

**Fanfare for the Future
Volume One**

Occupy Theory

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Woods Hole Ma.**

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Dedicated to the idea that “another world is possible” and even more so, to the practice to “make another world real” and to all those who wish for, believe in, and try to advance related endeavors. And to enlarging the Occupy Movement. And to founding an International Organization for Participatory Society.

Introduction

“The qualifications that I have to speak on world affairs are exactly the same ones Henry Kissinger has, and Walt Rostow has, or anybody in the Political Science Department, professional historians – none, none that you don't have. The only difference is, I don't pretend to have qualifications, nor do I pretend that qualifications are needed. I mean, if somebody were to ask me to give a talk on quantum physics, I'd refuse – because I don't understand enough. But world affairs are trivial: there's nothing in the social sciences or history or whatever that is beyond the intellectual capacities of an ordinary fifteen-year-old. You have to do a little work, you have to do some reading, you have to be able to think, but there's nothing deep...”
- Noam Chomsky

As we write this introduction, the world is erupting, and it isn't just bad news. Rather, across the Mideast and North Africa, from Spain to Greece and throughout Europe, even in unexpected but expanding parts of the U.S., in large sectors of Asia including India and China, and perhaps most compellingly in South and Latin America, substantial and sometimes majoritarian populations are rejecting existing relations and militantly and publicly pursuing new desires.

Minds are changing. Regimes are falling. New structures are emerging. Tumultuous times, tumultuous changes.

Yet victories are not inevitable. To win sought after goals people must advance not only from pain and anger to action, but from separated to entwined, from isolated to solidaritous, and from struggling to victorious.

Even beyond momentary victories, we need trajectories of gains which transform - by their accumulation and diversification - into new social relations.

Revolutions require changes not just to secondary features, but to defining features. They replace that which affects the conditions of all events and arrangements. They construct that which goes to

the roots of how people live. They transform nearly everything. And that is the aim.

Fanfare for the Future is three volumes about winning social changes that reorient whole societies by altering institutions at the heart of the lives of all people.

We pause before the pending enormity. We take a brief moment to consider a seemingly trivial analogy, far simpler to digest than changing whole societies. How would a sports team go from losing this past year to being victorious a few years in the future? And by analogy, what relation does conceiving a winning plan for a sports team have to conceiving a winning plan for a new society?

Mentality of Conflict

*"You must be the change you want to see in the world."
- Mohandas Gandhi*

Surely a sports team trying to win must understand its current situation. Who are its players? What strengths and weaknesses? What is its budget? What other players can it attract?

Who are its coaches? What is the "playing field" for its contests? Who are its opponents, with what strengths and weaknesses?

Additionally, another team's policies and actions, or one's own team's policies and actions, may change a team's playing field, players, and opponents' players. So to repeatedly win, a team must re-analyze as each month and year passes.

Further, beyond understanding its immediate situation, the team must understand its goal.

Is the team trying to win a championship, no matter what the cost? Does it want to maximize the owner's profits, no matter where it winds up in the standings? Does the team want to serve the public, regardless of both standings and profits? And does the team care about its players' health or its fans' well being?

Finally, the team must translate its analysis of its present and visualization of its desired future into policies that lead from the

endured present to the desired future, even as other teams are trying to thwart its plans.

Mental preparation for winning a sports championship may be summarized as constantly updating and refining analysis, vision, and strategy for each game and season.

Hard Means Easy; Easy Means Hard

"Beware of a man who works hard to learn something, learns it, and finds himself no wiser than before... He is full of murderous resentment of people who are ignorant without having come by their ignorance the hard way."

- Kurt Vonnegut

Somewhat similarly, to create a new society an activist "social change team" also needs to know where it will start, its final goal, and how to get from start to finish.

The bad news is that changing a society is vastly more complex than winning a sports championship. This is bad because it means it takes longer to think deeply about social change, involves many more variables, is riskier, etc.

However, the good news is also that changing a society is vastly more complex than winning a sports championship, because, paradoxically, it makes the detailed, intellectual side of changing a society in many respects easier than the detailed, intellectual side of winning at sports.

How can that be? How can being more complex make social change easier to relate to? It sounds absurd. A second analogy, this time to other areas of study, may clarify the seeming paradox. Compare physics to sociology. Virtually everyone would say that studying quarks and black holes is a lot harder than studying people and cultures. Physics texts and journals are far harder to read than sociology texts and journals. In a week or two, a typical citizen can understand a sociology text sufficiently to ask cutting edge questions. In contrast, it takes years to even reach the point of understanding a physics text and to ask cutting edge physics questions is still more difficult. So doesn't this mean the real world subject matter of physics is much harder than the real world subject matter of sociology? In fact, isn't that obvious?

Well, no, it not only isn't utterly obvious, it is false. The truth, instead, is that the real world subject matter of sociology is vastly more complex than the real world subject matter of physics. Compare truly understanding a person or culture to truly understanding an electron or a star. We can pretty much do the latter. We can't even come close to doing the former. And the punchline is that sociology's subject matter's greater difficulty is why sociology texts are far easier to read than physics texts.

The point is this. Understanding people and cultures to any depth is so difficult that scholars have accumulated relatively little of that sort of knowledge. Indeed, scholars know so little about deep social and interpersonal patterns that sociology has amassed only modest information in its texts. This, in turn, makes its texts relatively simple to understand (unless they are made needlessly obscure by convoluted writing designed to hide their relative simplicity).

Physics, in contrast, has relatively easy subject matter. We can successfully examine natural phenomena like electrons and stars and discover comprehensive causes and relations sufficient to make very detailed predictions. Indeed, scholars have been able to pile up so much accurate information and theory regarding natural patterns of electrons and stars that to become familiar with even a tiny part of all that accumulated knowledge, much less to extend it into new insights, is a massive undertaking.

You might respond that physics is more mathematical and math is particularly difficult. But, again, physics is more mathematical because the subject matter of physics is simple enough that we can discover patterns that we summarize with equations. In social matters, save for a very few instances, we don't know nearly enough to do that.

This claim that hard subject matter makes for easy mastery of (limited) accumulated knowledge, whereas easy subject matter makes for hard mastery of (extensive) accumulated knowledge is certainly surprising, but, you may be wondering, why are we talking about it here in our introduction to a book about social change? Let's see.

Where one of us lives in the United States the local football team (that's U.S. football) is the New England Patriots (but this analogy will hold with soccer, rugby, baseball, or what have you). The playbook for any New England Patriots football game is an extensive collection of detailed patterns and associated analysis. Knowing the responsibilities of each player for every play and the associated logic explaining and informing their actions so as to be prepared to flexibly adapt the options when conditions alter a bit from expectations is incredibly daunting.

Knowing the relation of player strengths and weaknesses with on field needs and possibilities, including the other team's weaknesses and strengths, further piles up the complexity.

Knowing budgets for spending, opportunities for trading players, implications of stadium conditions, and even weather patterns - combines into a daunting pile of information and connections. Football (soccer, rugby, hockey, etc.) coaching staffs do a vast amount of intellectual work preparing for each game, much less for a whole season, much less for a sequence of seasons, leading toward finally winning a championship.

In other words, American football, for example, is so amenable to analysis and is so carefully and comprehensively dissected (like physics), that it has a vast body of intricately detailed information that one must understand to intelligently assess the patterns that arise in football analysis, vision, and strategy. Monday morning quarterbacking may be amusing, but the truth is, quarterbacking, much less coaching, is no simple matter.

In contrast, because society is overwhelmingly more complex than football, there exists no massive accumulation of reliable and deep insights about society's patterns. Very little is predictable. To understand society beyond surface insights is so hard that no one knows very much about society's inner workings.

Okay, returning to our focus, changing society is not like physics, or rocket science, or, if you prefer, football or soccer. While changing society is ultimately much more complex, the analysis, vision, and even strategy of social change prerequisite to competently participate in winning a new society is more accessible to popular comprehension than the analysis, vision, and

strategy prerequisite to being adept at winning football championships.

Like sociology, changing society is about daily life and the institutions we encounter every day. And since even the most advanced available understanding of the dynamics and possibilities for ourselves and for the institutions around us are very general and extend only very modestly beyond common sense understanding, we don't need decades to get up to conceptual speed. Nor do we need excessively fancy language or lots of academic credentials to do so. In fact, most of the information about people and about social relations needed to understand, envision, and strategize for social change, average folks already know or can easily master without too much effort.

In short, as counterintuitive as it may seem, as long as experts don't make the modest amount of information that we need inaccessible by hiding it behind obscure language, the ideas we need to effectively analyze, envision, and strategize for social change are within relatively easy reach of normal people who face typical life pressures - as long they make the requisite, not too great, effort.

Put differently, you don't have to be a social change professional giving eight or ten hours a day to associated mental gymnastics to be really smart about social change. In fact, it is probably an advantage that you aren't a social change professional, since social change professionals are typically too weighed down with pointless and useless academic formulations that prevent their thinking clearly, not to mention biasing their results.

Does the above strike you as implausible?

What if we add that we even think the typical serious football fan in the U.S. (or soccer fan in South Africa) has accumulated more useful conceptual background and analysis about football or soccer and that he or she analyzes, envisions, and strategizes more deeply about football or soccer, than the average serious political activist has accumulated useful conceptual background regarding social change, and analyzes, envisions, and strategizes about society? Does that, too, sound ridiculous?

Well, the proof will emerge if this book can relatively quickly and painlessly, communicate information, insights, and modes of thought sufficiently for you to claim them as your own, refine and add to them for yourself, and then use them to intelligently think about, plan for, and participate in winning major social change.

To understand and utilize what this book has to offer you will only need to be an energetic reader willing to do a little thinking about what you take in. You won't need prior advanced schooling.

As Noam Chomsky says:

“...there's nothing in the social sciences or history or whatever that is beyond the intellectual capacities of an ordinary fifteen-year-old. You have to do a little work, you have to do some reading, you have to think, but there's nothing deep – if there are any theories around that require some special kind of training to understand, then they've been kept a carefully guarded secret.”

Indeed, the only thing hard about getting ready to be skilled at matters of social change is that it entails arriving at and holding on to thought patterns and insights very different than what we are used to thinking and believing. This is not difficult or “deep” in Chomsky's sense but it can be hard because it's “different.” And that's where this book hopes to be helpful.

Contents

"Once upon a time there was a magnet, and in its close neighborhood lived some steel filings. One day two or three filings felt a sudden desire to go and visit the magnet, and they began to talk of what a pleasant thing it would be to do. Other filings nearby overheard their conversation, and they, too, became infected with the same desire. Still others joined them, till at last all the filings began to discuss the matter, and more and more their vague desire grew into an impulse. "Why not go today?" said some of them; but others were of the opinion that it would be better to wait until tomorrow. Meanwhile, without their having noticed it, they had been involuntarily moving nearer to the magnet, which lay there quite still, apparently taking no heed of them. And so they went on discussing, all the time insensibly drawing nearer to their neighbor; and the more they talked, the more they felt the impulse growing stronger; till the more impatient ones declared that they would go that day, whatever the rest did. Some were heard to say that it was their duty to visit the magnet, and that

they ought to have gone long ago. And, while they talked, they moved always nearer and nearer, without realizing they had moved. Then, at last, the impatient ones prevailed, and, with one irresistible impulse, the whole body cried out, "There is no use waiting. We will go today. We will go now. We will go at once." And then in one unanimous mass they swept along, and in another moment were clinging fast to the magnet on every side. Then the magnet smiled—for the steel filings had no doubt at all but that they were paying that visit on their own free will."

- Oscar Wilde

Book one of *Fanfare for the Future, Occupy Theory*, is about the problems we face in today's world.

- How is society organized and why does it need changing?
- What are society's key defining features?
- As citizens who grow up and function in society, what are our personal and group attributes?
- How do different aspects of our society affect us?
- How do we affect different aspects of our society?
- What is history for our own society and more broadly?
- Why do some things change? Why do other things stay unchanged? When does what changes, change?

Once we have an overarching picture of our starting condition as well as a feeling for how to think about society as it changes with passing years, *Occupy Theory* will also look briefly at a few specific elements of society to present lessons that thinking about them reveals. In that way we can see by example some of the benefits and pitfalls of our new way of looking at society.

Occupy Theory contains five brief chapters presenting a conceptual approach for understanding societies and history unveiling Oscar Wilde's magnetic pressures that bend, twist, and orient our lives.

Is five chapters all we need to present a conceptual approach sufficiently for us to apply it and then enlarge and refine it in accord with our experiences? Yes, in our judgement.

Book two of *Fanfare*, *Occupy Vision*, proposes what we hope is a worthy and viable vision. It first argues the value of vision as a way to address the feelings many people have that there is no need to know, even broadly, where we are going. Next, *Occupy Vision* provides broad vision of what we want for economy, government/polity, family life/kinship, community/culture, ecology, and international relations.

By the end of *Occupy Vision*, the description of what we want matures into a visionary component of our mental preparation for seeking social change.

Volume three of *Fanfare*, the concluding volume, *Occupy Strategy*, adds a third component of our needed intellectual tools for change: ideas about strategy and program. It covers strategic themes that commonly arise in many settings including specific program and plausible paths forward.

Volume three's strategy and program are particularly hard to present because strategy and program change as circumstances alter and, therefore, permit only very general universal claims.

The main strategic problem social change activists face is how to think strategically in diverse settings, including altering one's views as situations unfold. To change society requires reacting moment to moment and our strategic thinking must enable that readiness.

Fanfare's Titles

"To teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibility for the production or construction of knowledge."

- Paulo Freire

A fanfare is typically a very upbeat musical composition often played on horns, and almost always, in past history, conceived to announce the arrival of royalty or other famous personages. Here comes the King. Play the Fanfare!

An American composer, however, Aaron Copland, turned the familiar conception upside down by authoring a musical piece titled "Fanfare for the Common Man." Our title takes Copland's heresy one step further. Not only do common people deserve a celebratory announcement, whereas kings do not, so too does a

better future. Thus we call the three volumes *Fanfare for the Future*.

This volume is titled *Occupy Theory*, and the next two are titled *Occupy Vision* and *Occupy Strategy*. The three names obviously pay homage to the Occupation Movements of 2011 - 2012 and hopefully beyond.

An occupation takes some domain or space for a new purpose and a new constituency. And that is one sense of our titles, taking theory, taking vision, and taking strategy for the purpose of creating a better world, and for the constituency of all those intent upon doing so. A second sense, however, is that the contents of these three volumes seem to us consistent with and hopefully aid the upsurges of the time. Finally, there is a third sense. Why not call the books *Occupied Theory*, *Occupied Vision*, *Occupied Strategy*? The problem is, to do so would connote a finished status. With the word *Occupy*, which is a verb, we instead imply an ongoing project that keeps altering, maturing, and developing, which is our aim for ideas as well as actions.

Fanfare's Style and Logic

*"Those who write clearly have readers;
those who write obscurely have commentators."
- Albert Camus*

Regarding *Fanfare's* style, that of all three volumes, an interesting quotation from the great writer Edgar Allen Poe may prove helpful. His words run a bit against the usual writing stylist's instructions, but clearly explain our hopes.

"In important topics it is better to be a good deal prolix [verbose] than even a very little obscure. But abstruseness is a quality appertaining to no subject per se. All are alike, in facility of comprehension, to him who approaches them by properly graduated steps. It is merely because some stepping stone, here and there, is heedlessly left unsupplied in our road to the Differential Calculus, that this is not altogether as simple a thing as a sonnet by Mr. Solomon Seesaw."

Well, actually, there may be many more steps for some subjects than others, especially, as we have seen, if a subject is simple enough to have accumulated rich analyses. But in any event, there is no calculus in this book. And there are no sonnets by Solomon Seesaw, either. We try to be succinct, but when we absolutely must, we certainly lean toward including extra words rather than accepting obscurity.

Ironically, writers addressing society often work hard to make readers think their subject is intensely difficult and that the author is incredibly smart. They use extra words, often unneeded words, long words, obscure words. Their aim is not to edify, but to hide the simplicity of the underlying substance - sometimes, I suspect, even from themselves. Here is a continuation of the earlier quote from Noam Chomsky that opened this introduction that succinctly makes this point.

“In fact, I think the idea that you’re supposed to have special qualifications to talk about world affairs is just another scam...just another technique for making the population feel they don’t know anything, and they better just stay out of it and let smart guys run it. In order to do that, what you pretend is that there’s some esoteric discipline, and you’ve got to have some letters after your name before you can say anything about it. That’s a joke.”

Albert Einstein similarly noted that it ought to be possible to explain physics to the uninitiated such that if you can’t do that you probably don’t understand the material yourself. Maybe it is a slight exaggeration for physics, but it is certainly true for social change.

Fanfare presents a conceptual staircase toward informed, empowered participation in social change. Can we make its concepts accessible? If not, they will prove worthless for participatory social change. In fact they will not just prove worthless. - that is not strong enough a rejection of obscurity - they will prove counterproductive, because they will suggest to people who fail to grasp the concepts’ needlessly obscure formulation, that they are unable to participate equally and fully, when in fact they actually are more than able to do so.

We hope the conceptual staircase we offer in *Fanfare* has no essential steps missing. We hope its terminology is clear and welcoming. We hope climbing *Fanfare*'s conceptual staircase is manageable and that the climb will take us all much closer to where we must mentally arrive if we are to, together, materially change society.

An Apology

"To create a new culture does not only mean to make original discoveries on an individual basis. It also and especially means to critically popularize already discovered truths, make them, so to speak, social."
- Antonio Gramsci

Fanfare cannot possibly completely address all the topics it must survey. First, to do so would be too much for three short books. Second, *Fanfare* is about topics that are themselves not complete. Virtually every chapter in *Fanfare* could be extended to become a whole book. Indeed, for many chapters the work of extension is still to be done. Additional evidence for nearly every claim in *Fanfare* can and should be offered. Additional applications can and should be explored. Additional insights can and should be developed, including insights that you and other readers might contribute.

Fanfare addresses all sides of life, including economy, polity, community, kinship, ecology, and international relations. Usually each of these parts of life, or a part of each, gets its own book. Indeed, *Fanfare* is a part of the Z Books series called Z Studies, and many focuses of *Fanfare* will get whole book treatment in that series. We hope you will move on from *Fanfare* to consider those longer treatments.

In any case, none of *Fanfare*'s explorations provide finished formulations or full treatments. Still, *Fanfare* hopefully presents a framework of thoughts, ideas, and methods sufficient to inform social activity in light of and attending to all its chosen areas of insight. How can we do that without going on too long? How can we do it without going beyond the bounds of what we can confidently speak about?

All this means that to be fair to *Fanfare's* efforts, readers will have to give Fanfare a chance to unfold before arriving at a final assessment of its usefulness. For *Fanfare* to be really successful, you will likely have to use, enrich, and adapt the included ideas yourself, and only then, in light of the results, make your final judgement.

Chapter One

Many Sided Lives

"The question which one asks oneself begins, at last, to illuminate the world, and become one's keys to the experience of others. One can only face in others what one can face in oneself. On this confrontation depends the measure of our wisdom and compassion."
- James Baldwin

Many Sided Lives

"I learned very early the difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something."
- Richard Feynman

Typically, we are born, nurtured as children, schooled, socialized, and grow up.

We work for our incomes. We celebrate our particular heritages and beliefs. We operate as citizens along with other citizens. We romance partners and create families. And in the end, it all happens again, assuming war, poverty, and other disasters don't interfere.

Typically, societies have important aspects that help or obstruct key social functions like being born, nurtured, and socialized; contributing to society's product and consuming from it; learning and enjoying a language, heritage, and culture; operating in accord with others via legislation, adjudication, and shared projects; enjoying or suffering environmental effects; and enjoying or suffering relations with other societies.

Indeed, it is reasonable to believe that helping people accomplish these many varied functions is society's reason for being and that to understand the societies we live in, even if only at the most general level, we should understand these diverse functions and how accomplishing them affects our options in life.

There is no denying that how society helps or obstructs the ways our days and nights affect our pleasures and pains helps determine who we are and what we can do, as well as what will be done to us.

At the risk of being a little mechanical, we can summarize society's centrally important aspects as including four functions and two contexts.

The four flexible functions are:

1. Giving birth, nurturing, socializing, and sexually interacting among genders, family members, and the young and old. Societies include new generations that are born, nurtured, and socialized. We could not live without kinship.
2. Acculturating, learning and using language, and forming and celebrating racial, ethnic, religious, and other cultural communities. Societies include people having shared cultures. We would be less than human without community.
3. Producing, allocating, and consuming society's social product by society's workers and consumers. Societies include goods and services being produced, moved, and consumed. We would starve without economics.
4. Legislating, adjudicating, and enacting shared programs by officials and citizens. Societies include means of accommodating the choices of different individuals, including outlawing various actions and facilitating others, resolving disputes, and enabling societal projects. We would not have efficient and effective social engagement without politics.

And the two contexts are:

1. The natural environment and our relations to it. No society escapes ecology.
2. The other societies in the world and our relations to them.
No society escapes international relations.

The point of these lists is that to be stable and effective societies must accomplish these four flexible functions - kin, cultural, economic, and political. Additionally, the natural environment and international setting provide a surrounding context affecting options and outcomes. So one way to look at societies is to assess how each society accomplishes the four social functions and how it engages with the environment and other societies.

But Why Bother?

*"The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."
- Steve Biko*

At the risk of taking a bit of a detour, some readers will wonder, why study society at all? The questioner might, for example, prefer spending the time fighting for change. And even if we must study society, why pay close attention to these six aspects and not equally close attention to many other aspects one could choose?

Regarding the first query, we need to understand society because we want to change it and we can't change something complex without understanding at least its central aspects.

But someone might follow up by arguing, if we don't need to change society, then we don't need to understand it. So what's our motivation to change it? Why should I keep reading?

A train is for transport. Clearly when an old train stops fulfilling its function we either fix it, or, if something better is available at a cost that doesn't offset the benefits, we get that.

The same holds for a light bulb, a pair of sneakers, or a paintbrush. If they don't do what we want from them any more, and we can afford to, we fix them, or we get something new.

Surprisingly, the dynamic is only a bit more complicated for an economy, culture, political system, or kinship system, and even for all of those social spheres considered together as a whole society.

A society is a set of relations that enables its citizens to get together to accomplish key kin, community, economic, and political functions.

If a particular society has means to accomplish these functions that fail to work well, then like a light bulb that no longer provides effective light or a pair of sneakers that no longer provides athletic support, they will need to be changed.

If new social relations exist that would work significantly better for the necessary functions than the old social relations a society has, and if the costs of attaining the new relations wouldn't outweigh or subvert the benefits, then just like getting new affordable sneakers to replace sneakers that have holes in them, we might want to seek new social relations instead of continuing to endure old ones.

- Are we serious about our desires?
- Does our society fail to meet our desires?
- Does a better way of arranging social life that would better meet our desires exist?
- Will attaining the better way be affordable?

If our answer is yes to those four questions, then doesn't our well being demand that we seek to escape the flaws of the present?

Suppose we need to paint a big wall. Suppose a paintbrush can't do it well. Suppose a spray painter can. And suppose we can get a spray painter at a manageable cost. We do so.

The analogy is strong. What is hard is to keep it in our heads and not forget that the same simple reasoning applies to judgements about changing society as to judgements about other changes. All that's left is to determine if our societies are failing to accomplish their necessary economic, political, kin, and community as well as ecological and international functions in a

desirable manner. Then (later in *Fanfare*) we need to ask if there is a better, affordable, and attainable alternative.

Everything is Broken

*"From the wars against disorder,
the sirens night and day,
from the fires of the homeless,
from the ashes of the gay."
- Leonard Cohen*

I suspect that as a reader of this book you very likely already know that your society is failing miserably. More, I suspect nearly all typical citizens in nearly all contemporary societies, if not right on the surface of their consciousness, then way down in their dreams and nightmares, know that their society is failing miserably.

Here are just a few reasons for this assertion.

We all know that billions of people around the world live in abject poverty. That is societies failing. That really ought to be more than enough. You don't need a precise accounting. You don't need a perfect picture of the pain. Billions are hungry. Case closed. But, there are other reasons, as well.

We all know that even greater numbers of people lack the free time and healthy space to experience life fully and fruitfully. This too says societies are failing.

We all know that even where more wealth exists and life lasts longer and is less hellish, dignity is almost impossible to come by. And we know that lying, cheating, aggrandizing, and even killing are the basic touchstones of much of daily life, both personally and, far more damning, collectively - particularly where societies are more developed. And this also shows societies are failing.

What we experience from birth to death is almost the exact opposite of a prescription for dignity, equity, and justice. Life as we know it could obviously be much better. Our ways of accomplishing economics, politics, community, and family, are not just a little damaged. They are thoroughly messed up down to their most basic attributes and in ways that impose horrendous costs on

humanity. Why should survival require vicious venality? If this isn't societies failing, what is?

Unemployment soars, the rich get richer, and financiers and owners celebrate. Unemployment soars, the poor get poorer, and weep or die. Wall Street counts profits, ignores suffering, and proclaims an upturn. That is no way to conduct economic life. Existing economies fail.

Bombs burst over daily lives. Politicians salute the rubble. Arms makers celebrate bloated dividends. Soldiers inhabit gray flannel caskets or face life anatomically or psychologically maimed, trying to navigate health care that treats them like dirt. International relations fail.

Our most cynical citizens, even in their most plaintive complaints, barely touch the surface of how incredibly out of alignment reality is.

Producers of medicines, houses, food, and virtually everything else from violins to shotguns, pursue profits for a few while curtailing generalized well being and development for all. People routinely die for want of medicine or from medical complications.

Banks and construction companies seek profit and most people never have - or temporarily have but then lose - houses.

Food chains and mega farms guard their blessings while significant portions of the population lack food or endure processed food's dietary debits.

Entertainment industry profits soar yet people can't afford concerts and cultural gatherings, much less violins, though they can afford and are structurally welcomed into appreciating and misusing guns.

Producers, because they must pursue profit, are generally overwhelmingly oblivious to public well being, even as they horrendously violate it. A popular descriptive aphorism is that nice guys finish last, and what could be more indicative of society failing? My version, to be a bit less cute about it, is that garbage rises. Witness the palaces of power, the windows of wealth.

Though many people might say in passing that they don't believe that all this depravity exists, deep down, nearly all of us know it exists. This is easy to confirm. People routinely and

appreciatively read thriller novels, watch TV shows, and go to movies which transparently - and as a central part of plot lines - take all this depraved degeneracy for granted. No one says, "hey, that's not realistic."

Temperatures and storms accelerate on a doomsday trajectory while the rich and powerful sip margaritas on the deck of Spaceship Earth while glorying in the pretty vistas they see through bloodshot eyes even as they fail to see, or deny, the thermometer and water levels climbing. The ecology is failing.

Society's monarchs take on the persona of ostriches, with their heads stuck in their appetizers, their minds ignoring or even aggressively denying the unfolding climatic truth.

No, that's too kind a characterization. More accurately, our rich and powerful monarchs are worse than ostriches. They are anti social and greedy homo sapiens with their eyes on the ground and their noses sniffing in the troughs of other people's pain that they must continually exacerbate due to the social requirements of their stature and comfort.

Our monarchs become habitually unwilling to lift their eyes lest they lose their social elevation. They won't look up even to ward off disasters that will harm their lives too, much less to prevent other people from being devastated. The masters of our universe are driving it toward collapse.

Every person on this planet who dies of preventable disease or starvation - and that is tens of millions of people each year - was socially murdered. These murders didn't have to happen. That is economics failing. Every child that never gets to experience their own full talents and capacities, and that never gets to enjoy a loving stable environment - and this is a significant majority and perhaps even an overwhelming majority of all children - is a soul crushing crime against young humanity. And these crimes didn't have to happen. They are kinship failing.

Every person laboring their lives away in comprehensively boring and debilitating conditions, enjoying nearly no stature and only meager income for their sacrifices, is one more soul subordinated to material greed and power. It is the condition of

roughly 80% of the planet's population. This soul subordination didn't have to happen. This is society failing.

The interpersonal rapes, thefts, and murders that clog streets with victims - and, even more, the large scale systematic bending of wills and motives and the subordination, impoverishment, psychological rape, material denigration, and social and even biological murder of countless souls encompasses a massively unjust misallocation of knowledge and circumstances that didn't have to happen. It is society failing.

In contemporary society, if you do a little poking around behind the facades, the reality turns out to have a horrendously vile character that didn't have to happen - if only society were organized differently.

In the U.S., there are roughly 50,000 auto accident deaths yearly. A sensible society might have a few hundred such deaths, and probably less.

In the U.S., not enough doctors and too high costs of medical care consign hundreds of thousands of citizens to permanent illness or death each year.

In the U.S., schools teach most students to endure boredom and take orders, which is virtually the opposite of what any sane person would see as a fine education.

And these last itemizations are just the ugly surface sores most visible on top of the accumulating and by now largely taken for granted mountains of hunger, disease, and other deprivations at the very core of our social arrangements. And that's only the most egregious ills in the empire's homeland. Imagine the most egregious ills in the periphery.

There is only one coherent or even moderately sane argument against fundamentally reconstituting society on a transformed foundation to eradicate all this deprivation and pain. And even that one argument - which is the assertion that a revolutionary redefinition would only make things worse because there is no viable alternative - is itself, as we will see, no more than another transparent lie.

No sane person argues any longer that the social systems we currently have ought to remain in place because they are optimal.

The logic of greed, racism, sexism, and authoritarianism, much less of pollution or war that literally threaten human survival - is not good. Greed and domination are not good. To call our social systems exemplary, or even just good, or even just okay, or even just bearable, isn't even a sad joke. No one who isn't delusional can honestly take that kind of system-rationalizing claim seriously. It is as absurd as it was in earlier times to say slavery was good, or cannibalism was good - both of which claims were made, of course, by those who benefitted from owning or eating people.

Greed is not good, nor is hunger, deprivation, or subordination. But the lie that however bad things are, any change would make things worse, though it is very widely believed by many very sane and caring people, is, as we will see, just the primary way rich and powerful people prop up and rationalize their own part in that injustice.

So what is the upshot of addressing our question, why should we try to understand society sufficiently to change it?

Suppose you read this book (and the subsequent volumes as well), and you think, "okay, I can see that a social system better than what we endure is possible. And I can also see how people can contribute to attaining that new social system, including having a good chance of ultimate success."

Then wouldn't you more or less have to partake in changing society in whatever ways you could fruitfully manage, however limited or comprehensive your involvement might end up?

Don't all of us who see and feel the truth of society's failing have to actively seek change as the only real hope of becoming civilized rather than barbaric?

Isn't our collective effort to change society the only alternative to continuing injustice and eventually even more incredible calamity than we already endure?

If that's true, then we need some more understanding of society, our aims, and our methods, so we can proceed. That is the observation propelling Fanfare. We start with understanding society.

The Ties That Bind 1: Institutions

*"We are what we constantly do..."
- Aristotle*

What is an institution?

We all use the word often, yet determining what we mean by "institution" requires special effort.

Consider the Pentagon in Washington DC. Is the Pentagon an institution? Yes, of course it is.

However, is the five-sided building that we call the Pentagon what makes it an institution? No, it isn't.

The Pentagon could be in any building and it would still be what it is. And if we put a bicycle factory in the building that is now housing the Pentagon, poof, the building would no longer be the Pentagon even though it would still have five sides.

Well, then, are the specific people who walk the Pentagon's corridors what make the Pentagon an institution? No, if we replace the Pentagon's current people with new people, it would still be the same institution, albeit with different people. If we reassign the same people now walking the corridors of the Pentagon to the State Department, the State Department would not suddenly become the Pentagon.

So what is the basis of the Pentagon being an institution?

The answer is a set of social relations, or what we might call roles.

In the Pentagon, for example, there are various positions with associated responsibilities and permissions. These roles, or slots that people fill, include Chief of Staff, Five Star General, various kinds of lower officials, division heads, technicians, secretaries, custodians, and so on. These roles and the ties, responsibilities, options, and limits they convey are the heart of the institution called the Pentagon. The roles that define what people who are part of the Pentagon or who are affected by the Pentagon can and will do or cannot and won't do, are the essence of "Pentagon-ness." Think of a typical family, church, or school. Or a typical legislature, factory, or market system. Or a police department or the Center for Disease Control.

Like the Pentagon, each of these institutions exist to fulfill some functions. In that regard they are each a bit like society writ small.

Society exists to allow its citizens to interact and accomplish a broad range of four flexible functions that are key to life. Individual institutions are similar, but typically, at least primarily, address a smaller range of functions - perhaps war, household daily life, religious celebration, or education.

The Pentagon primarily prepares and enacts violence and war. A family, church, school, legislature, factory, or the whole market system, primarily cares for kids, celebrates a shared set of values and ceremonies, conveys information and skills, establishes rules, produces outputs, or allocates goods, services, and labor.

And here is the logical capstone. If we want to partake of social functions, the only way to do so is to become actors in some limited list of institutions where we must fulfill one or more of some limited list of possible roles that our society makes available for addressing those functions.

To relate to and benefit from - as well as suffer due to - particular institutions in our society, we will have to fill roles that those institutions offer. This is so whether we are considering a family, school, church, legislature, court, factory, or market.

Why do we care about this rather obvious observation? Why are institutions - not so much the buildings they are in, the particular people who are in those buildings, or the equipment which is in those buildings, but the social relations and roles composing the logic and offerings - important to think about in trying to understand society in order to change it?

Consider a corporation. A corporation is an institution. Some of its general roles are owner, manager, and worker which take on special attributes in specific cases such as in an auto plant, software publishing house, or hotel chain. If you want to be part of a corporation and its functions - including to earn a living and thereby survive - you must fulfill the dictates and responsibilities of one or another role in the corporation. You fill the role to get some benefits - including essential ones like an income - but you may also suffer some debits like being subject to a boss.

You might be an owner of the corporation, taking immense profit and having to do nothing much for your great gain. You might be a manager or a CEO, CFO, engineer, or corporate lawyer doing a range of conceptual, empowered tasks with various relations to more rote workers below as well as to the owners above. You will then typically have to produce results that enhance the owner's profit while also taking a considerable income for yourself and keeping workers from taking too much income, in turn leaving you too little. Or you might be a rote worker, say on an assembly line or cooking hot dogs on a grill. In this case you will typically be doing largely or even entirely disempowering tasks controlled entirely from above. For this you will earn a modest, or in many cases horribly low but desperately needed, income.

From churches to police forces, from farms to investment houses, and from families to hospitals, institutions are society's vehicles of social engagement. We must fill roles within institutions to get anything society has to offer, including an income, schooling, entertainment, health care, and so on. However, in turn, institutions require us to interact in particular ways which often also dramatically constrain who we can be and what we can enjoy or must suffer.

So the point is, institutions create an arena in which we operate. We gain some benefits from the institutions we relate to, which is why, in fact, we relate to them. But we also suffer various limitations due to the institutions we relate to, a debit we seemingly cannot avoid. Ultimately, the question at the heart of social change is can we have new institutions that still provide needed benefits, and that provide new benefits as well, but that do it without imposing dreaded debits?

The Ties That Bind 2: Beliefs

"Suppose that humans happen to be so constructed that they desire the opportunity for freely undertaken productive work. Suppose that they want to be free from the meddling of technocrats and commissars, bankers and tycoons, mad bombers who engage in psychological tests of will with peasants defending their homes, behavioral scientists who can't tell a

*pigeon from a poet, or anyone else who tries to wish freedom and dignity
out of existence or beat them into oblivion..."*
- Noam Chomsky

If institutions matter because of how they impact people who fill the roles that those institutions offer, what characterizes “we the people” who fill those roles?

Of course, lots of things characterize us.

Our relative heights and weights, hair color, favorite clothes, TV preferences, reading habits, hobbies, and beyond those, dozens, hundreds, and even thousands of personal attributes help characterize us. However, since we seek to figure out what is important to understand about society and people in society in order to think broadly about how to effectively and dramatically change society, “we the people” are always people with certain preferences, knowledge, habits, expectations, and material and psychological interests and beliefs.

Consider a particular friend of yours. What matters most about him or her as your friend is likely whatever is special and even unique about him or her in your perceptions.

However, if you think about a whole society, what matters most about the population is likely to be features that recur in person after person throughout large subsets of the population because these common features affect many peoples’ behaviors and those many people together in turn have large effects.

If everyone in society is hell bent on some pursuit, or shares some influential habit or some belief with significant implications, then the widely shared pursuit, habit, or belief will typically significantly contour the society, telling us a lot about what is likely or possible within that society.

Even if a pursuit, habit, or belief is not shared by everyone, but by some large constituency which may put it to use in blocking or pursuing social change, again, that will be important for us to understand because the collective impact of that can be enormous. In contrast, some single individual’s hair color, or even the total number of people with red hair, just isn’t likely to matter all that much for changing a society. For example, suppose women in large

numbers accept that they are in some way inferior to and deserve to be subordinate to men. That would certainly be a big issue for society, as it has been at various times and places in history. It would be equally or even more important, if, instead, women largely became feminist, where the initial impetus could be one person's revelation, or any other proximate cause, but in time women collectively sought new relations, as has also occurred at certain times and places in history. One passive or rebellious person may have potential, but huge numbers sharing a similar passive or rebellious inclination inevitably helps define broad outcomes.

The same holds for working people, for members of cultural communities, or for citizens facing their governments from below. Each constituency might share pursuits, habits, or beliefs that cement them into subordination, and, if so, that will be how their society will maintain itself and the conditions of its population. Alternatively, each constituency might share pursuits, habits, or beliefs with whatever diverse origins those may have, that propel them into opposition to existing limits. And that too would certainly be critical to efforts at changing society. Likewise, for example, other people may be wedded to sexist, classist, or racist domination and its perpetuation, again, greatly affecting large scale outcomes.

The logic of all this is simple but important.

One mother, one Catholic, one owner, one worker, one elected official will have many preferences, habits, and beliefs that are unique to his or her particular combination of personal experiences. But each will also likely have many preferences, habits, and beliefs in common with other mothers, Catholics, owners, workers, or elected officials, due to sharing the roles those other people also occupy and due to the implications of the shared roles for themselves and for those other people.

Any individual's preferences, habits, and beliefs - what we can call the individual's consciousness - can arise by way of a vast range of local and personal factors. Unique events and may rise to paramount importance for a given individual's relations to a friend or relative. But when we consider society, we need to know if a

substantial group of people share overlapping preferences, habits, or beliefs. If they do, we can be pretty sure what is shared will have similar origins in common role positions in social institutions because even if the initial precipitating events generating the first instance of the shared views were highly personal or even unique, their later spread will owe a lot to shared circumstances and realities.

Widely shared consciousness typically arises largely due to people sharing similar roles in some institution or set of related institutions, so that even if the views emerge first in only a few individuals, or even in only one, many individuals in time develop the attributes that their similar roles impose or at least facilitate, or perhaps due to resistance to those same roles.

Consider this example of people discovering an important reality for themselves, which corrected their prior impressions. In the late 1960s in the U.S. and in many other countries as well, there was great turmoil and dissent. This context caused many people to begin communicating with others in more serious ways than usual. One thing that happened was that women - often housewives - would get together with their friends to talk personally, essentially going around the room and telling their stories (this was like a new role, in a new "institution," describing life in the women's movement). Something very moving happened.

One woman would report her experience of objectification, violence, rape, being ignored and trampled in discussions and having their capacities demeaned and denied, or of having to do incredible volumes of work, through a long - and in the mind of the testifier - quite personal story of how she got to her current diminished position. Most often, the testifier blamed herself or some particular deadbeat or violent husband, father, uncle, neighbor, or all of the above.

But then the next woman sitting in the circle in the living room or kitchen would describe her own overwhelmingly similar experiences. The names changed. Many details changed. But the essence was the same.

And then the next would report, and the next. And in this common experience was born - first for a few women, and then

later for many more - a feminist outrage at outcomes that came to be clearly seen as not their own fault, and not a result of some single deficient man, but a result of a social system - their families, their upbringing, their schools, their churches, their economy - all arrayed to assume and to perpetuate female subordination and passivity, with men the beneficiaries. They began to see, through each other's eyes, ubiquitous social roles, not unique personal experiences, creating their social hardships. It was not personal inadequacy that created personal failing, it was institutional pressure.

What emerged from these simple observations is that institutions are important for two primary social reasons:

1. Institutions facilitate some possibilities, and curtail others, differently for people who occupy different roles. If you are a mother, father, son, daughter, priest, rabbi, parishioner, catholic, jew, or muslim, black, white, latino, worker, manager, engineer, owner, citizen, mayor, judge, or president - your pleasures and pains will vary dramatically due to the roles you occupy in society's institutions.
2. Institutions convey common preferences, habits, and beliefs to people who fill largely the same roles. Thus depending on whether you own, manage, or work routinely in a particular industry or firm, you have different workplace responsibilities, options, requirements, benefits and losses, with derivative effects on the rest of your life as well. And the same holds depending on your role in a family, political system, and cultural community.

What also emerged from the above simple observations is that people are important for two primary social reasons:

1. People mediate why institutions exist, their aims, and their methods. People are the carriers of the implications of institutions, but also the creators of institutions.

2. People are able to react and conceive and create, not only in accord with the roles they occupy, but also in opposition to those roles. While any one individual may be first to arrive at some new conception or stance, personal revelations can become shared collective perspectives that, in turn, inspire shared activity.

Judging Societies

"Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?"
 - Michel Foucault

We live in a society. What should we think of it?

This depends on what we value. Whatever our preferences are, the way to judge our society is to ask whether its institutions - and the attributes they impose on our habits, capacities, and preferences via their roles - advance, impede, or obliterate any hope that the values we favor will be met.

For example, suppose we value that society produces the absolute maximum possible output, or that the largest possible output goes to a small percentage of citizens, or that the same amount of output goes to everyone, or some other outcome regarding society's product.

Or suppose we value men dominating women materially, socially, psychologically. Or that we abhor that result. Or we think some cultural group should benefit greatly at the expense of others. Or we abhor such a prospect. Or we feel the broad public, not just a small elite of officials, should have decision making influence or should not have decision making influence in legislative and judicial outcomes, and that the direction of outcomes should benefit all, or only a few. Or we like war and domination of other societies, or we prefer peace and mutual aid. Or we think the environment is an endless pool to piss in, or is a limited treasure we must protect and carefully use.

Of course we could go on listing possible divergent preferences about various aspects of social life. The point is, once

we establish our own values a question emerges: do society's institutions and people's personalities and inclinations further, impede, or obliterate any possibility of the values we favor being met?

Social evaluation is really quite simple and no different in broad logic than evaluating anything else we might judge. Are society's attributes in accord with what we favor? Or do its attributes violate what we favor? If they are in accord, excellent. If they violate, then we we must change them.

Conclusions

"If you are out to describe the truth, leave elegance to the tailor. "
- Albert Einstein

What is the polity, economy, kinship, and culture in this emerging approach?

Each of these is but one aspect of a complex society. However, each of these is also a kind of system unto itself, within society. In a sense each is like a biological organ in a human. No heart, lung, kidney, arm or eye usefully exists other than in complex entwinement with the rest of a person - yet each of these organs can also be usefully considered as a system unto itself.

The words polity, economy, kinship, and culture are each partly the name for some flexible functions we have identified. They are also, simultaneously, the name for "organs" of society, all entwined, but each also viewable as an identifiable conglomeration of institutions for accomplishing one of the four defining flexible functions. Viewed as components, some institutions in each of the four spheres of social life are of course more central and critical than others.

The institutions in each of the four spheres all taken together across the four social spheres create a kind of boundary of available roles with various accompanying implications that people in society have no choice but to relate to.

As people in society, therefore, we fill society's roles or not, sometimes by choice, sometimes without any alternative other than

to be entirely excluded from social relations if we decide to go our own way.

And who are we?

Individually, we are each unique breathing, feeling, thinking beings, with very complex and diverse preferences, habits, and beliefs, albeit all built on quite similar genetic natures.

However, looked at from a greater distance, we each share various roles with many other people. Often that commonality with others causes us to also share associated preferences, habits, and beliefs in broad patterns of group allegiance, all depending on such features as our gender, sexual preference, age, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, class - such as owner, manager, or worker - and our being citizens or government officials of various sorts in different polities.

And what is a society?

In the view we are slowly elaborating a society is the immensely rich and varied combination of a “human center,” which is us with our consciousnesses, capacities, and agendas, plus an “institutional boundary,” which is the roles that we must fulfill or avoid as a means to gaining various ends in society. Taken this way society is like an incredible mosaic with each multifaceted part affecting and even defining all the other multifaceted parts.

But we can also see society as its four spheres of social life, even as we also note that there is a porous and flexible line of demarcation between kinship, culture, economy, and polity and that each has institutions and people - and even as we also see that the whole society resides, of course, in the natural environment as well as either cooperating with, ripping off, or being ripped off by and perhaps even bombing or being bombed by other societies.

How do we judge a society?

We decide on the broad kinds of outcomes and relations that we desire and appreciate, and we then ask: Does society’s human base and institutional boundary, or the base and boundary in each of its social spheres, further those preferred values or violate them?

So far, therefore, we have arrived at a tentative and general set of observations about how to understand, judge, and as we go forward, change society.

1. Current society is basically horrendous in its human implications, so if (in *Fanfare's* part two) we can conceive social relations that would be much better and that would also be workable, sustainable, and attainable, we should try to attain them.
2. By virtue of human needs and potentials, to accomplish certain unavoidable functions all societies necessarily have four social spheres - economy, polity, kinship, and culture - and also two encompassing contexts - ecology and international relations. To understand any particular society means at least understanding these six aspects separately as well as in their entwinement.
3. Accomplishing defining social functions typically entails collective action including people having sufficient clarity about their tasks and responsibilities to permit scheduling, coordinating, and abetting each other's efforts, all of which is accomplished by persistent institutions which are themselves arrays of roles. Understanding any one or all four spheres entails, among other tasks, understanding its core institutions.
4. The social roles of society's institutions, taken together, create a kind of institutional boundary of society, which people relate to by filling (or avoiding or being excluded from) various available roles, and by which people gain certain benefits and endure certain hardships.
5. The people of a society, taken together, create a kind of human center, including their preferences, habits, and beliefs, so that in the whole populations of societies there will be groups of people who, due to shared conditions and roles, have commonalities of preferences, habits, and beliefs allowing for, or sometimes even compelling, collective actions defending or altering society's features.

6. The people and institutions of society, of course, depend on and affect one another. Institutions constrain and mold people's preferences, capacities, and habits. People, in turn, compose institutions, including sometimes changing or even completely replacing them. Likewise, each institution and each person affects the rest and we can judge the whole assemblage, whether people or institutions, whether one at a time or all together, in light of those effects.

Given these simple insights, a reasonable next step for becoming better able to understand societies is to refine our means for understanding each of the four social spheres as a basis for moving on to say more about how the aspects interrelate, and about change and history.

Chapter Two: Redefining Four Views

*"The illusion that we are separate from one another is an optical delusion of our consciousness."
- Albert Einstein*

If we believe society may be usefully described as involving four spheres of life, or if we at least pursue that belief to see how far it can take us, then in this chapter we can agree on some additional tools for understanding each of those four spheres taken separately. In the next chapter, we can consider the four spheres as they interact and change over time.

General Character of Social Spheres

*"A child of five would understand this.
Send someone to fetch a child of five."
- Groucho Marx*

One way to rapidly progress is to make some generalizations that apply to all the four spheres of social life - kinship, culture/community, polity, and economy - even while we remember that these four spheres do not really exist by themselves, but always overlap the other three.

We particularly want to understand institutions that contour people's lives. And, of course, we particularly care about the reasons why groups of people might seek change to escape limitations that institutions impose on them.

In the various acts of..

- kinship family life, procreation, and socialization
- community cultural identification and celebration
- political legislation, implementation, and adjudication
- economic production, consumption and allocation...

...and especially as a result of the requirements of the roles for carrying out those acts, people are typically divided into groups with different access to influence, status, material well being, and overall quality of life.

Some groups enjoy many benefits and suffer few discomforts. Other groups enjoy few benefits and suffer many discomforts.

Further, it isn't just that one group does better and another group does worse. It is that groups often contend for benefits. For one group to get significantly more, another group will have to get less.

Men gain time, influence, and material advantages relative to women, heterosexuals relative to homosexuals, and such gains and losses also accrue around matters of age and other kinship/sexist hierarchies.

Various cultural communities (such as U.S. whites) compared to other cultural groups (such as U.S. Blacks and Latinos) do better due to community/racist as well as ethnic or national or other cultural hierarchies.

In the economy owners do better than managers, engineers, and other empowered employees, and both owners and empowered employees do better compared to workers, all in accord with class hierarchies.

And finally, those who have legislative, judicial, and/or coercive political power do better relative to those who don't, this time due to political (sometimes called bureaucratic) hierarchies in elected or imposed governments, and in police and armies and other governmental institutions, depending on the society.

Additionally, all these group oppositions are largely zero sum. The better-off groups typically enjoy gains proportionally as the worse-off groups suffer losses. Taken together, this description of

multiple contending groups constitutes a complex claim, but its truth is obvious to virtually everyone.

Also obvious, though less often made explicit, is that when there is a group above and a group below, while the particular features differ for the different hierarchies, there are also significant similarities in the dominant/subordinate relationship from hierarchy to hierarchy. Mainly, members of groups on top - in each sphere of life - will not typically get up each morning and smugly tell themselves: "We are on top because the system is rigged to our advantage, and we act to keep those who are beneath us down by whatever means we can muster." Rather, very often, those above will confidently tell themselves, "We are superior and deserve our advantages while those below are inferior and in any case don't deserve as much." Those above - whether it is a matter of kinship, race, class, or political power - will also feel that, "Our being rewarded more than others benefits everyone, because we are smarter, more creative, harder working, and more responsible."

They may even tell themselves that those below "wouldn't even enjoy the benefits we receive were they to have them - at least as much as we enjoy them - because they just don't have the refined taste and creativity to make good use of such riches. In fact, our underlings would likely be burdened if they had all the wealth we have? What would they do with it - other than waste it?"

Those above conclude that for the most part, on average, "society is just." This set of self-elevating attitudes appears in racism, sexism, authoritarianism, and classism, which in turn elevate dominant cultural community, kinship, political, or economic groups above those subordinated below.

Reciprocally, those on the bottom won't always furiously tell themselves, "We are on the bottom unjustly. We suffer because the system is rigged to keep us down and because those arrayed above work hard to keep things as they are, and we damn well ought to change it."

Rather, those on the bottom may instead tell themselves, or at least at some level harbor the doubt that, "We belong down here. We didn't try hard enough. Or we weren't able enough. Or we were unlucky. Or our kind just doesn't have what it takes."

Those below may even sometimes feel that they “do better with those above staying above, because the men/owners/whites/politicians are better at what they do and we get trickle down benefits.” Or they may tell themselves, “We like it down here. We have less responsibility and less hassle.”

However, while those formulations are what primarily existed as rationalizations and justifications decades back, and while they still hang on naggingly for quite a few people living on the downside of society’s hierarchies, impressions and polls suggest that they are no longer the predominant view for those on the bottom. Rather, in the past few decades and increasingly as time passes, a new motif contends in oppressed people’s rationales for accepting their plight.

Those below have come to realize they are below because the system is rigged. They have come to realize, even if they don’t dwell on it, that their plight is not inevitable, but imposed. However, at the same time, they have also come to believe, very strongly, that “there is no alternative, no better arrangement, or at least no way out.”

With this mindset those below report that: “There is no point in fighting. There is no point in trying for anything profoundly different. There is no option beyond working within relations as they exist to get the best of a bad lot for me and mine.”

They say, “I can maybe work a little harder, spend a bit more wisely and otherwise improve my plight and the plight of my family a bit. But I can’t improve my situation beyond that, much less change things for everyone.”

The mindset is that: “To fight the hierarchy, to fight the system, to fight injustice, is like rolling big rocks up steep inclines, only to be crushed when they finally roll back down. It is like blowing into the wind. It is like complaining about gravity. It is futile.”

They even tell those who do resist that they are on a fool’s errand. They urge that: “You best make your way within the rot. You can’t fight city hall. You must operate within its dictates. And the same holds for all society’s hierarchies.”

However, since in this book we are not interested in justifying current oppressive relations but instead seek to change them, we will want to chart out useful rebellious counter views, as well as understand the tenacity of the self-defeating views that sometimes bind those who suffer to their subordination.

Yes, being on the bottom often does lead one to adopt views that seem to make sense but which wrongly cement one's lowly position. Many people may place the blame for our plight on ourselves or, in any event, reject thoughts about changing our situation. But that is obviously not a stance we favor and pursue in this book.

More positively, being on the bottom sometimes leads people to examine their situation, define alternative arrangements to pursue, seek levers by which to win changes, and pursue further insights to fuel each investigation and practice. And, indeed, this has happened repeatedly throughout history and has led to various oppositional, radical, and sometimes revolutionary perspectives that have dramatically advanced the interests of those below.

So we might expect to be able to look at these past rebellious perspectives to find tools we can use ourselves, in our own future. And indeed, we can do just that, quite successfully, and largely without need for fundamental alterations, for at least three of the four spheres.

Three Spheres: Theory the Easy Way

*"Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen."
- John Steinbeck*

Suppose we start with issues of gender and sexuality. On average, women and homosexuals live at the bottom of sex gender hierarchies and have, over time, elaborated concepts and ideas for understanding the attitudes of people in sexist hierarchies; for understanding the effects of the institutions that create and maintain sexist hierarchies; and, at least to some extent, for understanding alternative institutions that might fruitfully replace existing kinship institutions.

Taken together, we can reasonably call all these frameworks that elaborate the interests of women and gays, feminism. They are combinations of concepts, insights, aims and methods that people can bring to the task of altering gender relations, confident that their views highlight what needs highlighting, leave out nothing critically important, point them in useful directions, and arm them to understand and act. As forewarned in the introduction, we could mine the literature and practical history to now produce a lengthy book just recounting and summarizing feminist insights about all manner of important historical events and societal relations that those struggling with changing the kinship sphere have produced, but instead, for now, we will have to settle for presenting only some central insights, learning more as we proceed later.

The functions defining the kinship sphere are those of family life - particularly those related to bringing into the world and raising the new generation. They are about maintaining living units and conducting sexual and daily life interactions more broadly. The roles associated with these functions are, of course, incredibly diverse. Some central ones are man and woman - and I will explain in a second why man and woman are roles - mother and father, and for that matter sister and brother, uncle and aunt, and so on - as well as gay, straight, and bisexual, etc.

Feminist analysis has explained the features of the hierarchies and the tremendous toll they take on women and gays - and to a degree even on men and heterosexuals - as compared to the better circumstances we all might enjoy in our lives. They have uncovered the differences in circumstance and material well being, the psychological and physical abuse, the different allotments of time and energy that accompany being in different sex gender roles including tracing implications into all features of social life, religion, work, government, education, culture, and of course home life. And to an extent, feminists have also explained, though without full agreement as yet, the origins of the sex/gender hierarchies and have elaborated some ideas about alternative roles and structures that would eliminate those hierarchies to establish instead just relations in households and sexual and familial interactions, and, by extension, throughout society.

But why are being a man and being a woman social roles, you might wonder, given that they are biologically determined?

Well, it's because while Samantha may biologically be a woman and Samuel biologically a man, the behaviors and responsibilities that Samantha and Samuel carry - and the habits and preferences they arrive at in any particular society - go way beyond their innate biological differences.

Being a man or woman in a society that has a sexist hierarchy is very different than being a man or woman in a society in which men and women are different only by virtue of actual biological imperatives. Biology always imposes some differences in what we can do vis a vis birthing, nursing, etc. But social structures typically impose much broader and more stringent differences regarding how we must act, what we can be, our jobs, behaviors, feelings, status, income, and position.

Suppose we go a step further and consider being a mother or a father. Again, you might think, those are not roles in an institution - rather being a mother or father is defined by biological dictates in our natures. And, yes, biology is certainly part of being a mother or father. But being a mother in our society typically means having an array of very specific nurturing, caring, cleaning, and organizing responsibilities, among many other implications, all of which are on average quite different from what fathers do, where the differences have literally nothing to do with biology.

Likewise, viewed from the other end of this spectrum, being a father in our society typically carries a very different set of responsibilities and expectations than being a mother, often financial and disciplinary, that are more authoritative as well as far less time consuming, and that again have zero to do with biology.

Of course, the non biological attributes of being a mother or father, and even how the actual biological aspects are practically undertaken, can change due to institutions changing, as has happened, to a degree, in the last 45 years or so - while the actual biological imperatives are far more fixed.

We don't need to get too much into all this yet. We will look more deeply at sexist roles and their implications in home life and other places as well when we talk about vision and strategy. For

now, let's just assume that much of what feminism has asserted and still asserts can be carried over, pretty much as it currently stands, to become part of our development of a multifocused perspective. We'll test and act on that assumption as we proceed.

Next, however, we will consider issues of cultural community.

The situation is quite similar to what we found for sex/gender relations. Historically, communities that have suffered the indignities and gross violations of racism and other cultural hierarchies such as those based on nationalism and ethnic and religious bigotry, have sometimes given in to despair and even been resigned to their situations while trying to carve out the best possible circumstances within the dictates of the oppressive limits they confront. Other times, however, subordinated communities have rebelled and developed ways of thinking about their plight - including developing related concepts and commitments about racism and other cultural oppressions - that we can pretty much adopt in full.

The heart of this has been understanding that racial, religious, and other cultural hierarchies typically involve communities arrayed in conflict, often with one community dominating and seeing itself as innately or at least historically superior to one or more other communities, and with institutions throughout society elevating members of the dominant community while subordinating members of the subordinate communities.

An additional key insight of those rebelling against community hierarchy and seeking community/cultural liberation - and I want to call such a stance intercommunalist - has been that these racial, ethnic, national, and religious hierarchies are actually social. The power and material advantages of one community over another arise from social relations and history, not biology. Indeed, no real biological boundary exists between communities and there is no significant biological basis for cultural community distinctions. On average the genetic difference between two randomly selected individuals in any single cultural community are typically greater than the genetic differences between average representatives of two different communities. Role differences, not biological destiny, deliver unequal circumstances and benefits

whose rationalization then fuels derogatory misconceptions of self and others, often including domination and resignation, all backed by power differences which create and sustain cultural hierarchies.

As with sex gender relations, we will learn more about all this, even as we borrow and incorporate into our own views - with only very modest refinements - many related insights from past practitioners challenging community hierarchies.

Next, to continue this survey, we have issues of polity. Again, critics of existing political relations - and in particular I have in mind the best practitioners of what has often been called anarchism - have developed highly useful insights that we can largely adopt and work with in our own developing perspective. The focus they have often made central has been on political institutions that serve narrow interests and exist separate from and above the population, including ruling over the population. The polity that anarchists reject is not an extension of the population limited by and manifesting the will of the population. The rejected polity, whether dictatorial or parliamentary, is instead an encumbrance on the population, weighing down on it, manifesting the will of a minority.

The anarchist school of political thought can also be elaborated at far greater length, and much of its wisdom will become clearer as we talk more about vision and strategy. One anarchist insight, for example, is the observation - long asserted but rarely seriously considered - that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This means, basically, that if some people have excessive power they will rationalize it in ways extolling holding power as a virtue, leading to their trying to accrue even more power, and they will then most typically use their power in pursuit of more power. The results become steadily worse the more power is centralized into ever fewer hands.

For now though, the main point is that - as was true for our view of feminist and intercommunalist approaches - there are no grave and fundamental problems in the basic ideas of anti authoritarian projects such that we would need to reject or dramatically amend the perspective. Rather in building our own framework, we can mostly incorporate the political insights of

these practitioners, meshing them with the best insights of feminist and intercommunalist schools, making modifications mainly - as we will see next chapter - so that each approach respects and incorporates the wisdom of the other two.

One Sphere Takes More Work

*"Prejudices are what fools use for reason."
- Voltaire*

The fourth sphere, economics, presents a different problem than the other three. Economics, it turns out, needs significantly more innovation of past views, even renovating past views, to make useful progress.

Typical dissident understanding of the economy is certainly, in large part, informative. It addresses material inputs and outputs and produced services, and the condition of workers and consumers involved in these acts. These perspectives - as they are elaborated in anti capitalist movements and struggles - address production, consumption, and allocation and unearth some key roles regarding all these, including seeking to understand the implications of those roles for contending groups. So far, so good. The path taken is much like for the three other spheres. Identify functions, identify institutions, and examine the implications for contending groups.

But then something profoundly important goes awry. Pretty much all dissidents examining economics agree that the key to understanding economic prospects and possibilities is understanding contending groups, called classes, and the attitudes, behaviors, and interests largely imposed on classes by their economic roles. This is much like understanding men and women, gays and straights, blacks and whites, Catholics and Muslims, and the attitudes, behaviors, and interests largely imposed on those contending groups by kinship or cultural roles. But despite this similarity, almost all dissident approaches to economics then make what we consider a devastating error. They rightly identify a critically important aspect of economics that affects its creation of contending groups - which in the economic case are called classes. At the same time, however, they overlook - and even obscure -

another comparably important but quite different aspect affecting the creation of contending groups. This imposes a fundamentally flawed picture. The usual approach goes more or less like this. Economies must produce and distribute so that people can then consume. We produce potatoes to consume potatoes. In the type of economy we currently endure, called capitalist, particular ownership relations and the roles they impose generate the working class and the owning class as contending actors with different motives, agendas, and views of each other.

The anti capitalist analysis of this contentious relationship is insightful and can, in many respects, be borrowed. As we will see, that analysis uncovers how private ownership of workplaces and production assets leads to the pursuit of profit by owners and the pursuit of better salaries by workers - which, in turn, leads to owners trying to diminish wages, lengthen the work day, and speed up and intensify work, while workers seek to raise wages, shorten work days, and enjoy less frantic and dangerous conditions, among other contrary agendas. All of this, and many similar insights, are indeed important for efforts to change society. After all, the economy being oriented to the pursuit of profit over well being is one of the key reasons why capitalist economies fail to further values we believe in.

But here is the problem. People are divided into contending classes due to their different roles in the economy giving them opposing interests. One factor causing such differences is different ownership positions - as in some people owning means of production and others just owning their own ability to do work. So far, so good. However, another factor causing people to occupy different classes is not about owning property, but is, instead, about the type of work we do in the economic roles we occupy. Economic class is not solely about who owns what, but also, who does what.

Work, like all activity, affects those who do it. In modern capitalist economies - except for the top owners who constitute only one or two percent of the population - we all work. Indeed, we all sell our ability to do work to owners, and we all get wages for the work we do, a relation rightly called by its critics, wage

slavery. This commonality is what has caused most anti capitalists over the decades to lump all these people who sell their ability to do work for a wage into a single working class.

However, there is another line that divides all those who get wages into not one but two classes.

In this view, at the top of all economic actors there are owners, or capitalists. At the bottom there are workers. But in between the lowly laborers and lordly capitalists, there is a third class, which we will call the coordinator class, including all those who do largely empowering work unlike workers at the bottom who do overwhelmingly disempowering, rote, and tedious work.

By doing largely empowering work, we mean that this third class - between the two more familiar classes - overwhelmingly does tasks that give them self confidence, social skills, workplace knowledge, habits, and experiences of workplace daily decision making. All of which, taken together, empowers them. In contrast, the more typical workers toiling below the coordinator class, overwhelmingly do rote, tedious, repetitive, and often dangerous tasks which convey only exhaustion, reduced health, personal isolation, habits of obedience, and disempowerment.

So our new claim is that unlike the situation for sex/gender, race/ethnicity, and power, past efforts at developing a perspective suited to understanding economics from the angle of those at the bottom of society's class hierarchies - its workers - have been seriously flawed.

We can borrow from kin, cultural, and political approaches without having to fundamentally correct them by making only some refinements. Those three approaches accurately identify contending constituencies and accurately sensitize us to all the key oppressive dynamics in their domains.

In contrast, the economic approaches that have in the past typically characterized dissent have focussed on two key classes where they should have focussed on three. These familiar economic approaches - including, particularly, marxism - have highlighted some kinds of economic oppression (related to profit seeking), but have largely ignored - or even at times denied - other kinds of economic oppression related to maintaining the division

between coordinators above (usually around 20% of all waged employees) and workers below (typically constituting the other 80% of all waged employees).

How could this oversight have entered and persisted in past anti capitalist efforts?

A rightful rejection of economic oppression got sidetracked, one might say, into aggressively examining one set of relations (property relations) but away from equally examining another set of relations (division of labor relations having to do with empowerment).

This is not a small problem. And it isn't just that the twenty percent in the coordinator class do much better than workers who reside below while contending with owners who reside above. It is also that a two class view that denies the importance of a third class sabotages capacities to envision a truly classless economy.

Focusing on only two classes often causes anti capitalists to arrive at a vision they think aims to benefit workers, but which in fact elevates coordinators above workers. In Fanfare, therefore, we must not only refine and better integrate with the rest of our understanding of past economic insights - as we have to do for past gender/sex, community, and political insights - we must also more fundamentally transform past economic insights.

We must add to an understanding of owners and workers, an understanding of coordinators existing between owners and workers. This third group is not merely small capitalists or better off workers. It is not just a fraction of some other class, nor a variant on some other class. Nor is it about property. This is a third class with a different logic that derives from how the corporate division of labor leads to one group monopolizing empowering work while another does only disempowering work.

To usefully address economics for social change we must highlight how coordinators defend and enlarge their relative monopoly on empowering work as a natural - and very nearly inexorable - outgrowth of their position in the division of labor and also highlight the great advantages in circumstance and income this position gives coordinators in capitalism relative to workers below. We must also show how at times the coordinators try to

escape subordination to owners, including by establishing a whole new economy which is, however, not classless, but instead ruled by the coordinator class, with workers remaining subordinate.

Our claim, in other words, is that a two-class focus emphasizing only those who profit as against those who work for wages doesn't give us a full and accurate picture of our economies. It misdirects us to try to see everything in terms of property and capitalist/worker relations. But coordinator class members - doctors, lawyers, managers, accountants, engineers, scientists, and so on - are not just another kind of capitalist, smaller, or smarter, or whatever. Nor are they just another kind of worker, better off, but still in the same class. They are not a somewhat deprived part of the class above, nor a somewhat advantaged part of the class below, nor are they some kind of a mix of the two. Coordinators occupy a class unto themselves, with very different circumstances from workers below and owners above that can cause them to contend with both. If our concepts hide this reality, then our concepts also cause us to miss crucial insights relevant to social change, as will become clearer as we proceed.

But even now we can note that the coordinator class can elaborate its interests into a program of their own, and often have done just that - even winning changed economies that they then rule in place of owners who the coordinator project eliminates by eliminating private ownership of productive property - even while coordinators still administer workers who remain subordinate.

This is the meaning of the song lyric, "bring in the new boss, same as the old boss." In fact, however, the new boss is the same as the old boss only in the sense of still being above while workers are still below. The actual basis of the new boss's rule, and the behaviors of the new boss, change with the shift from a capitalist to a coordinator ruling class. But from the point of view of eliminating subordination, clearly the result remains undesirable.

Regarding the four spheres of society, our aim as we proceed is going to be to understand how to accomplish their relevant functions without generating old or new hierarchies of wealth, power, dignity, status, comfort, etc.

For the economy, this will mean we want classlessness. But you can't get from class divided to classless if you fail to notice a key class that can become a new ruling class. This isn't just a plausible hypothesis or a clever prediction. It is also verified in experience repeatedly in history. What has been called socialism in the past, claiming to be an economy guided by the interests of and ruled by the collective desires of workers, has in fact typically been an economy that has eliminated the owning class by eliminating the role of owning workplaces, but has retained the corporate division of labor and the coordinator class, with the coordinator class ruling workplaces and the overall economy.

Wanting classlessness means we don't want this new boss in place of the old boss. We must, therefore, attend to the coordinator class in our thoughts about what exists, about what we want, and about how we get to our goals. We have to examine how the coordinator class relates to owners above and to workers below in our present economies. We have to examine how new economic relations will eliminate the monopoly on empowering work that produces the coordinator class in our future economy. And we have to examine how our strategies have to address class to successfully eliminate the division of labor-related elements of class rule, as well as the ownership-related elements of class rule. Our changed theory will, in coming volumes, affect our new vision and strategy.

Conclusion

*"Most everybody I see knows the truth
but they just don't know that they know it."
- Woody Guthrie*

In this chapter we have discerned that popular dissenting conceptions regarding polity, culture, and kinship are fundamentally sound and can be incorporated into our conceptual tool box for social change with only minor refinements, to be elaborated next chapter.

On the other hand, we have also claimed a need to renovate old dissident economic conceptions because they obscure the critically important role of the coordinator class - and thus also of the corporate division of labor.

Changing society requires an accessible, sufficiently complete, but not excessively detailed set of accurate views about what exists, what we want, and methods can take us from the former to the latter.

With two chapters complete we have identified four spheres and two contexts and the centrality of certain social constituencies and institutions. We have seen that we can borrow from past insights to enhance our understanding of three of the four spheres and that we can borrow some but also must generate some new insights, for understanding the fourth sphere.

We must now note, however, that we also know that sexism isn't just something that exists in the home. Nor does classism exist only in workplaces or market exchange. Nor does racism or other community dynamics occur only in cultural institutions. Nor does political power exist only in government offices and relations.

To move toward more detailed analyses and also, in time, on to vision - even as we leave many gaps for later attention - we must now at least look at how the four spheres intersect and change over time, each affecting and being affected by the others, changing and being changed, which are the topics we address next chapter.

Chapter Three: Society and History

*"A new world order is in the making, and it is up to us to prepare ourselves that we may take our rightful place in it."
- Malcolm X*

Society Snapshot

*"How many care to seek only for precedents?"
- Peter Kropotkin*

A society, when seen as a kind of momentary static snapshot, has features, more features, and then even more features. In the nearly endless array of people, institutions, and objects composing any society, we need to highlight what is important and essential to pay attention to if we are to avoid errors of omission. We also need to at least initially ignore what is relatively unimportant to avoid being sidetracked by endless peripheral details.

Our first two chapters argued that seeing what is critical and leaving aside what is peripheral entails looking at the features that centrally define kinship, culture, polity, and economy. We need to examine the institutions centrally addressing the four functions as the core, respectively, of the kinship sphere, community sphere, political sphere, and economic sphere.

If we use the U.S. as an example, that means we should be looking, at least, at:

- families and their social relations
- racial and religious communities and their social relations
- political groups (officials of various sorts, electorates, etc.) and their social relations
- economic classes and their social relations.

Key institutions we should highlight and examine include:

- types of family and perhaps schools

- types of churches and other cultural community institutions with their languages and celebrations
- government branches and their local administrative variants including legislatures, courts, etc.
- economic workplaces, the market system, and consumer units.

We should pay attention to hierarchies of gender, race and religion, political power, and class including examining each hierarchy's attributes, tenacity, and implications.

We should not highlight one or another of these four hierarchies alone, but should instead pay close attention to all of them because all dramatically impact people's life prospects.

We should examine each social sphere to find the sources and implications of sexism and homophobia, racism and ethnic and religious bigotry, authoritarianism, and economic oppression and classism in the core institutions.

Obviously such a varied exploration of the four spheres could proceed for a long time - and, it must be admitted, so far we have only begun what is required. But suppose, to see where it might take us, we had done all that. Then what?

Well, these spheres of social life are a bit unusual. They are not self contained or isolated from one another. Rather, a society is a giant whole. The four functions all transpire in virtually every nook and cranny of that whole.

Thus, if we say the kinship sphere is all those places where kinship (sex/gender) dynamics occur, it turns out that while the center of the kinship sphere is families and other locales of intense gender interactions, the outer reaches of it extend to all of society. There are kin-dominated and kin-affecting relations in workplaces, churches, legislatures - not just in families.

More, the same holds when we look at other spheres. Community, political, and economic dynamics also extend to the whole of society, well beyond the institutions that define each.

For example, the core of the economic sphere is workplaces, markets, and consumption units, but the extremities certainly include families, schools, churches, government agencies, etc.,

since in all of these institutions at least some production, consumption, and allocation can occur alongside more central kin, community, and political aspects.

If we look at a society in a stable, non chaotic condition, people will largely fill the roles they occupy in the various institutions in society's institutional boundary - which is, remember, just the array of all the roles in all the institutions society offers people. The structures of gender, race, power, and class will be continually created by those roles and will continually need people with certain expectations and inclinations to fit the roles. Society in a steady and stable condition requires that some people fit here, some fit there, but nearly everyone fits somewhere.

Suppose that a society is strongly sexist, relegating to women greatly excessive burdens and denying them access to significant benefits that men readily enjoy. This means the kinship sphere's roles, by the practices they impose on people, produce men who feel superior to women and women who largely accept subordination to men. Suppose these men and women are fitting their sexist kinship roles nicely, and by their actions and behaviors in their household and other core kin relations wind up with the expectations, habits, and beliefs of sexism continually reinforced.

Now imagine that in the economy of the same society, at the same time, men and women fare similarly to one another, with little or no gender differentiation, so that men who, by virtue of their experience in households and their upbringing, expect to be above women, instead typically find themselves as often as not economically equal to or even below women in income and influence. And similarly, women, who by virtue of their experience in households and their upbringing expect to be subordinate to men, typically find themselves, as often as not, economically equal to or even dominant.

This disjuncture between the requirements and implications of kinship and the requirements and implications of the economy would obviously pose a problem. The economy and kinship sphere would be out of alignment - or, to use a term we prefer, "out of whack" - creating tension, dislocation, and possibly also resistance.

We do not expect to see this type of disjuncture between these two spheres of social life - at least not without there being conflict and then changes due to realigning violated expectations - and, indeed, we will talk more about how two or more spheres being out of whack might be resolved. However, for now, what we can anticipate when society is quite stable and without conflict and fundamental change, is that any substantial hierarchy born of one sphere will tend to invade other spheres, creating a degree of consistency for actors in both. In what manner, we will soon see.

The general idea is clear and simple. Just as inside a single institution you would not anticipate seeing one important part of it having roles causing people to be x-like, and another important part of it having roles causing them to be y-like - where being x-ish contradicts being y-ish and vice versa, unless the institution was in turmoil - we expect something very similar for a society.

We expect, that is, that each sphere of social life - meaning the ways that its main social institutions address and accomplish the four key functions of society - will typically tend to welcome and induce particular habits, beliefs, expectations, and desires in people filling that sphere's roles. Corporations mold us. Families mold us. Citizenship molds us. Communities mold us. Each sphere will have requirements for us, depending on the roles we fill in the associated institutions.

When conditions are largely stable, as is most often the case in typical societies, this might mean, for example, that there are habits, beliefs, expectations, and desires consistent with sexism, racism, political authoritarianism, and classism within the institutions of the four spheres. However, the four spheres overlap so much and so intimately, that each sphere's implications radiate, like a field of social influence beyond their own structures and into the other structures in society, and we expect this to cause the sexism, racism, authoritarianism, and classism to tend to expand from each originating institution and sphere into the rest, so that there is at least compatibility.

Past and Future History

*"The past is not dead. In fact, it's not even past."
- William Faulkner*

Elaborating the above observations leads to a view not only of society at a moment, but of society changing from moment to moment - which is history.

Social Accommodation

*"Those who do not move, do not notice their chains."
- Rosa Luxemburg*

If we look at the history of any society, again at a snapshot, one of the ways the four spheres entwine with one another we can call "social accommodation."

A social sphere, let's say kinship or economy, creates a particular set of social expectations, habits, and beliefs, let's say sexism or classism, by the behavioral requirements of its roles. This typically means that these social spheres each impose a hierarchy on the actors filling their roles.

Next, accommodation occurs when the hierarchy created by one sphere is respected by others. Thus, if kinship creates a gender hierarchy - and the economy accommodates kinship's sexism - it will, overall, not pay women more than men or give women power or status above men. It will obey and especially not violate the expectations and patterns of behavior emanating from kinship.

Similarly, if the economy creates a class hierarchy, then if kinship accommodates the economy's classism it will, overall, "produce" young men and women who are ready to fill the class-divided role slots of the economy, rather than producing folks not suited to their likely positions.

Think of each sphere as a kind of school that - along with accomplishing its own functions - conveys to people filling its roles various beliefs, habits, knowledge, skills, and expectations. If what one sphere creates and requires of people is contradicted by and even undone by what another sphere creates and requires, then the two spheres are at cross purposes, disrupting one another's operations. Each sphere would prepare people who would not fit

the other but would instead clash with the other. This would not persist without changes occurring. So in stable situations, after those corrections occur, we tend to see what we are calling accommodation in the alignment of any two of the four social spheres.

If one sphere creates and recreates a set of powerful patterns the other three will at least, if society is stable and functioning smoothly, not seriously violate and contradict those patterns in their own different contexts. Thus, in this way, the basic attributes of kinship, racial, political, and economic hierarchies are at least not violated and are in fact typically abided by other spheres. To the extent that there are features that are “out of whack,” there will be tension, resistance and disruption, and forces pushing for recalibration. Social spheres, in stable contexts, do not for too long cause people filling their roles to not fit the roles of other social spheres in the same society without turmoil occurring.

But this is not the only possible interrelation between spheres. Rather, not only can they accommodate each other, they can, over time, come to more fully reflect and even reproduce one another.

Social Co-Reproduction

"The higher the buildings, the lower the morals..."
- Noel Coward

Co-reproduction exists when the field of influence emanating from the kinship sphere, to continue with that example, is so powerful that it actually redefines the roles in other spheres of social life to the point where instead of simply not violating sexist hierarchy, the roles in those other spheres also produce and reproduce it.

For example, with co-reproduction it isn't just that women earn less than men. Rather the actual role requirements of work (and of allocation and consumption) are transformed by the influence of sexism to themselves generate sexist behavior and expectations. Economic roles become imbued with sexist assumptions and patterns to the extent it literally imposes those attitudes and behaviors on its actors. The field of influence from the patriarchal kinship sphere insinuates itself in the very manner

of carrying out economic functions - not just in who does what, but in what is done - thereby altering the make up of economic roles.

What it is to be a male business person and his female secretary, or a male doctor and his female nurse or a male x and a female y - changes from what economics alone would dictate of those roles. Instead of gender neutral definitions of how to carry out the tasks, it would incorporate gender attributes that assume and continually recreate sexist outcomes. The economy becomes a seat of the creation and recreation of sexism. What people do in their economic roles generates sexist assumptions, beliefs, habits, and expectations. Even if the kinship sphere were to be somehow changed so that its sexism generating attributes were attenuated or even eliminated, an unchanged economy that had become co-reproducing with kinship in its old form, would still produce sexism.

A female economist, Batya Weinbaum, was the first person I ever encountered making this sort of observation. She looked at workplaces in the U.S. through feminist eyes and she didn't just see men earning more than women, or having jobs that were better and more often on top, a result of accommodating kinship in who gets what positions. She instead saw that the actual composition of work - the role structures, the positions themselves - changed so that some work was not just done by a woman or a man, but was altered in its make up, in how it was undertaken, in what tasks were included, and thereby in the expectations and requirements associated with it, until it was literally man's work or woman's work - meaning work that imposed on those doing it male and female assumptions and habits.

Indeed, Weinbaum looked at workplaces - and as highly attuned as she was to the dynamics of gender roles, she could literally see mothers and fathers, even sisters and brothers, inside the workplace - and saw people doing things in the manner and with the implications that were typical of sexist families. This is co-reproduction, a condition that is powerfully important, particularly when we later consider what is required to make fundamental and lasting changes in even one much less in all four social spheres - and thus attain a new type of society.

To pin it down, in a co-reproducing situation, the dynamics of the origin sphere are incorporated elsewhere, substantially redefining other spheres' qualitative ways of accomplishing their functions so that the other spheres start to also produce and reproduce the features emanating from the original source sphere. The economy not only doesn't violate the sexism of kinship, it alters so much that it reproduces sexism - and likewise the kinship sphere reproduces classism rather than merely accommodating to it. Similarly for the polity and culture regarding all others, and vice versa. When a sphere is strong enough in its field of force, other spheres alter so as to incorporate its logic, reproducing its features, not merely abiding them.

History's Engine

*"All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players."
- Shakespeare*

We could ask why aging happens, but we don't mean by that question, how come it happens given that it ought not happen or even that it might not happen? We mean, we know that aging always happens, but there are likely central reasons that also always operate. What are those reasons?

With history the situation is different. Yes, time passes, but changes are not inevitable. History happens - depending on what we mean by history - sometimes, but not other times. More, there is no limited group of causes.

If we look way back to the great Egyptian societies around Cairo six millennia ago, we can see that there is a real question lurking there. Big historical change wasn't automatic - like aging in an individual is automatic, in that it always happens and always occurs a year at a time.

It is 4,000 BC. We stroll around in ancient Egypt and take an inventory of the society we find. We know enough to look first at the four spheres of social life, specifically at the roles people fill in the economy, polity, kinship, and culture. We examine easily visible indicators of the character of those roles evidenced in the

look, feel, and features of their outputs - for example, the details of technologies, buildings, clothes, rituals, government, daily work, and so on.

We take our leave for a bit, indeed for many years, and then we return. We look again. We find that there are new people, as old ones have died and their offspring came of age. That's changed. There are also new buildings and houses, some from the past having collapsed, etc. That's changed. There are new clothes. There are a few modest new rituals, and so on. But, we also notice that in a very profound sense the new is in its essence the same as it was before - and indeed is unchanged, even for the most part, in its details. And this isn't surprising, because when we then also look at the social roles in the society - the religious, decision making, productive, and cultural roles - those are all as they were, too.

Time has certainly passed. Some modest changes have happened, but history, writ large, has stood still. Strolling around after the time warp delay, we could easily be in the same society, the same place, as before the time warp delay. It would take a discerning eye to even know time had passed.

Now this little thought experiment didn't occur regarding a passage of ten years, or fifty years, or even a hundred years, but regarding a passage of 3,000 years, thirty centuries. And yet, despite the passage of such eons, the basics and even most of the details remained as they were on the earlier visit. After 3,000 years less change was visible than between 1900 and 2000. Hell, it is possible there was less change visible than between 2000 and 2010.

There was, in ancient Egypt, very modest, snail's pace, social evolution. That is, there were very modest changes consistent with the continuation of the defining features of the old order, which is, as we have seen, the defining features of the four spheres of Pharaohnic (Egyptian) society - though actually, in fact, there was not even much of that. And even over the thousands of years there was no transformation of those old defining features themselves.

The same descriptive label (Pharaohnic, we believe some historians use for it, though perhaps there is a more accepted

technical term) was accurately applicable to the society before and after the 3,000 year passage. The same social roles pertained, and actually not much that was second, third, or even fifth order changed, either. Social evolution happened, pretty much by definition, with the ticking of the clock. The calendar's pages turned. People were born and died. New leaders replaced old leaders, new priests replaced old priests. New clothes were worn instead of old worn out clothes. But if you look at the hieroglyphics - the pictures revealing style and substance - it was hard to distinguish before and after. And if you dig around archeologically, there was virtually no change in the substance of the defining roles in society. History, one could say - if by history we mean substantial changes in structures - apparently doesn't necessarily always happen, but, instead, occurs only sometimes.

Why does history in the form of social evolution happen at all? Why do more or fewer changes happen consistent with the existing defining order - the four existing social spheres and their defining roles, and thus the existing human center of attitudes, consciousness, and expectations common to various constituencies in society, and the existing institutional boundary or totality of critically influential social roles?

There are lots of reasons. New ideas may be hatched. New technologies can flow from those ideas. Changes in weather or geography can occur and impact housing and clothes and some habits, as can somewhat altered tastes or talents. There could also be migrations. Births could accumulate. This type of change happens, sometimes less, sometimes more, but always at least somewhat. So this type of history - called social evolution - always happens.

When some infamous commentators have said about modern times that "History is Over" or that "Capitalism is Forever" or that "There Is No Alternative," they must be talking about something other than social evolution, because they know there will always be changes of that sort. There will be new styles, new designs, and new knowledge. There will be new applications of it all, yielding not only trends and fashions, but new options, behaviors, and outcomes.

Folks who proclaim an end to history know all that. What they really mean is there will not be new defining roles leading to and deriving from new defining institutions. There will be more social evolution, yes, but there will be no more fundamental transformations of how we accomplish social functions.

Sometimes, “history” just refers to time passing. That’s true when we call social evolution, which more or less always happens, history. Other times, however, by “history” we mean the social revolutions in defining role structures that are more rare. An end to history in the former sense would mean there is no further change at all. An end to history in the latter sense would mean new things keep happening, but the basics remain in place.

Okay, to be in accord with the most familiar and frequent practice, let’s use the word history to refer to all of it. Time passes, changes happen - or not - and that is history. You can reasonably reference it mainly by noting years passing. Social evolution, no matter how modest or grand, is change occurring over time that reproduces the defining features of the old order. Social revolution, however, which is also part of history, also occurs over time but only when there are changes that overthrow the defining features of the old order and introduce, in their place, new defining features that bring new roles that dramatically change life’s options and prospects. As to social evolution’s engine, we know that many things can play a role. Ideas and their applications, natural changes in weather or geography, new tastes, and many other variables.

As to social revolution, what causes that is not so obvious. We know that by definition social revolution means change in the defining institutions and thus in the roles that are available for people to fill in one or more of the four social spheres.

Social revolution doesn’t mean violence. It doesn’t mean chaos. It doesn’t mean progress or reaction. It could involve any or all or none of those, but it means change of a certain type and degree, which may come about in any of a large variety of ways. So in asking for potential causes of social revolution we are seeking to identify phenomena that could cause such changes.

Karl Marx confronted this question of why history in the large sense of social revolutions happens at all. He made great progress

but also went, we think, significantly wrong. Looking at some specific periods in history and noticing that social evolution was common, but that social revolution only happened sometimes, Marx suggested - or at least the school of thought named after Marx say that he suggested (whereas others attribute to him personally far more flexible and rich views) - that history moves by virtue of a very particular kind of tension embodied within societies.

Marx showed, rightly, for example, that in capitalism there is a built-in drive to keep on accumulating - that was his word for it. He famously wrote that for the capitalist the guiding mantra was "Accumulate, accumulate, that is Moses and the Prophets." Due to the pressures of competition for profits and market share, Marx taught, a pressure to keep on transforming natural resources and human capacities into more and more outputs, including constantly innovating, etc., was built into the actual logic of the system. This wasn't just an option that might be pursued. It was an inevitable part of the fabric of these societies. It was built into the defining relations and role structures. This pressure would persist regardless of whether people liked the results or not. And the ensuing perpetual drive to accumulate, clearly meant, he argued, there will at least be significant social evolution - indeed, he contrasted this positively with prior systems, like the Pharaohnic, that had no such built in pressures and were, as a result, far less innovative. But one might note that maybe accumulation could happen and auger social evolution and only social evolution, with the surrounding capitalist system constantly reproduced. Whether it was subjectively because Marx didn't like that surrounding system, or objectively because his investigations led him to the following observation with no influence from his hopes and desires, Marx came to the conclusion that the inevitable accumulation drive of capitalism did more than just pile up new products. Rather, it also created a tension or a contradiction in society between ever-growing and innovating technical and social capacities on the one hand, and old forms of organization and exchange that operate incompatibly with the new potential for full utilization, on the other hand. Marx argued that this tension would eventually, in society after society, cause the old

social relations to be overcome by the new productive possibilities leading to new social relations, and in that way leading, as well, to a new economic sphere with new roles and, therefore, a social revolution.

This is not the place to get too deeply into these claims which seem to us to identify one possibility that could occur, which is that technical and even organizational innovations can drive new productive possibilities which, in turn, can fuel social changes via effects on population's actions. As with the old Marxist way of seeing class, this is a possibility that is still, at most, only one possibility, while there are actually many other possibilities as well. More, we would suggest that the possibility that social relations will be burst by growing productive forces isn't even likely to transpire or to yield comprehensive results, if it occurs alone. But whatever one thinks about what Marx called a contradiction between "forces and relations of production" as a possible locus of revolution - as with broadening from a narrow two class conception that is often typical of many anti capitalists, (which we did back when we were discussing how to understand the economic sphere) - so we will now also broaden our approach to understanding history's engine, or better its engines, from what is often typical of many anti capitalists.

Consider some possibilities, each of which at least augments or broadens a Marxist view. Along comes some kind of technical innovation - like birth control - as but one example that is not about production per se. This innovation, in turn, leads to changes in social relations and outcomes, which fuel new attitudes, which cause gender struggle and finally, push all manner of evolutionary changes, some highly consequential for life situations. But, we can also imagine this innovation sparks, say, women to see outcomes differently, to resist their subordination, to discover sexism's roots, and to transform defining kin relations. Does this have to happen? No, it doesn't. But could it happen? Yes, a fundamental transformation could be propelled by a technical innovation impacting attitudes and actions in the kinship sphere.

Consider another possibility, the economy and polity - and probably also kinship and culture in some societies - generate a big

imperial war. In fighting that imperial war it happens that various historic roles are violated. For example, perhaps there is a severe labor shortage and women who were previously excluded from an economy that was accommodating a sexist kinship sphere now must be incorporated and even treated equally so as to take advantage of their talents and capacities, winning the war being paramount. Women begin to discover their own potential, previously deemed to be nonexistent. Likewise, the same could happen with some oppressed cultural community that is welcomed into the military and, given fair conditions to generate both trust and military efficiency, are treated equally with others rather than in a racist manner. Again, previously subordinated people could discover potential that they had long forgotten they had.

We can imagine, then, that this jolt in circumstances unleashed by the dictates of trying to win a war could unleash new expectations and hopes, unmet and even dashed upon the war's end, when women and blacks return to far more sexist and racist circumstances than existed for them during the war, in turn fueling resistance, leading to insights into the true causes of gender and/or racial injustices, and then leading to transformations. Surely this will involve at least social evolution, but it could also involve social revolution, affecting certain spheres of social life, or perhaps all spheres of social life. The general ideas in these examples emerge easily enough. When events and occurrences within one sphere, or between two or more spheres, directly cause either consciousness to get out of accord with old role requirements in a sphere, or cause two spheres to get out of accord with one another and then consciousnesses to alter and get out of whack as well, it can lead to lasting changes. The turmoil might reestablish or merely innovate old social relations a bit, yielding only social evolution, or the turmoil might cause dramatic changes in defining features, yielding social revolution.

Here is another, arguably, still more interesting possibility, at least as far as contrasting with the familiar Marxist possibility. Some people create new institutions. On the one hand they do this for addressing some social functions, on the other hand they do it to guide and enrich fighting to win changes in old institutions. The

new approaches to dealing with social functions, such as new household or neighborhood arrangements, new workplaces, or whatever, develop wider support and participation due to being compelling and even inspiring in how they treat classes, genders, and communities better than past ways of handling the same functions. The organizations gain steadily more participants by the weight of their victories and by the manner in which their activities reveal new possibilities. Their actions arouse new desires and provide means for collective expression, fulfillment, and for further victories. Both the exemplary functional and fighting institutions - whether we are discussing new families, workplaces, modes of allocation, means of governing, cultural communities, or movements for changes in various spheres of life - may themselves in turn have roles that breed new habits, expectations, and desires and that also popularize those and militate for the wider acceptance of the innovations. This path, too, this time based on acts of will by affected people, can lead to social evolution or even to social revolution - as can a combination of all the mentioned patterns.

The point is, history is not preordained. It is not an inexorable process. It is not an outcome of one simple dynamic. It is not based solely on classes, or genders, or communities, or political constituencies. History can unfold due to many diverse causes, propelled by many diverse motives, engineered by many diverse groups, and inspired and advanced by many diverse acts and insights, including many diverse dynamics within and among society's social spheres and its relations to ecology and other societies - all either due to intentional choices or unintended occurrences. Life is like that. History is like that. But narrow theories are not like that - and are often, for that reason, not helpful and even counter productive.

Further Refinements in Four Orientations

"The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones, which ramify, for those brought up as most of us have been, into every corner of our minds."

- John Maynard Keynes

One of the problems with having a theory is a tendency to bend the world to fit the theory rather than to continually check the theory against the world, including giving the world preponderant weight in any dispute between the two. To fit reality to a preconceived expectation is particularly destructive in social situations because unlike with physical theories, in social situations exceptions to prediction abound. However, there is another type of problem for us to address.

Suppose you have a set of concepts composing your viewpoint that gives you guidance in looking at events and relations, in posing alternatives, and in evaluating and implementing possible paths forward. Think of concepts and viewpoints as being a set of instructions - look here, look there, emphasize this, check for this predicted relationship when you see that, look for that when you see this, and so on. The problem is, one might start to see the world as if through a filter that cleaves very closely to one's viewpoint, sometimes seeing what isn't there or is minor, and missing what is there and perhaps even major.

We know that if we look at the world with a red filter, we will see the red part highlighted, but we will tend to mute out or even miss that which is yellow, blue, or green. The same holds if we look through a yellow filter, seeing only that which is yellow, and not the other colors. Of course the analogy between looking at the world with colored filters and looking at the world with concepts is a bit tortured and exaggerated, yet nevertheless there is considerable truth lurking in it.

Suppose I adopt a feminist perspective. It highlights for me some important types of consciousness - relations among men and women, and institutions, like families, and their roles - and it also orients me away from wasting time on what it deems unimportant secondary or tertiary relations.

But what if some of that other muted stuff is, in fact, key? Indeed, what if some of that muted stuff has differences from my expectations that bear on what I care about accomplishing. Well, I may manage to get beyond my initial views to perceive the unexpected key relations, or I may not. I may cleave so tightly to

what my framework predicts will be the case that I simply can't see beyond its limits.

This has lots of implications, but here is a big one. We have said that in any society, by virtue of inevitably present human needs and social realities, there are four social spheres. We have said, as well, that each of these four social spheres will likely emanate a field of influence that propels its logic outward to produce at least accommodation in other social spheres, and sometimes co-reproduction.

In other words, it turns out we have already arrived at additional refinements. First, our approach says to the feminist, intercommunalist, anarchist, or anti capitalist that to avoid missing key elements of reality you must become an adherent of the other three perspectives as well as of the perspective you already favor.

Second, our approach notes that a person identifying mostly as being a black person, for example, or a woman, or a subordinate citizen, or a worker, will, in adopting the framework most relevant to their own centrally felt condition not gain all that much missing insight. That is, regarding their own intensely felt condition, even without taking aboard new and carefully formulated concepts, the person is already quite alert and sensitized. They already almost reflexively highlight the key, and even many secondary factors, operating in their priority sphere of focus. However, their capacity to see that which is central in the other spheres of life is limited, perhaps very heavily limited, by their lack of related experience, and so in a very profound sense those other spheres are where they need the most conceptual help and guidance.

The point is this. If I am a white male worker, I need more conceptual help understanding the roots and implications of sexism and racism than I do understanding the roots and implications of the classism that I am already - by my own situation - attuned to and focused on. Similarly, if I identify as a feminist, it is with the other spheres - not the one I myself most directly and automatically relate to - that I need the most conceptual help with. And so the second point is that we not only need to have a fourfold rather than single sphere approach, but individually we need to put more effort into having concepts for the spheres we are weakest at,

and even prone to misunderstand, than into the sphere (or spheres) we are strongest at and already largely understand. This is, of course, almost exactly opposite to most people's reflex agenda of pursuing more reading and thinking about their own circumstances. So for precisely this reason it is quite important.

As an example, if I analyze a capitalist market economy just in economic terms, I will come to the conclusion that in choosing a new working class employee, or a person to become a coordinator class manager, the key thing the owner will care about is the person's inclination to abide the dictates of class and economy - which means to work hard without attention to personal dignity or seeking additional bargaining power, while willingly enduring boredom, taking orders, and putting out, in the case of the working class hire. And, for the coordinator class hire, while paternalistically administering and keeping subordinate the workers below, enjoying ample income, but not working to unduly enlarge it and in any case accepting ultimate authority from above without challenge, as well as producing at a frantic rate.

But what if there is a sharply racist culture at play, or a sharply sexist one, in the society that contains the workplace. Then things become more complex in choosing among working class or coordinator class applicants. There are new variables such as not violating and indeed perhaps even reproducing the requisites of those two hierarchy creating spheres. Women and or blacks who I might hire for one position or another - if I ignored race and gender implications and derivative implications for class that I would not see if I was ignoring race and gender - I might not hire, favoring, instead a white and/or a male hire. Or, in fact, especially for the working class position, this could operate in reverse, since I might be able to better control and extract labor from a doubly down-trodden individual. If there is a pecking order of status, security, and influence established elsewhere in society, then in the economy I don't buck it, but use it.

Another variant of this same type of refining of views we already revealed earlier. The Marxist - or at least some marxists - tend to see society as economy based, with everything else in a "superstructure." They argue the economy, their prioritized sphere,

is essential - since without it, we die. They note that the economy yields opposed constituencies, or classes, and that the one at the bottom, the working class, is key to arriving at new social relations. The economy has its own internal dynamics and those dynamics can (and some Marxists would say they must) yield disjunctures which arouse dissent leading to opposition and finally to fundamental change. And, in this view, this change then imposes a kind of outward field of influence that changes the rest of society as well, called society's superstructure.

Can this, more or less, happen? Yes. But contrary to some formulations it is certainly not inevitable, nor is it inexorable once elements of it have begun, and even more to the point, it is not the only thing that can happen.

First, the feminist, or the intercommunalist, or the anarchist (now focused on polity) can argue, quite like the Marxist, that their function is essential. Their sphere also produces opposed constituencies. Their sphere can also affect consciousness and arouse resistance. When the Feminist does this, she may see kinship as base, and all else (including economy) as superstructure. A very insightful feminist, Shulamith Firestone, roughly four decades ago made exactly this case, as an argument *ad absurdum*, against class relations being alone critical. She literally took marxism's arguments and words and simply rewrote them with new references to kinship instead of economy.

And so, too, for the intercommunalists or anarchists, who can just as reasonably emphasize culture or polity as base, and the rest as superstructure, as some have done. So actually it is not the case that only one claim is right and the rest wrong - which is what an adherent of each perspective might, and often will, argue, and what each will often act on as a guiding assumption. Nor are all the claims to importance wrong. Instead all these claims are possible, but none are inevitable. And more, it is also possible for what happens in one sphere to be reversed by pressures from other spheres, rather than to propel other spheres to change in accord.

In essence, we must say goodbye to prioritizing one sphere before analyzing all spheres - an approach called monism. We must say goodbye to taking one aspect of society as a priori

preponderant in importance. We must say hello to a more balanced and comprehensive stance, called holism, which sees the mutual interconnectivity and entwined influence of all four spheres.

Conclusion

*"Your theory is crazy, but it's not crazy enough to be true."
- Niels Bohr*

Think of our effort as slowly filling a conceptual toolbox. We dig into this toolbox when we need to understand existing relations and history, and, as we will soon see, also when we need to propose new relations (vision) or new paths forward (strategy). The toolbox is big, and so far only part of it is in place. In our toolbox, so far, we have the idea of four societal functions essential to a society existing and persisting - economic, political, kin, and cultural. We also have the idea that societies exist in context of, and influencing and being influenced by, the natural environment, as well as many other societies that together establish international relations.

We next have the idea of four social spheres corresponding to the four inevitably present and important social functions. And we have the idea that each sphere has defining institutions, which in turn have defining social roles. More, we focus also on institutions and their roles, both in each sphere and also taken all together to constitute a kind of institutional boundary of society, and we focus, too, on people's consciousnesses, values, skills, and expectations, particularly as shared by large groups defined by institutional roles, all together constituting a kind of social center of society.

We have in mind, too, that each social sphere affects the lives of people, via that sphere's roles, often generating hierarchies - for example, of class, gender, sexual preference, race, religion, ethnic and national group, and political power or influence. Each sphere also, again by way of its roles, produces in those who function in it particular shared attitudes, interests, beliefs, habits, and expectations - typically arrayed in ways that line up from one sphere to another so that what each sphere requires and upholds does not seriously violate the requirements that other spheres

require and uphold, and, sometimes even tends to reproduce and enforce the requirements born of the logic of the other spheres.

Indeed we also adopt the insights that have emerged to serve the interests of subordinate populations in each of the four spheres - three approaches (feminism, intercommunalism, and anarchism) we adopt largely whole just as they have been often used before, with only modest refinements to take account of mutual interconnections and influences. One approach, however, (anti capitalism) we substantially modify by seeing three key classes rather than two, based not only on monopolies of property but also on monopolies of empowering work - adding the new concept of the coordinator class between labor and capital, with its own attitudes and interests.

We highlight, as well, that sometimes the requirements and implications of social spheres can get out of whack, either internally within one sphere, or between two or more spheres, or, for that matter with innovations in any one sphere that have been proposed or enacted, sometimes even with the explicit purpose of propelling change. In these ways there ensues social evolution that occurs within the limits of reproducing old defining relations, but also sometimes a less frequent and more profound social revolution, replacing old roles with new and fundamentally different ones.

In light of all this, our next task is to broadly apply these ways of thinking in books two and three of *Fanfare* to issues of vision and strategy. As we do this, our conceptual toolbox and our broad perspective about social change will get some new resident concepts, while some of the concepts already in it will become sharper and better understood. First, however, a few examples of using our new concept to understand some existing social phenomena.

Chapter Four: Modes of Analysis

A multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor."

- William Wordsworth

A theory highlights various areas of concern, making predictions, and guiding choices. Books 2 and 3 of Fanfare will assess if our theory helps inform vision and strategy. But how do we actually use a theory - in this case the one we have begun developing - for understanding existing relations. And how do we keep developing it?

An Analysis Agenda

"The more important the subject and the closer it cuts to the bone of our hopes and needs, the more we are likely to err in establishing a framework for analysis."

- Stephen Jay Gould

For any issue, event, or project, and for that matter for vision and strategy, too, to understand it in its societal and historical implications and prospects, we examine it in the following way.

We discern how it is a manifestation of, or might affect, the four spheres of social life, ecology, and international relations - meaning we discern how it relates to the institutions and the consciousnesses associated with each, either manifesting and

reproducing their logic or, alternatively, upsetting or even overthrowing their logic.

Does what we are considering - whether it's an issue, event, or project - exist due to being imposed by the fields of force of one or more of the four spheres of social life? Does it impart to one or more of those spheres an impact that will have lasting consequential effects on the sphere's defining institutional relations? As activists concerned to understand the world to choose actions to make the world a better place, we ask what the relation of what we are examining is to the hierarchies of social groups in the four spheres of social life. Does it, or could it, benefit some groups as against others? By an institutional or a consciousness effect? Does it exist for that reason?

Suppose, to start, we have an economic phenomenon - call it X. With our particular conceptual toolbox, we might ask about X, what roles in the economy are responsible for X existing and how do those roles enforce, compel, or just make X highly likely? What is X's impact on class relations and consciousness and the interests of different classes, and on whoever is directly involved in X? Is X inevitable, or is X something we could reduce or eliminate by way of changes to the economy? And then, of course, we would also assess the relation of X to the other three spheres of social life, other constituencies, etc. Is there an element of co-reproduction, etc.?

Now if we suppose we have a largely cultural, or kinship, or political phenomenon. The logic is the same. We might ask about it, what roles in the cultural, kinship, or political sphere are responsible for the phenomenon existing and how do those roles enforce, compel, or just make it highly likely? What is the phenomenon's impact on community, gender, or political relations and constituencies and on whoever is directly involved in the phenomenon? Is the phenomenon inevitable, or is it something we could reduce or eliminate by way of changes to the sphere of origination? And then, of course, we would also assess the relation of the phenomenon to the other three spheres of social life, to other constituencies, etc.

Example 1: Advertising/Consumerism

“A society in which consumption has to be artificially stimulated in order to keep production going is a society founded on trash and waste, and such a society is a house built upon sand.”
 - Dorothy L. Sayers

By advertising people typically refer to the trumpeting of information with the purpose of inducing people to purchase things. By consumerism people typically have in mind a drive inside our personalities and preferences to consume things even beyond meeting real needs accurately based on the actual attributes of the items purchased and our situations, and typically at a level far exceeding what we might anticipate in a more sane world. Consumerism in this sense is often seen to rest on manipulative advertising.

Talking about advertising and consumerism is most often undertaken when considering the ecological implications of economics, as in urging that excess production to meet consumerist desires is damaging human prospects for survival. Or when considering the psychological and material pressures of modern life, as in consumerism diminishes our lives by making us never satisfied and always “hungry.” The most suggested antidote to all this is that people should get a grip and consume less.

Of course the volume of consumption and associated advertising stem from their abetting profit making, dictated by capitalist structure, and their entwining the public in pursuits other than confronting and altering those structures. Likewise, the same holds for its relation to other hierarchies - to a degree it diverts attention, and to a degree it abets reproduction of each. That is, we might say, level one of insight.

Beyond that, however, many analysts additionally argue that a whole lot of what people consume is needless and irrational. It is induced by ads, it doesn't meet needs, and it does damage, instead, all for the benefit of producers pocketing profits.

Folks with this analysis often think that those who appear to them to consume excessively and irrationally (which tends to be pretty much everyone other than themselves) are manipulated and tricked by ads into doing so. The broad public is, at bottom, dumb,

or at any rate manipulated, and suffers for it. Ads get us to buy because we are sucked in by tricky, endlessly repeated claims.

Is there some truth to this? Sure there is. But let's look a little closer to see if there might not be a bit more to consumerism. Suppose we ask, what institutional relations and role structures affect how much and what we consume, as opposed to what ads help induce us to consume? Rarely do people seek causes of consumption beyond advertising. Rarely do people ask how our class and other allegiances influence our desires for commodities.

Just asking these questions opens a different way of seeing the situation. When a person wants a brand of toothpaste, a shirt, or a car - were they tricked into it by an ad that deceptively led them to believe buying the item was a direct route to sex, friendship, or status? Did they, as a result, become irrationally driven to spend excessively and needlessly to obtain the item? That's broad possibility 1. Here is broad possibility 2. Society's roles in its four spheres place us in situations that make consumption the major route to various sorts of benefits - such as improved status, emotional ties, family relations, friendships, sex life, love, and status, not to mention plain old entertainment. We must consume if we are to benefit - because most other routes to benefits are inaccessible or literally absent. In this view, ads mostly just differentiate among available consumption choices.

In other words, what we consume does dramatically influence our prospects for meeting people, having sex, finding and keeping friends, having status, and gaining plain old pleasure. And, thus, we do it.

Could society be organized in a manner that did not reduce life's options so drastically that buying commodities becomes a main or even the sole route to pleasure and fulfillment? Of course. Kinship could generate non commodity mediated paths to family, sex, love. Politics could generate non commodity mediated routes to participation and efficacy. Culture could generate non commodity mediated routes to community and friendship. Economy could generate non commodity mediated routes to all kinds of entertainment and play, not to mention generating goods that were durable and sensibly priced, as well as generating

collective solutions to material issues of need, rather than only private ones.

And so, in our societies, are people tricked by ads? When an ad says that a drug will do X, and it is a lie, and we believe the ad, then yes, we were tricked. And yes, that does happen in various ways, about drugs, and other commodities too, though much less often than typically assumed. But if an ad implies that some product will make us happier, or more popular, or at least not less happy and less popular as we would be made by exclusion if we did not have the product, because of the absence of other routes to related benefits - then, no, in those instances, most often, we are not tricked. The sad and much more damning truth is that having or not having the commodity probably will impact our spirits. People want the commodity because it is an available - however unlikely - route to the meager levels of life enrichment that may be plausibly attained given the hours people must work, the conditions of peoples' lives, the available energies people have, and especially the constrained opportunities people confront due to the social roles they occupy. There is much more to say, but in this short volume we must leave that for readers using the intellectual framework to explore - though we can here at least briefly consider the effects of membership in certain constituencies on our actual consumption preferences.

Example 2: Sports Fandom

“Sports is the toy department of human life.”
- Howard Cosell

Being a man or woman, as an example, dramatically alters our consumption tastes - ruling out many items, making others essential - because social norms deriving from social rules and customs impose the needs. That much is obvious. But to see that this can significantly affect matters of great social concern, consider a classic image of the beer drinking working class guy on a couch watching football for hours on end. Many leftists look at this fellow, in their mind's eye, with disdain. Just ask yourself if you have ever had a dismissive view of sports fans. The sad,

manipulated, passive dolt, many critics think. But let's look more closely.

First off, for one thing, nowadays there is nearly the same likelihood the person is a woman as a man. Second, there is a very good likelihood the person isn't lying their alone. Rather, it may be a family viewing the event and it may involve friends, as well. Third, the person is highly unlikely to be passive. Rather, many viewers of football and other sports are very knowledgeable about what they are watching - and they think along, evaluate choices, get engaged, and so on. They do this, probably more so, in fact, than the typical leftist watching a news show.

When we want to know why a person does something - in this case why a person consumes a ball game from the couch - we could ask the person, or simply consult why we might do it, or more insightfully, we could ask what would be the result of the person not doing it, and doing something else, instead.

So the leftist critic may think, why can't Joe or Jill - on the couch for four hours riveted to the game (in fact, Joe and/or Jill are probably interacting with each other, with others who are together viewing in a social way, etc., but, let's say the image is correct: just the one person, just lying there watching) - instead do something more useful?

If you ask friends on the left what this more useful pursuit might be, their most frequent reply will be, well, why not play? You might discuss how over the past few decades most possibilities of assembling enough people, having a field, and having equipment, have been obliterated - the reason being, to reduce social ties which, especially among working people, are very dangerous for the status quo. So as with advertising we have an instance of the elimination of alternatives leaving sports fandom as a remaining available route to engagement of diverse types.

But then the person you are querying will nonetheless typically say, okay, if options to play are slim for those who can't afford private access, the sports fan could at least read a book. There is nothing structural preventing that. What book? The reply from an American leftist might be: How about Chomsky? Why not

read Chomsky instead of watching football, basketball, American Idol, says the critic of the couch fan.

The next step, rather than stopping at that point, comfortable with disdainfully saying the sports fan has opted out of reading due to being stupid, lazy, or sucked in by ads, might be to explore the results one could expect from his or her reading Chomsky instead of rooting for the home team. Having nothing to talk about with others at work the next day is a most obvious outcome, an extreme version of which would be to appear anti social and aloof, with devastating consequences.

One is, however, also likely to be made angry, to be highly sensitized to injustice, to lose the rationale for suffering that comes with believing at least the country is great, and so on, due to reading Chomsky. In short, if you think it through, the option to read Chomsky instead of watching the ballgame - at least in non tumultuous times - turns out to be an option to reduce friendships and even risk losing them - and similarly for family ties - and so on. Plus going to work may now be even harder than usual, risking income, at least. You read. You learn. You get aroused. But there is no social route to manifest the insights, angers, and desires the reading intensifies. The reading becomes a bit masochistic, if you think about it. (This also explains oppressed constituencies reticence about accepting leaflets and attending political events.) The reading is arguably a slippery slope to loneliness, anger, and views and desires contrary to fulfilling one's allotted roles at work and in society - and thus we see how the impetus to watch sports as compared to doing something else is largely imposed by societal pressures and constraints that reward and make accessible activities like watching sports that are consistent with reproducing society's defining relations and that make hard and punish other activities that may lead toward inclinations to alter society.

Does society apply tremendous resources to making sports highly visible, accessible, respected, because doing so is a useful mechanism to distract folks from social problems? Sure. Of course. But does that mean that watching, given the limited alternatives for spending the time other ways, is dumb? Not at all. The context makes the behavior sensible - and so the context, including the

absence of huge, effective social movements, is the problem, not the couch fan's genetic dispositions or personality. It is easy to see gender, race, and power relations at work, but before leaving this issue, albeit barely having begun to explore it and just trying to show how looking at roles and their implications can clarify matters, what about the explicit impact of class on issues like this?

The main thing to consider is how class allegiances affect the actual final choices that the viewer - or consumer of goods - makes. To make the point in a domain of great personal importance to readers, this time consider the average leftist student's disdain for McDonalds, country music, and tabloid newspapers, as well as for car racing, bowling, roller derby, boxing, and football - one could go on - versus the same person's likely appreciation of fine restaurants, rap or rock music, the New York Times, and tennis or figure skating. Is this set of tastes just due to preferring objectively better to objectively worse offerings in the horribly constrained setting that imposes opting for commodity fulfillment? Or is there a very clear class dimension to these particular final commodity choices?

Without going on excessively, leaving much to further explore, McDonalds and fine restaurants are both dens of wage slavery, but one serves workers more, and that is the one that is denigrated, particularly by the coordinator class (which is not surprising given that class's disdain for workers below) and the left. Country music is typically about working class lives and historically claimed by working people, while Rap springs from other oppressed communities, but typically the former is far more ignored and dismissed by the coordinator class and the left. The New York Times is one of the most vile institutions in the world and the leftist - and coordinator class types more broadly - typically read it, or a paper mimicking it in smaller cities, daily. Indeed the leftist and coordinatorist typically minutely examine the front section and the editorial section of the Times, which is to say, the parts that lie and manipulate the most. The worker instead often reads the sports section of some lowly tabloid, which is to say the part that lies and manipulates least - and perhaps some other parts for amusement. Yet somehow the worker is, in the eyes of the

leftist, duped and dumb. Really? Could it be, instead, that not only everyone else's consumption preference, but also those of leftists, like those of the coordinator class, are dramatically affected by class background, history, and identifications? Perhaps this is something to explore further.

Example 3: Wages / Welfare...

"Economics is extremely useful as a form of employment for economists."
- John Kenneth Galbraith

These phenomena all affect distribution of income and also circumstances, clearly. So in thinking about these we need to consider their impact on society's various constituencies - class, race, gender, etc. And about the relations of the phenomena to the core institutions of society, to their role impositions, and people's consciousnesses. Here are just a few such observations, largely familiar, among the many more that you can discern yourself.

Owners, by virtue of their position, seek to maximize profits. This includes lowering wages as best they can, intensifying work without a change in hourly pay, reducing vacations, etc. Conversely, workers seek to raise wages, which means using bargaining power they can amass to extract higher incomes for fewer hours of labor. Coordinators are in the same boat as workers in that they too seek income from owners, but there is a large difference in the basis for their bargaining power. For workers, for the most part, their power stems from a collective threat to withhold labor which can become real only by way of organization. For coordinators, again power ultimately stems from a threat to withhold labor, but now each individual has great power because the threat is tremendously enhanced by the difficulty and often even impossibility of replacing the labor due to the monopoly this class has on empowering work, and on the knowledge, skill, confidence, and very limited credentials to do that work.

Thus the typical worker's union has as its priority to gain more members and then apply their collective power. The typical coordinator's organizational vehicle, such as the American Medical Association, however, is different. It strengthens doctors by

keeping down the number of doctors and keeping up barriers that prevent others from replacing doctors. This entails a perverse mindset. The doctors have to be motivated only in part by doing their jobs, but what must trump that is being sure that others - such as nurses and masses of citizens - cannot do their job. Thus doctors establish high barriers to entry to their profession - and similarly for other professions like lawyers, engineers, etc. - and develop and defend an educational system that honors those barriers by not educating more of the population, and even structurally obstructing the education of most.

But what about welfare? Why is granting welfare such a big deal in society, for elites in particular? We could say the elites are sadists. That would explain their tireless and energetic opposition. But it leaves open the question, why are they sadistic about this. But, in any event, it is so obviously not the case that there must be a far more calculating explanation than enjoying hurting others. If we simply ask, how does the enlargement of welfare provisions affect the relative strength of different constituencies vis a vis income, as well as how does it affect consciousness which, in turn, again affects social hierarchies, a different answer emerges.

The concern for owners and other powerful sectors actually has nothing to do with getting pleasure directly out of the decreased well being of victims of reduced welfare. It also has little to do with the cost of delivering that welfare, which is modest. The real issue is that welfare strengthens society's poorest and weakest members. It insures them against disaster and unemployment. This makes the threat of reducing others who are doing better into the weakest condition - for example, by firing them - less compelling. It increases the willingness of people to risk their situations to gain still better situations. The first reason welfare is so vehemently imposed by elites is therefore because it threatens their interests due to making those who they benefit more willing and more able to fight back. So that is point one.

There is a second point, as well, having to do with consciousness. Welfare is premised on the idea that society, and indeed each person, should be concerned about the conditions of other people. This type of concern, which is the bedrock basis for

solidarity, is incredibly dangerous to those at the top of society's hierarchies whose position depends overwhelmingly on keeping those below fragmented. There is nothing machiavellian or conspiracist about noticing this type of logic and asserting it has a powerful impact. The way it works is more like natural selection than like pre-conception. Society and its members typically try all kinds of policies and patterns. Those that are safe from the perspective of decision makers and power brokers are ratified and enlarged. Those that are not safe from the perspective of elites, are denigrated and diminished, and, if need be, obliterated. In this manner, lasting patterns of interaction which fulfill the dictates of reproducing society's basic structures become dominant. The fields of force emanating from the four spheres, and the consciousnesses imposed by them, cause this result.

Now it becomes easy to address, at least in the brief form we are using to promote further exploration, unemployment and government spending. The story is basically the same. Unemployment weakens not only the unemployed themselves - which is not particularly important in its own right to elites - but, much more so, weakens everyone in conceivable danger of losing their job. This is the real benefit to those at the top of society. Those below, the ones not unemployed but who owners can threaten with firing, are weakened because lots of unemployment - without good welfare - means you can get fired and will then have great difficulty getting new work, and will suffer tremendously for it. Thus the threat of a pink slip works.

With government spending, what to spend on is the issue. Some things government might spend on would benefit the poor and the weak - not just welfare or unemployment insurance, but also low income housing, public health care, public schooling, and so on. Other things government might spend on, such as military expenditures, have few if any such effects. There are massive profits to be had by companies doing the military work, but this is also true if the government instead built schools, hospitals, and housing. That expenditures yield profits for owners is the same in both cases. However, in the first case, a by-product of the expenditure is strengthened working and poor people via the

benefits of the product. In the latter case, there is no such benefit for working people. More, in the former case, the touted motives reinforce social values, promoting ideas of solidarity, meeting needs, etc. In the latter case, the opposite holds - the touted values are about violence. The social projects, contrary to rhetoric, would actually employ way more people, dramatically reducing unemployment - which, however, is, from the point of view of elites, another bad aspect. The point is, if one pays attention to effects on class relations - which the government does - then the perverse and irrational focus of government on needless and harmful production becomes sensible from the point of view of political, economic, and social elites - albeit not from the point of view of the weak and poor.

Example 4: Class or Multitude

"...the question to ask, in other, is not 'What is the multitude?' but rather 'What can the multitude become?' ... common condition, of course, does not mean sameness or unity, but it does require that no differences of nature or kind divide the multitude. "
- Hardt and Negri

In our conceptual approach class plays an important role as the type of group alignment that arises from economic relations. Of late, certain activists have espoused a new concept, "multitude" in place of class. Is this an improvement? Theory should explicate such matters and even a brief look will hopefully begin to reveal how our new approaches yield new strategic insights.

What emerges from *Occupy Theory's* pages is that we need class concepts, but we don't need the concept "multitude." Here's how our framework approaches such a matter.

Class concepts focus us on the difference between owning factories and selling one's ability to do work. This difference produces capitalists versus everyone else. The source of this difference has to be eliminated if we are to transcend capitalism. All people concerned about true and full justice agree.

Additionally, however, this book has argued that class concepts should also focus us on a second critical economic

difference. Some people do work that conveys knowledge, confidence, and control over daily life. Their work is empowering. They give orders. They define tasks and decide who does them, at what pace, and with what distribution of the results. Their knowledge increases. Their confidence grows.

Other people do work that is overwhelmingly rote, obedient, and dis-empowering. They follow orders. They do not set schedules or agendas. They do not decide outcomes. Their knowledge decreases. Their confidence erodes.

On the one side we have people who we call workers - which includes assemblers, bus drivers, short order cooks, miners, maids, nurses, and waitresses. These are the daily implementers of economic dictates. They are very roughly 80% of the workforce.

On the other side, we have people who we call coordinators - which includes high level lawyers, engineers, doctors, accountants, architects, and managers. They are the daily designers and administrators of the economy and its protocols. They are very roughly 20% of the workforce.

In capitalism, coordinators are subordinate to owners but in turn benefit at the expense of workers. In another type of economy, and this is one of our key insights, coordinators can rule workers.

Institutions that create and preserve the coordinator/worker class hierarchy, as we have seen and will elaborate more fully when discussing vision in book two of *Fanfare*, include corporate divisions of labor, remuneration for output or for power, hierarchical decision making, and markets or central planning for allocation.

Sadly, even with private ownership eliminated, these institutions remain central in what most people have called socialism, but which we think we should call coordinatorism.

Those in favor of universal justice want classlessness. All participants in economic life should enjoy conditions of comparable empowerment and quality of life. We want all people in the economy to have a fair say in economic outcomes. We do not want a few people to rule many people.

Our framework says to these ends we need class concepts that highlight the three class structure of modern economies and can

guide our efforts to eliminate not only ownership bases for class division and class rule, but also division of labor bases for class division and class rule. So what about the concept "multitude"? Being one word, multitude presumably refers to essentially one thing. What is that? In discussions, it is often vague.

Perhaps multitude refers to anyone who could conceivably become a revolutionary in revolutionary times. But since that could be anyone at all, the word population would do equally well as a label for that set of people. We doubt the whole population is the intended meaning of the concept multitude, though we have heard people use the term that way.

Perhaps multitude refers instead to everyone who is a very good prospect to become revolutionary in revolutionary times. But then the word multitude just replaces the two word label, likely revolutionary, and that doesn't seem very innovative or essential either. We also doubt that that is the intended meaning of the concept multitude, though again, we have heard people use the term that way.

Perhaps multitude means, instead, those who by virtue of their economic position are very good prospects to become revolutionary in revolutionary times. Taken in that sense, the concept multitude would replace the old concept proletariat, or even working class. As Michael Hardt, one of the authors of the use of this term himself put it, "[this] is one way in which you might think of our notion of multitude as being very close to a traditional notion of proletariat, that is, the class of all those who produce, once the notion of production itself has been sufficiently revised and expanded." This is the intended usage. It is the most counter productive usage.

If the term multitude means likely agents of economic and social change, and includes "all those who produce," we think there is a high likelihood emphasizing it would crowd out our giving equal attention to kinship, race, and power based dynamics as we give to economy based dynamics.

Emphasizing multitude would tend to hide that procreation, sexuality, socialization, celebration, identification, adjudication, legislation, and implementation count just as much as production

(and for that matter, consumption and allocation) in people's conditions and consciousnesses, and also in igniting or thwarting revolutionary inclinations.

Advocates of multitude correctly want to highlight that production affects and is affected by culture, gender, and power. So far, so good. But if our method for incorporating that insight impedes our also using central concepts that are specifically rooted in those other domains and not just in thinking about production, not to mention if our method for incorporating that insight impedes our using more detailed economic concepts of class and of consumption and allocation, then despite our good intentions, using the concept multitude will tend to narrow rather than broaden our focus.

To see what this means, it is sufficient to note that using multitude this way would mirror the impact on the left of the old use of the term proletariat, also meaning revolutionary agent based on being a producer.

For example, many activists who used the term proletariat as agent of change, took race very seriously, even considering it of paramount social importance. Nonetheless, the proletariat-based framework led them to understand and think about race in overwhelmingly economic terms. And using proletariat as an organizing principle had the same predictable delimiting effect on people's approach to gender and political power, as well.

Despite multitude being defined more broadly than proletariat was defined, nonetheless, like the word proletariat, the word multitude identifies a revolutionary agent based on examining economic foundations. That approach typically causes people to think that the only or at least the most important way to become revolutionary is by way of economic concerns and attitudes. Must we endure that "rank the oppressions" approach yet again, with a new label?

Moreover, even if the above danger was avoided, elevating the concept multitude would certainly enforce a bi-polar view of economic change. Regarding economy, with multitude guiding our thoughts there will be potential bad guys - maybe we will call them capitalists, or emperors, or whatever - and there will be potential

good guys, the multitude. This is quite like when the conceptualization of economic struggle was capitalists versus the proletariat or capitalists versus the working class, with no other economic agents operating.

The trouble with a two class approach to economic agents is that it covers over the existence of the coordinator class and makes it seem that beyond bad capitalist economies there can only follow either more of the same or good multitude economies.

This is quite like Marxism Leninism's mentality that there is capitalism and then there is socialism. An economy must be one or the other. In fact, however, beyond capitalism there are at least two possibilities: one bad, one good.

A bad post capitalist economy has institutions that elevate what we call the coordinator class. We call this economy coordinatorism, though most people call it market or centrally planned socialism. We hate it, though many advocate it. Whatever we call it, and however we feel about it, this economy has public or state ownership, corporate divisions of labor, hierarchical decision making, and either markets or central planning for allocation.

A good post capitalist economy would have institutions, instead, that eliminate class division. We think this will be participatory economics, to be discussed in book two of Fanfare, and we think it will include such features as remuneration for duration, intensity, and onerousness of work, balanced job complexes, self-managed decision making, and participatory planning, but of course the jury is still out on all that.

For us, however, the problem with the concept multitude is that whatever fine intentions its authors may have, it is (1) a step back toward crowding out priority attention for race, gender, and power, and (2) also a step back toward drawing attention away from the nature and importance of the coordinator/worker division.

We know these claims fly in the face of the stated motives of those advocating the concept multitude. But so too did charges of economism and of favoring institutions that elevated a new ruling coordinator class fly in the face of the stated motives of those who in the past advocated Leninist approaches to social change.

Yes, advocates of multitude urge their desire to broaden economics so that it accounts for other dimensions of life. They say they want to address all forms of domination. But, despite these admirable desires, it is far more probable that piling all dimensions of life under a single concept emphasizing only production will underplay extra-economic variables at least as badly as in the past, rather than elevating them.

Second, trying to hammer all the varieties of economic possibility into a bi-polar framework of a bad capitalist economy pitted against a good economy that a multitude will rule, ignores that anti-capitalists can, in fact, seek a future that is classless or one that has coordinators dominating workers. We want classlessness. We don't want coordinatorism. And so we also don't want concepts that run the risk of distorting seeking classlessness into seeking coordinatorism.

We favor using the concepts capitalist, coordinator, and worker for understanding the key constituency dynamics of current economies and also for understanding the two main kinds of post capitalist economy, coordinatorist and classless, or, in our view, coordinatorism and participatory economics.

We favor using concepts like man, woman, mother, father, black, white, religion, nationality, ethnicity, citizen, order giver, and order taker - and others as well - of course, for understanding the key dynamics of current families, cultures, and political structures, and for envisioning future improvements.

It seems to us that trying to shoehorn social or even just an economic reality into a single-constituency concept like multitude is wildly backward, not forward, in its implications.

Highlighting multitude obscures the independent priority of race, gender, and political structures and obscures the coordinator/worker difference - just as Marxist Leninist concepts obscured and denied these same central elements in the past.

Example 5: We Are The 99%?

"Occupy Everything...we are the 99!"

- Anon

The above discussion is, in our view, of extreme importance, so we would like to take up the ideas a second time, in another example. One of the most celebrated features of recent occupation movements in the U.S., and then around the world, from which we take the title of each book of the three book set *Fanfare*, has been the slogan, “We are the 99%.” Participants love the slogan, but what do we feel about it, in light of our conceptual framework?

Saying we are the 99% aggressively pinpoints a very small group who have overwhelming power and wealth in society. They are owners. They are capitalists. They are on top. So far, so good.

And there is a policy related benefit, as well. Mainstream corrections for economic crisis seek for the 1% to wind up even more securely in power than they were before the crisis. In contrast, we want to escape business as usual. In that context, saying we are the 99% excellently orients us toward redistributing wealth and power down, not up.

Even so, we would prefer that we call the 1% capitalists. Calling them capitalists pinpoints that they own the economy. It highlights that we can’t retain owners, yet not have owners on top. It clarifies that to get rid of 1% dominating 99% requires replacing capitalism.

But virtually every occupier knows the 1% are on top by virtue of owning productive property. Most people watching and learning from the occupations also know this, or can come to know it, and the 1% label won’t obstruct that from happening. So saying we are the 99% against the 1% (instead of against the capitalists) still stands tall as a slogan which communicates previously subterranean sentiments.

But what about managers? What about doctors? What about lawyers and engineers? What about financial officers? What about people who earn five six, ten, twenty, and even fifty or more times what the typical worker earns, but who do not own the means of production, do not work harder, do not labor under worse conditions, and do not work more intensely than more typical workers? In short, what about people who have jobs that are highly

empowering and convey very substantial and sometimes incredible wealth and status inaccessible to those below?

A 99%-er may reply: "They are just at the top of our team but they are still on our team, aren't they? After all, they can be fired. They get wages and have to struggle with the 1% to increase their wages. They are hurt by the crisis. So isn't it good if they come to our encampments and pitch in? Isn't it good if they march in our parades and protest along with us?"

A problem arises, or can arise, when we think of the whole 99% as being one type of economic actor. In fact there are differences, some of which matter not only to our lives, but to our activism.

"But to highlight the differences will diminish our inclusiveness," replies the 99%-er.

What our conceptual framework says about this is that about 20% of all economic actors have a relative monopoly on empowering tasks. About 80% end up doing jobs composed of only disempowering tasks. The former group, due to their work, become more confident, more knowledgeable about their conditions and workplaces, and more socially practiced and capable. The latter group, due to their different work, become less confident, less knowledgeable about their conditions and workplaces, and less socially practiced and capable. The former have way more power than the latter and they parlay that power into more income as well.

Okay, all that seems true, the 99%-er likely agrees, "but if the 20% side with us in pursuing our agendas, isn't that good?"

Yes, of course. But there are two other possibilities we should not ignore. First, they can instead side with the owners at the top. Second, they can oppose the owners, and even say they side with us, but have their own agenda, different from ours, that they pursue. Both these possibilities are not only possible, but quite likely for many highly empowered employees, even as some will also sincerely side with more typical workers. Okay, says the 99%-er, "but I still don't see the problem with the slogan. If we want the doctors, lawyers, engineers and others to side with us, why isn't having one name for us all - 99%-ers - a good step toward that

goal? Why isn't welcoming the top 20% under our one large umbrella good?"

It is, in some ways. And certainly the opposite approach - treating empowered employees as enemies - would virtually ensure their absence from our encampments, marches, and protests.

But here is our heresy from the perspective of older concepts. We believe there is a very strong dynamic by which if we don't give some serious attention to the differences between the roughly 20% - who we call the coordinator class - and the disempowered roughly 80% - who we call the working class - the former coordinators will, over time, wind up dominating the latter workers, in turn transforming working class aspirations for classlessness into coordinator class agendas for coordinator rule.

Without going into endless detail about matters we will return to in books two and three of *Fanfare*, the point is that the coordinator class has a monopoly on empowering work. They are not smarter. They are not more industrious. They are not more worthy. Rather, they are elevated by their backgrounds, luck, better schooling, and mostly by their position in the division of labor. The workers are subordinated by their backgrounds, luck, worse schooling, and mostly by their position in the division of labor. To achieve classlessness, all this must change. A successful movement needs to fight to change the division of labor.

But this insight about class has implications that go further than ultimate aims. For example, what preferences characterize our movements? What values do our movements celebrate? What habits do they embody? How do our movements feel to participants? What do our movements provide participants? Who, therefore, do our movements appeal to? Who makes our movement decisions and becomes steadily more confident and empowered by doing so? Which people will feel comfortable in and empowered by our movements? And then, finally, and largely derivatively from these other attributes, what will our movements fight for? In other words, how do our movements relate to existing constituency hierarchies, in turn reproducing or overthrowing their logic?

If we ask these questions about race or gender issues, the implications are clear. We know that we are not all one race. We

know we are not all one gender. We know we need movements that address rather than ignore race and gender inequalities and hierarchies. To attain that clarity, of course we don't argue that white people are the enemy. We don't argue that men are the enemy. However, we do recognize that there are real privileges to deal with. We do carefully ensure that our movements elevate women and people of color to positions of influence and that our movements reject culture, styles, habits, values, and assumptions not only associated with dominant groups ruling, but off-putting to subordinate groups.

Don't we need to translate that thinking to issues of class? Should we settle for having a movement against the 1% or even a movement that calls itself anti capitalist, but which nonetheless has a culture, style, habits, values, and assumptions, and, even more so, organization and leadership that takes for granted continued rule by the the coordinator class rather than fighting to eliminate all class division? We worry that if we actively bury this class distinction under an all-inclusive 99% label applied to everyone who isn't a capitalist, we will open the door to not addressing the problems of class inside our own organizing.

Inside our movements, it is certainly important that we address issues of private ownership of property. Otherwise we will not deal with the dynamics of capitalist rule. But it is also important that we address issues of asymmetrical access to economic power. Otherwise we will not deal with the dynamics of what we call coordinator rule.

It is obviously important that we not have a bunch of capitalists deciding our agendas. It is also important that we not have only coordinator class members doing so. It is important that we not adopt styles and approaches comfortable for the 1%, or the 20%, but uncomfortable for the 80%.

The 99%-er may reply, "oh, that is all just outdated orthodox marxist rhetoric that would divisively diminish our potentials."

The thing is, it isn't. And, ironically, the opposite is true.

Treating the economy as if there are just two important classes - whether we call them owners and workers or we call them the 1% and the 99% - is itself, in fact, the tired old marxist approach. To

lump everyone who isn't capitalist into one category - whether we call that category worker or we call it 99%-er (or, for that matter, the multitude) - masks a critically important difference among non capitalists. Obscuring this difference was, indeed, a main conceptual problem of marxism (and programmatic problem of Leninism), because using a two class approach invariably generated economies (wrongly called socialist) in which the (unmentioned) coordinator class ruled over the (celebrated) working class.

But the 99%-er may reply, "okay, that's intellectually fair enough, regarding the long run. But we aren't about to win a new economy tomorrow or next week. And, for now, we need to welcome as many new participants as possible, don't we?"

Yes, we certainly do. But the economic participants we mostly need to welcome and elevate to defining our movements, are working class people. Use the analogy to racism, again. We need an anti racist movement, and we certainly need to welcome white participants into it, but only if they are truly against racism and seriously prepared - albeit even if only imperfectly and sometimes with reluctance - to not exploit their privileges. We shouldn't welcome white people into an anti racist movement in ways that lead to adopting approaches, language, and habits that put off people of color from participating.

By analogy, do we want to welcome doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, and even managers into a movement fighting against class rule? Yes, of course we do, but only if they are on the side of working people, and only if they are ready, albeit even if only imperfectly and sometimes with reluctance, to understand and try to overcome their privileges. We need doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, and even managers who are ready to respect working class attitudes and culture and choices, who are ready to accept working class leadership, who are ready to try to spread currently monopolized knowledge, not hoard it, and who are ready to listen, not just lecture.

"But what about students," says the 99%-er?

If a student who hopes to be doctor or lawyer also hopes to put their education and training at the disposal of working people,

including trying to break down the obstacles to more people having similar education and training and being similarly empowered, that's wonderful. Welcome aboard. But if a student who hopes to be a doctor or lawyer also hopes to become as wealthy as possible and identifies as an elite, implicitly or explicitly, and sees the resolution of the current economic crisis, for example, in a return to business as usual, that's another matter, isn't it?

Of course it is hard, in practice, to deal with such differences and distinctions in ways that avoid recrimination, guilt tripping, and all the rest that we all know can creep in. But with patience, it can be done.

Suppose, down the road, a time comes for issuing demands. We wonder, will coordinator class occupiers be okay with proposals that redistribute power and wealth not only from the top 1%, but also from the top 20%? Will doctors be okay with proposals from nurses that eat into doctors prerogatives? Will engineers be okay with proposals from workers that eat into engineer's prerogatives? What about professors supporting students, even when it eats into professor's prerogatives? Managers and assemblers? And though it is harder to navigate the details, what about would-be doctors, engineers, professors, and managers? If we want a movement that seeks self management for all, doesn't that mean we do not want to retain a class division that gives a monopoly on empowering work to a coordinator class thereby elevating that class above workers? If we want a movement that welcomes and empowers working people, doesn't that mean it must be guided by working class needs and desires?

For coordinator class members who will be okay with activism that benefits mainly workers, their involvement will certainly be highly beneficial to movements seeking real change. But for coordinator class members who won't be okay with workers' gains reducing coordinator advantages, their involvement could interfere with seeking classlessness and could become a serious barrier to retaining working class participants - just as the involvement of racists and sexists can be a barrier to retaining people of color and women participants.

Our worry is that if we adopt slogans that place a big onus on even admitting that there are class differences within the 99%, much less on movement activists calmly and supportively delineating those differences and finding respectful ways to address them, then the obstacles and barriers we face could grow to be insurmountable.

Our worry with the slogan "we are the 99%" is that maybe we need to find a way to talk about ourselves which welcomes participation but which also recognizes differences that need to be addressed.

The desire to address and deal with differences by eliminating elite positions in a new economy is evident in the occupy movements' attention to self management and participation. This is what the movement's attention to process is ultimately about: getting rid of all hierarchies of power and influence. So, without becoming sectarian, without becoming judgmental, without becoming personalistic - can we make this desire truly and deeply real? Can we pay attention to class differences which, if they go unmentioned, will get in the way of self management and participation, as they have, repeatedly, in the past? Can we do it in ways that do not diminish our capacity to reach out to people receptive to participating? We think we can, and that we need to. It will be a significant part of our agenda for the upcoming book two, *Occupy Vision*, and book three, *Occupy Strategy*, of the three book set, *Fanfare for the Future*.

Chapter Five: Participatory Theory

“He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards a ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may arrive.”
- Leonardo Da Vinci

What Is Social Theory?

“Even for practical purposes theory generally turns out the most important thing in the end.”
- Oliver Wendell Holmes

Theory is a mental construction we use to explain, predict, and also guide. Examples are a theory of gravity, language acquisition, or baseball.

A social theory is a theory, as defined above, but about some part of collective human activity and engagement. It could be a theory of markets, law, bureaucracies, or families.

In our case, the theory - and, again, we prefer to call it the toolbox of thinking aids, but we will bow to popular usage and for concision say the theory - addresses societies and history in general and also specific types of society or epochs of history, or even actual instances of either.

The components of a theory are called concepts. They can come in groups or sub theories bearing on some particular part of the whole. For example, we may have a theory of gravity, with concepts like force and mass. But we may also then have sub theories like black holes or gravitons. Or if we are theorizing

baseball, we might have concepts like player and coach, ball and bat - and sub theories on hitting or pitching.

Concepts can be more general and encompassing such as player or fielder, or more specific, such as shortstop or stolen base. They are just names for patterns or things that we usefully and frequently highlight in our thinking about the overall topics we consider.

Theory also contains assertions about relations among its concepts. How do the basic concepts - elements or aspects - fit together and influence one another or impact systems more broadly, and change over time. Here, too, the theory highlights recurring patterns we can usefully be alert to and think about. In the sports case, an example would be the relation between certain hitting or pitching styles and possible outcomes in the game.

The components of the social theory used in this book are at the broadest level:

- humans and institutions
- people's consciousnesses and preferences and roles
- the four functions and associated spheres of social life and their influences
- the two encompassing contexts and their influences
- the social center of people and their attributes
- the boundary of institutions and their roles
- the two relations, accommodation and co-reproduction.

Getting more specific we have additional concepts bearing on each of the four spheres - like family, religion, legislature, market, and workplace, among many others - and regarding the effects of the four spheres on people and groups via the roles they offer - such as mother and father, workers, coordinator, and owner, and so on - up to, arguably a sub theory for each sphere.

Theories are typically about specific domains - such as gravity or cosmology, baseball or sports, society or history - and they are better or worse insofar as they accurately address the domain we wish to consider and deliver the type of insight we are seeking for

that domain. This could be an explanation of its operations, prediction of its future reactions to different choices, or informed guidance in our actual choices of actions to pursue or aims to seek, or all of these.

For example, baseball theory is supposed to help us understand past and upcoming games and seasons. But suppose we are not just spectators or even historians of the sport but also want to predict likely outcomes in particular situations in order to win bets. Or, we are not just betting on games or seasons, we are playing and coaching and we want theory to guide actions we can take.

In this book, our theory is similarly meant to explain past societies and historical events as if we were historians or spectators, to predict likely outcomes of particular situations as if we were betting on outcomes, and also to help guide us in formulating viable and worthy aims and in making choices to attain them because we are activists - all of which will become more obvious as we proceed in volumes two and three of Fanfare.

Finally, the validity of a theory rests on how accurately its insights correspond to what occurs in its domain - whether the domain is planets hurtling through space, stars collapsing, players competing, or societies chugging along or sometimes dramatically altering. And the theory's worth to us, even beyond its technical validity, corresponds to how well it helps us accomplish whatever our particular agendas may be - such as understanding, predicting, and/or acting.

But so what? Does any of this have any relevance for us? Well, it can at least demystify theory a bit, and that is important. As to more, let's see.

The Language Of Theory

"Works of imagination should be written in very plain language; the more purely imaginative they are the more necessary it is to be plain."
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge

David Hilbert, one of the most successful and brilliant mathematicians of the twentieth century, said, "A mathematical theory is not to be considered complete until you have made it so

clear that you can explain it to the first man whom you meet on the street.” Albert Einstein said the same thing about physics, except he referred to a “barmaid” as the person who would have to understand. What were these great theorists trying to convey?

I think it was that when you technically understand a theory - the concepts and their relations - and you become so immersed in it that you make it totally your own in general and specific terms, you ought to be able to convey the essence of it for others to broadly comprehend.

Hilbert and Einstein thought this was true even for theories whose discovery and use necessarily utilized very technical tools of mathematical analysis and had highly unfamiliar, and even counter intuitive attributes, because those theories explored deeply and precisely into relations very far from our familiar experience.

When we switch back from math and physics to looking at society and history, our comprehension is far less deep and precise, requiring only a few new terms to highlight things we don't typically talk about but need to give a name so we will focus on them. It certainly involves no really complex tools of understanding, like complex math. More, history and society are familiar to everyone's experience.

So, here is the point we take from this. Social theory, like all theory, should not be made unduly obscure even in its creation, much less once it is developed. Even more so, a theory has to be assessed not only by its bottom line ability to explain, predict, and guide when it is employed by the best trained practitioners who have made the theory totally their own, but by its utility for accomplishing whatever agendas it is meant to aid.

In that light, please consider a theory which is meant to guide efforts at social change.

Who is supposed to engage in such efforts?

Well, this is jumping ahead a bit, but it will come as no surprise that in this book we have in mind that broad populations are meant to engage in such efforts. This is, however obvious it may be, a major observation.

It means that the only people who really need to be able to creatively and efficiently utilize the actual concepts of gravity, or

biology, or even baseball, are the practitioners within those domains. But in our case, dealing with society and history, the practitioners of social change include essentially anyone and everyone aroused to participate.

And that tells us that obscure social theory, no matter how insightful it may be, is, for our purposes, horribly flawed. To be successful at guiding normal people living in normal circumstances with normal prior experience, social theory must be highly congenial and accessible.

A random person doesn't have to be able to just pick up and run with social theory in five minutes. That's asking too much. It can reasonably take more time than that, say a few hours or even days, and some practice, to comprehend and become adept with a worthy social theory. But picking it up to use it should not require learning a whole new language and entail a vast amount of training. Everyone learns to ride a bike. It isn't and can't be trivially easy, but nor is it out of reach. Similarly everyone needs to be able to learn to understand, make predictions about, envision, and act on social situations in pursuit of a better future. This need not be trivially easy, but nor should it be out of reach.

In the toolbox of aids to social thought that we have offered in this book we have opted to include just a few new words to label new concepts. Hopefully we won't have to add too many more as we proceed further. The meanings of these new words are also, hopefully, clear, and in most instances correspond to things we already intuitively recognize from our experience. Even the relations of our concepts to one another that we have only begun to display, we hope will present no insurmountable obstacles.

However, if some purported "big thinker" for social change claims to be for a bottom up and highly participatory future, but then presents an utterly incomprehensible framework of arcane terms - very few of which he or she can even define - and which he or she cannot explain clearly enough for the proverbial "man on the street" or "barmaid" to understand, and which he or she then routinely stitches into incredibly convoluted sentences and paragraphs that defy logical interpretation, then you should question the person's motives or methods, or both.

Arcane inaccessibility is not only unnecessary for social theory, when it exists it is typically a creation for purposes of appearance, not communication. If the “big thinker” gets defensive and calls you anti intellectual for questioning him or her - you should redouble your critical efforts. Such defensiveness is typically additional evidence of a wrong-headed approach. Neither Hilbert nor Einstein doing math and physics would resort to such a stance. Certainly an advocate of participatory social change theorizing societies we all live in shouldn't.

To Be Sectarian or To Be Participatory...

*“Woe betide those who seek to save themselves the pain
of mental building by inhabiting dead men's minds.”
- GDH Cole*

Thomas Jefferson wrote: “The moment a person forms a theory, his imagination sees in every object only the traits which favor that theory.” This is a problem to address, often called dogmatism, but is not necessarily what we mean by being sectarian, which is typically dogmatism on steroids, plus with anger toward others.

For one thing, the whole point of having a theory is to use it, so we can't reject using theory. Jefferson's highlighted problem is having an orientation that assumes the theory is without flaw, and, even more, having an orientation that is prone to ignore or even hide flaws. Of course this tendency can get excessive or even grotesque or it can remain subtle and muted - the difference being on the one hand a robotic and totally reflexive application of one's concepts, and on the other hand a more patient and thoughtful application. But, either way, the process is harmful when it takes for granted its own worth and rules out that which contradicts its own worth.

We have all seen this attitude often enough. It exists with conspiracists, with fundamentalists, and with all manner of political ideologies. It can even arise among scientists. Rather than provide specific examples, let's ask, instead, why does it happen? Why do I see the world through my theory, my concepts, which is okay, but then also refuse to notice that which calls my concepts

into question? Or worse, even deny the possibility of questions and, worst of all, even react adversely and antagonistically, indeed even violently, to any questions that are raised?

Jefferson is talking about a relatively benign but not unimportant part of this problem. We inevitably use theory to think with, much like using a colored filter to see through. And when we do this, we inevitably emphasize theory-highlighted or theory-sanctioned thoughts and downgrade theory-neglected or even theory-denied thoughts. We will even have a tendency to perceive or not perceive facts based on their supporting or denying our theory. This type of more or less inevitable bias arises from using theory. It can be countered and tamed, or it can be ignored and become a foundation on which far more aggressively dogmatic and sectarian traits grow. But, luckily, the means for combatting the worst tendencies will serve nicely to offset the more benign tendencies as well. So the next question is, what are the worse tendencies rooted in?

Here is a hypothesis.

A person has a perspective, a conceptual toolbox, a theory. If the person tends to see this perspective not as a flexible and transitory tool, used for utilitarian reasons, but, instead, as an extension of self - almost like a personality trait, or even a physical attribute - this is typically a recipe for disaster.

Joe or Sue is an anarchist, feminist, nationalist, leninist, conspiracist, fundamentalist or whatever. If Sue sees the concepts and beliefs she holds as aids to accomplishing important aims - but mutable and potentially temporary and thus to be refined and improved or even replaced if need be - then aggressive dogmatism and sectarianism, I maintain, are unlikely to be present. But if Joe feels these concepts and beliefs to be a part of his identity - to be who he is - to be a part of his very being, then aggressive dogmatism and sectarianism are highly likely to be present.

Joe or Sue encounters someone who questions a view they hold or a concept they employ. In the first case, where Sue sees her views simply as aids to accomplishing important aims, this critic may or may not be right. If right, then Sue wants to know it, so she can fix her view. If wrong, okay, Sue needs to explain why, calmly.

In the second case, where Joe sees his views as composing his own identity, his reason for being, who he is, then the critic who raises a question seems to Joe be attacking him. The claim that his view is flawed is heard as an attack indicating that he is, himself, flawed. Joe gets as defensive as if he was called nasty names. He strikes back as he might if he had been lied about, maliciously. The critic, under assault, replies in kind. The discussion barrels toward disaster.

The logic and pattern of dogmatism and sectarianism is the tendency to assume that one is right, that others are wrong, and that everything thereafter should flow from those quite obvious truths, including hostility toward anyone who even remotely differs with them. But the foundation of the problem, I claim, often derives from people making their beliefs into their identity and then reacting to criticism of the beliefs as if those criticisms were personal assaults. Of course any degree of insecurity about self only adds fuel to the inferno.

We have been developing a conceptual toolbox for social change. We advocate using that toolbox. What, then, do we offer, as the alternative to dogmatic and even sectarian tendencies which are intrinsic to using theory?

Being Flexible

*“Half of the people can be part right all of the time
Some of the people can be all right part of the time
But all of the people can't be all right all of the time.”
I think Abraham Lincoln said that.
I'll let you be in my dreams if I can be in yours.”
I said that.
- Bob Dylan*

Individually, what, if anything, can we do to prevent sliding into sectarianism? It is easy to say we should listen, we should be mature, we should have patience. But in practice it doesn't accomplish much to offer these instructions. We each think we are listening, being mature, and having patience, even when we are not. We think it is others who are not hearing us, respecting us, taking time with us, rather than vice versa. So, what can we do?

There is probably no magic policy, no magic stance. Certainly there is no choice that will always, automatically, work. Everything one might suggest to an individual to do to avoid being dogmatic or sectarian is subject to dismissal in practice - just like listening, being mature, and being patient are - on grounds the individual is, after all, doing all that has been suggested more than enough, which is even sometimes true.

Still, here is a possibility. Suppose you manage to get your sense of self not from the tenacity of your beliefs but instead from your flexibility about your beliefs. Rather than avoiding being dogmatic after having identified self with a set of views and making your perspective into your identity, suppose you avoid being dogmatic by changing the connection between your identity and your views in the first place?

The advisory to avoid sectarianism becomes advice to see yourself, respect yourself, and even admire yourself, in precise proportion as you not only have what you think are worthy views, but as you are eager - given good reason - to refine, alter, or even replace those views.

Suppose, in other words, that the anarchist, feminist, or whatever else, sees him or herself not as an anarchist, feminist, or whatever else, but as a flexible, thinking, caring, listening person, who has a point of view, but is always eager to hear others propose different views.

Suppose one is even more excited at the prospect of changing views than keeping them unchanged. Suppose one's attitude is that there is always room for improvement. Suppose I feel like if I stand pat I am not improving, but if I change intelligently, I am improving. And suppose that who I am and who I want to be is a person who is always improving.

This is not an easy mindset, but if a person sees him or herself in this way, then the person automatically hears others and continually reassesses and hopes to refine revered views. A listening and assessing pause occurs before pouncing - and in fact replaces pouncing - with exploring because this is the key to one's self respect. Attacking - unless really, really warranted - violates rather than protects one's self respect.

I suggest, pending lots of evidence, that this growth-oriented approach to theory ought to be another feature of the toolbox of concepts and methods of the effective social change activist.

Institutionally Participatory Theory

*“The people will feel no better if the stick with which they are being beaten is labeled ‘the people’s stick.’”
- Mikhail Bakunin*

Personal solutions to problems arising in personal behaviors are worth trying to enunciate and employ, as above. But collective solutions and even institutional solutions, are better still, precisely because they are less subject to individual error and emotional violation in the heat of the moment.

We have identified that any frequently utilized perspective has a tendency to protect itself partly by how it bends perceptions (which is a nasty by-product of a key virtue, highlighting what is important and setting aside what isn’t important), and partly by how it co-opts personal identity and then propels aggressive defensiveness of self. We have also noted that perspectives can be modestly or even fundamentally flawed and need to be regularly reassessed in light of experience and reasoned challenge, and very likely updated periodically as well with additions, refinements, or perhaps even more fundamental changes.

What would it mean to have a participatory growth oriented theory in institutional practice? It would mean that one’s institutions - and now we are presumably talking about the organizations aimed at social change, which we will think about in book two and three of Fanfare - should continually assess and reassess theory and all other components of political beliefs and practices.

This means, in turn, that there should be roles in our social change institutions that compel actors to engage in continual challenges, to seek out doubts and concerns, to give skeptics space and resources to make a case, to take all such cases very seriously - and to even hope that they prove successful in inducing changes. Rather than always feeling vindicated and uplifted if a criticism is wrong, individuals, and even the collective population of the

organization, instead feel a bit let down when criticisms are shown to be wrong, because it means a chance at improvement led nowhere new.

Again, as with personally rebutting tendencies to sectarianism, this collective stance is not easy. We will see the kinds of internal structures it implies later in book two and three of *Fanfare*, when we have a better picture of vision and strategy and thus of some of the organizational requisites for carrying through a strategy to attain a vision.

Contending Extremes

“Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play.”
- Immanuel Kant

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, “An ounce of action is worth a ton of theory.” His meaning was that theory is in texts, it is uttered, and it is often abstract. If you want to see outcomes, however, you must act. And of course his observation is in some respects apt and accurate.

However, there is another meaning one could attach to his wisdom. Forget theory, let’s get on with doing things. This is a widespread sentiment which also has at least some, but now much less, validity. Theory is, we cannot deny, often just a lot of noise, empty blathering, and even when theory is sound, one can bandy it about well beyond what insight requires. However, this reasonable observation often gets taken beyond rightful applicability to a feeling that theory is just plain junk. In this view, thought is little more than a brake on action. We must go go go.

When one author, Michael, was first becoming socially and politically active back in the 1960s, we used to have a name for folks with this inclination. We called them, and I was sometimes pretty close to the stance myself, the action faction. Get moving, dammit. “Do it,” as the wondrously clever Abbie Hoffman put it.

But here is the thing. If you act without concepts and ideas considered carefully - then you might as well be a tractor as a

person. Our most prized asset, when trying to do things, is our minds. Getting so frustrated as to turn our minds off or ignore them, diminishes prospects for success. The action faction needs to slow down, just a little, to legitimately exercise the mind.

Erma Bombeck, an American newspaper columnist/satirist who was often more insightful than most highly schooled academics, once wrote, "I have a theory about the human mind. A brain is a lot like a computer. It will only take so many facts, and then it will go on overload and blow up." My guess is she was venting about show off intellectuals who would parade fact after fact, while nothing ever got done. In the sixties we called this syndrome the "paralysis of analysis." It often took the form of beating a topic into dust even when one didn't actually have the knowledge, tools, or insights - and in fact nobody did - to get much beyond a serious but reasonably rapid assessment and judgement. It also typically embodied much preening and prancing by people with lots of training, which is to say lots of vocabulary, but not necessarily with much on the ball. This was the opposite pole to the action faction. Slow down. Slower. Slower still. Wait. Reconsider. Let's debate that again. I must have my say, again. The paralysis of analysis.

As an antidote to mindless action, excessive debate goes from the frying pan into the fire, and the same goes for mindless action providing an antidote to excessive debate. Both extremes miss the real point. If you have theory, okay, good. But theory isn't everything. Combine it with experience, don't bury experience. If you are eager to act, okay, good. But action isn't everything. Combine it with theory. Think and act. Act and think. Either of these without the other is a recipe for disaster.

Conclusion

"Tact is the knack of making a point without making an enemy. "
- Isaac Newton

We can summarize our thoughts about theory quite quickly, not least because they are all utterly obvious once enunciated. The

issue with these observations isn't difficulty of conception, but difficulty of implementation.

First, we realize that theory is good. We need it to get at relevant truths, aims, and methods. Thus we develop and continually utilize and refine diverse concepts.

We do not get caught up in posturing about concepts and their relations, making believe they are more subtle or complex than, in truth, they are. Rather, we put a great premium on making our thoughts as clear as we can by making our concepts and the relations among our concepts congenial to people. Indeed, we mistrust obscurity in the realm of social change comprehension and action.

We use our theory - our conceptual toolbox - but we do not abuse it. We assume it always can be and needs to be better. We welcome critique and hope for wise and valid improvements. Personally we admire ourselves not for our views but for our willingness to hear contrary views, truly understand them, and when need be, to adopt them in place of, or as refinements of, what we thought before. To be right is nice. To become more right is nicer. In the words of the French philosopher Joseph Joubert, "It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it."

We believe in analysis. We believe in action. We combine the two without unduly privileging either.

With the above postures in place (as best we can implement them), and with our concepts of societal functions, four social spheres, two contexts, institutions and roles, institutional boundary and human center, familiar critical constituencies for change (and the new three class rather than two class conception), adapted insights from prior feminist, nationalist/intercommunalist, anarchist, and anti capitalist stances, and the added ideas of accommodation and co-reproduction, all in hand, we are ready to proceed to issues of vision and then strategy.