form (chemical energy) or a better form (electrical energy) to replace the same quantity of energy as contained in the extracted hydrocarbon.

When these additional costs are "tacked onto" the hydrocarbon resource at the point of extraction by using a PigouvianTax such as a Carbon Tax or a Carbon Burning Fee, cost efficiency would influence us to stop extracting this ancient hydrocarbon for burning and go directly to the use of renewable energy and avoid the CO_2 re-sequestering cost for energy.

and hence we exist in a constant state of "efficiency/cultural lag." It is simply impossible in a competitive system to make the strategic best and the result is excessive waste on many levels - from the waste of labor, to the waste of energy, to the waste of materials. Invention and application is a technical/scientific process and the Market System is simply an interference, which degrades the quality of goods and services. Incidentally in a sustainable society, there is zero waste. Everything that humans create must be done so with the Cradle to Cradle requirement. Whatever 'products' are made, must be 100% recyclable.

-The Debt Based Monetary System operates by "pyramiding" money to cover outstanding debts; hence inflation and bankruptcy is a natural byproduct as money is constantly scarce in proportion to the debt outstanding at all times. The end result is always deficiency and hence social deprivation in some demographic or region. Balance is impossible for there is never enough money in circulation to cover the interest charges imposed on the currency created. This creates a spectrum of ongoing deficiency, which moves like a cancer between individuals, families, cities, states and countries. This deprivation is truly detrimental to our public health as it guarantees that some win and some lose over time. The word "inhumane" is an understatement and this debt phenomenon is like a cruel social experiment. This Debt-Based system utilizes the dreaded usury concept that has been proven time and time again to be unsustainable and immoral.

-There is no Physical Referent for decision-making processes in the Market System and this creates a vast, wasteful inefficiency with respect to the resources/materials/designs to be used and the goods created. "Price Efficiency," which is often thought of a means of organization that ostensibly "accounts" for resource management (for example, if a resource goes scarce the price rises to offset demand) is a completely decoupled, unscientific notion with no basis in the physical world; hence neglecting the concept of "technical efficiency," which is the true ecological/economic measure. In other words, we should not be making things based upon what we can "afford." This is an artificial measure based on nothing tangible. It is based on a decoupled "game" and nothing more. We should be making things based on what the scientific method teaches us as to the best means to manage our conduct. Again the library book concept must be imbedded in the economic system – you can borrow but you must return/recycle every atom of what was borrowed – anything less is unsustainable over 20,000,000 generations.

Moreover, unlike the prior films of the series, this film lends more direct support to the data sets of both The Zeitgeist Movement and The Venus Project as Activist and Sustainability organizations respectively. Please visit **thevenusproject.com** and **thezeitgeistmovement.com** to learn more about these issues and how to help bring the world back in line with nature.