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Leila Kincaid

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Path to Utopia:
Shifting Consciousness from Derangement to Entanglement in the Anthropocene -
How Capitalism is a World Destroyer and Love Can Save Us

Leila Kincaid

School of Consciousness and Transformation, California Institute of Integral Studies

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Abstract

The way to survive in the Anthropocene and transform the world is to end capitalism. Humanity must stop commodifying everything and reifying its value for consumption for the sake of power and survival. The way to do this is through love. This is an inquiry into methods and processes for confronting and transforming the planetary destruction caused by capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism among other phenomena. This paper challenges the idea that it is unrealistic to believe that love can change the world. It posits that loving is caring and caring is the way humanity will shift consciousness so that capitalism is no longer the dominant politico-economic paradigm. That is the key. If we care, no one will go hungry, homeless, or without what they need. Racial injustice, sexual violence, the maldistribution of wealth and resources, famine, and so many of the world's ails can be radically halted if there is a critical mass of human beings caring enough to do something about it. If we care, no one will be murdered, discriminated against, exploited, starved, and oppressed. This love as a revolution to end capitalism and champion human rights and the welfare of all of Earth's living systems must be a movement that generates momentum to catalyze change. This shift in consciousness occurs individually and collectively in order for global transformation of human created systems from Hell on Earth to a global, loving social utopia.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Capitalism, Collapsology, Consciousness, Feminism, Love, Marxism, Patriarchy, Patriarchy, Political Philosophy, Transformation, Utopia

Shifting Consciousness from Derangement to Entanglement in the Anthropocene: How Capitalism is a World Destroyer and Love Can Save Us

Living in the world today seems, in some ways, like living in hell on Earth. Forests are burning, the climate is in chaos, water and soil is polluted, society is plagued by the maldistribution of wealth and resources that leaves ten percent of the global population in famine (Roberts, 2008), and racial and sexual violence plague every corner of the planet. Add to that the reality that a mere mistake can lead us to planetary devastation by nuclear bombs, making it clear that something has gone wrong. Larry Ward, Founder and Director of the *Lotus Institute*, says “it is no wonder people are killing themselves, because they are tuned into this seeming ‘death urge’ of humanity”, and we are living in “a debris field of the collapse of post-colonial society” (2022). Global suicide rates from the *World Health Organization* for 2021 showed that three quarters of a million people killed themselves (2022). They estimate that for every successful suicide, twenty more are attempted. This points to the overwhelming grief and suffering that humanity is experiencing in the face of the global catastrophes that characterize the Anthropocene era – in which humanity has become a planetary force (for good or bad) that impacts everything on Earth through its socio-politico-economic systems. Catherine Keller speaks of humanity’s convulsions “into irreversible anthropogenic harm” (2022). In short, capitalism is a state of derangement by which human beings and Earth’s living systems experience suffering and death. How can we realize that we are ultimately and undeniably entangled with one another and the planet’s living systems so that we will shift the way we live to care for Earth’s biosphere and create a better reality? Caring enough will eventually lead to ending capitalism and creating a global social utopia in which everyone gets what they need and has the freedom to flourish.

From Derangement to Entanglement

To the extent that realities in our world seem hellish, we are invited to ask how we can transform reality so that we are living in a utopian reality rather than a hellish one. My argument is not only dialectical and historical, but it is also existentially necessitated. As global citizens, we can wake up to the reality of our entanglement with one another and commit to the ethical imperative of love as a way to confront the many global catastrophes that threaten our very survival. Living in a time characterized by the apotheosis of forces started with the Copernican revolution and the disenchantment that came with it means we carry a burden that both cobbles us and empowers us. The realization that we are not the center of the universe and, later, that God is dead (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 1882, p. 187), and we are relegated to a cacophonous relativity of meaning in a possibly infinite universe based on randomization and chaos, has brought us to this point. As a species, humanity might be wounded enough to make bad choices and not rise to this moment, but we might be egotistical enough to think we can save the world. Will we rise or will we perish? This is the crucible upon which we will yield or wield our anthropocenic power.

Jaime Lorimer (2017) describes the Anthropocene as a scientific proposal that Earth has entered a new epoch as a result of human activity in which humans are a planetary force that is destroying Earth's living systems. Living in the Anthropocene requires that we think "beyond the type of technical, 'solutions-orientated' and 'deficit-model' forms of knowledge practice" (p. 133) and invoke an integral, holistic approach to figuring out how to face the challenges of our time. We are called to mobilize around the scientific question of where we are and how we got here and engage in a new intellectual *Zeitgeist* around this issue where upstarts can create ideological provocation, and new ontologies emerge, like Sean Kelly's *Gaianthropocene* hypothesis (2021,

p. 10-12), and collapsologists decrying our broken alienating systems. Lorimer suggested that science fiction can offer a way to “parse” the diversity we find ourselves in and understand interactions between different ways of thinking, as a sort of answer to our entanglement with each other. Living on the planet with a variety of species, lifestyles, and viewpoints can create chaos and something must arise that merges our cause for survival. I say that something is love. Perhaps this is what Lorimer meant when she described the “plasticity of the Anthropocene” that “enables generative discourse across ‘trans contextual tangles’ of contemporary political ecologies” (Lorimer, 2017, p. 118). By engaging in dialog with one another, across communities and disciplines, we can discover and create new ways of understanding ourselves as cohabitants on planet Earth, on Gaia, and co-creating new realities characterized by the flourishing of love, beauty, and joy. The consciousness that grasps our entanglement will lead us from derangement to love.

Ontological Entanglement and Love as an Ethical Imperative

In seeking to find the grail to save humanity and Gaia from the forces of the anthropocene, Kelly (2021) posits his “Gaianthropocene” hypothesis, which is an epoch in which we “awaken to our deeper nature as living members of Gaia, the living Earth (p.30). By critiquing the Anthropocene as anthropocentric and stuck in technological and Newtonian dualism, he calls for an end to capitalism as part of this necessary endeavor (of shifting our consciousness so that we embrace our oneness with the planet). I really love his inspired view of where we are headed. By couching our common origin and shared destiny as inextricably linked to Gaia, he invites and inspires us to consider our ultimate entanglement with and responsibility for, not only each other, but for Gaia herself. It is through the lens of thinkers like Lorimer and Kelly that I situate the

path to utopia squarely at an intersection of awakening to our inextricable interconnectedness and entanglement, embracing love as an ethical imperative, and ending capitalism. Philosophers like Kelly, in a long line of critics of capitalism from Karl Marx and Max Weber to Silvia Federici and Noam Chomsky, urge us to understand the dehumanizing effects of capitalism and how they prevent human freedom and actualization.

Freedom, Ending Capitalism, and Facing The Bully Archetype

In centering human emancipation and freedom in the context of ending capitalism, Federici, Segato, and others take up the torch lit by Marx and offer it as a path to utopia. People balk at exhortations to Marx and the evils of capitalism, but the arguments in favor of a Marxist lens through which to understand the crises of our times that have caused hell on Earth stand strong, clear, and true in the face of empty objections which are usually driven by the indoctrinated into the orthodoxy of capitalism.

One of the most controversial dialogues of political philosophy pervades every corner of our life, and concerns the ideal structure of socio-economic political systems. The psychology of economics impacts our entire planet to the extent that capitalism commodifies everything, even our thoughts, our breaths, and our seconds. Marx dedicated over four decades of his life writing to this end. He sought to articulate the nature of the relationship between these systems and their participants, and we can well learn from him now as we grapple with how to transform our planet into a place where all Earth's inhabitants and living systems can flourish and co-habitate.

At the center of confusion about Marxism is that people are brainwashed into thinking that capitalism is freedom. They confuse economic free markets with human freedom, and the ideal implicit in Marx's philosophy is human freedom or emancipation. Human emancipation is that

which enables authentic human activity, what Marx referred to as "species-activity" (Marx, 2000, pp. 81-2). I do not think we will be able to end capitalism if we cannot deprogram human consciousness from the belief that capitalism is inextricably linked to and even a guarantee of their freedom and emancipation. Emancipation is defined as freedom from restraint and as liberation (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). It is important to discuss Marx in the context of addressing the many planetary crises we face because capitalism causes them all. And it is important to discuss capitalism in the context of freedom and emancipation because human beings need freedom and emancipation and have mistaken capitalism as their champion to that end. A false avatar and an empty idol. This is something Nietzsche wrote a lot about. While he was not specifically critiquing capitalism, he equates the same forces that cause the sin of Christianity as the same that cause a master to enslave another, or for one to be forced to work in order to eat (Kaufman, *Twilight of the Idols*, 1954 p. 500).

Marx (*The German Ideology*, 2000) distinguishes political freedom/emancipation from human freedom/emancipation by delineating the qualities which characterize them. Political freedom, viewed in political life as "rights," consists in rights in a society as a citizen of that society; and in connection to the forms of government and economics, as rights within these systems (i.e., the right to private property, and the activities of free market, etc.) within a free market economy. Human rights, according to Marx, are individual rights, such as freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, and the freedom to engage in the activities which the individual deems gratifying a contingency of the happiness of the individual (pp. 51-52). This true, or authentic, kind of emancipation or freedom is the ideal state of species-activity for Marx, where the activity is self-fulfilling; activity which aims toward self-actualization or realization. In *The German Ideology*, written with Friedrich Engels and

published posthumously, Marx said that self-actualization is activity which human beings do when they are truly free (Marx et al., 1970, pp.177-179).

For Marx, there had not yet been a political system which yielded human emancipation. His socio-political criticisms dig deep into the labyrinth of political thought by asking how society can create real human emancipation. He describes the relationship between the individual and the existing system in which it participates as alienating. The activities and ends to which the individual is bound are not necessarily the activities and ends that the individual esteems. He wrote: "Alienated labor alienates man from himself" (Marx, *The German Ideology*, p. 81). Labor is alienating in a capitalist society in the following ways:

1. The product that the laborer creates is not his own; he gives away what he makes in exchange for money (p. 118).
2. The work the laborer engages in is usually not the work he would choose to do -he only does it to make a living and strive toward something more satisfying.
3. The individual in a capitalist society is either exploited by or competes with his fellow man -he is not treated as a human being by his fellow men, but merely as an exchange value (p. 120).
4. The laborer is cut off from an enjoyment of nature because he is constantly struggling to meet the needs it creates--subsistence needs (pp. 80-82; p. 84).

It is in this way that all emancipation is mere political emancipation. It is a breed of freedom "not based on the union of man with man, but on the separation of man from man" (*Selected Writings*, 2000, p. 53). A market economy creates inhumane relationships in the sense that it inheres a dog-eat-dog, each man for himself sense of human conduct. The laborer in a capitalist system is deprived of engaging in activity for its own sake. Rather, all of his activity is reduced to the fulfillment of his

subsistence needs. It indicates the participation in, and upholding of, a system that undermines the quality of life, and relinquishes all possible means to real emancipation. Material/political emancipation, in this sense, is not human emancipation. This is where confusion occurs in human consciousness about capitalism and freedom, and creates a vehement disdain for Marxist philosophy and ideals. It is here where what I call the *Bully Archetype* rears its head at those who would undermine, question, or challenge its darling sword and slayer, Capitalism. The *Bully Archetype* is a state of human consciousness that has given rise to the world's ills and is the subject of my doctoral research.

Referring to the systemic relationship of alienation to market economies, Marx (*Selected Writings*, 2000) elucidated the sense of freedom that they elicit as merely political. Politics can be understood as the psychology of economics where politicians make laws and decisions about the use, manufacture, and distribution of wealth and resources according to their financial influences and interests. Economics is politically and practically applied as the right to private property. Political freedom is seen as free enterprise, as the freedom to buy, sell, and own at everyone else's expense. It is an interest developed for the individual, not based on a concern for the welfare of others, but on the personal desires of the individual, at the *expense* of others (pp.232-3). To Marx, this sort of economic freedom implies a doctrine of selfishness. It supports the right to selfishness and even elevates it to the status of virtue by calling it freedom, independence, and individuality (p. 234). He explained that it is the tendency of capitalist society to deify money (p. 114). Jacob Needleman (1991/1994) wrote about this when he talked about capitalism as an ontological argument for the proof of worth in society -he who has the most money is valuable, and thus, good. Marx (*The German Ideology*) described this as “the complete domination of the estranged thing *over* man has become evident in *money*” (p. 118). It is in this way that money separates man from his true nature (pp. 109-111). This form of

materialism is a testament to the existential vacuum created by and inherent in a capitalist society. In this way, it alienates the citizens who work in it and denies them any real emancipation or freedom. So, the people who think they are free fight for the thing that keeps them in chains. Until we can help shift consciousness to understand this, we will not transform hell on Earth and forge a path to utopia.

Political emancipation, in this sense, is the reduction of man (Marx, *Selected Writings*, pp. 53, 57). It does not offer the human being true freedom, but only the illusion of freedom. The right to own private property and pursue economic gains is equated, in market economy-based societies, with freedom, liberty, and independence; freedom and independence viewed as a necessary result of free market economy (pp. 232-233.) It is the glorification of the selfishness manifested by greed. Marx thought that "the only wheels political economy sets into motion are greed and war among the greedy, competition" (p. 77). Man, when forced to engage in wage labor, finds himself dehumanized: He is reduced to an exchange value -man as mere value in a market, and not as being valuable *in itself* (p. 117). This myth of freedom is created by market economies. It is a necessary inducement to its participants; one which keeps them complacent and accepting of the status quo. It is only by awakening from this belief, by questioning the implications of the sense in which freedom is used by capitalists, that the individuals in a free-market economy can find true freedom, real emancipation. The class of people who realize their condition as that of subjugation to a system, as steeped in myth -a myth which separates them from their true being (species-being) and who act to change the conditions of their material existence- make up what Marx called the proletariat (p. 230). It is the proletariat who, by demanding that changes be made in the structure of society, create the communist revolution.

The communist revolution is possible when one class of people, the proletariat, breaks away from the oppression of another class of people, the bourgeoisie. Marx (*The Communist Manifesto*, in

Selected Writings) described the history of all society as the history of this class struggle; it is the struggle between the oppressing and the oppressed classes (pp. 223,230.) This struggle is about the difference in defining freedom. For the bourgeoisie, freedom is hailed as economic freedom (p. 233). For the proletariat, freedom is more philosophical; it is freedom as freedom of conscience, and of activity - as equal access and enjoyment of the natural resources, products, and wealth of a society, created by the participants, and equally shared by them. It is the freedom of thought, to create thought and art, and to define the value of oneself outside of the market -as more than mere exchange value (*The German Ideology*, p. 169).

Marx (*The Communist Manifesto*, in *Selected Writings*) sees the tendency of market economies to organize toward the unequal distribution of these resources, products and wealth; where the property owning few have the largest share of capital, and thus control and determine the economic lifestyle for the needy many (p. 225). It is a relationship of subjugation. This relationship of subjugation is furthered by the creation of laws and social values that support the assumption that free market means free human activity (p. 223). Marx believed that "it is an unconscionable freedom" (p. 223). Everyone in a free-market economy is forced to work in order to survive, unless they are born or married into wealth, inherit wealth, or are lucky enough to find themselves in a position which gives them more control over the economic conditions of their lives. But for the majority of the people in a market economy-based society there is a constant struggle to make ends meet, and a dichotomy between the energy and time they spend working and the things they wish to dedicate this energy and time to. Throughout history those in control of the resources and wealth of a society -the economic structure- also control the political structure, which influences the social structure. Thus, they make laws that protect their right to private property and all varieties of commerce. The remaining agents of society are mere slaves. In other words, they are the labor force of the system which is created by the

dominating class (pp. 224-226). The situation they are forced into is alienating in the sense that the workers spend their time and energy engaging in activity that does not directly benefit the workers, but rather, it benefits the people in charge, who stand to gain from the production of products or services provided by the labor force. The wages earned doing this labor are usually barely enough to provide for the subsistence needs of the labor force, which keeps them in a constant state of frustration. They are too busy working just to make ends meet, creating goods or services that are not their own; they do not rightfully own what they create, nor do they have the rights to the profit which is gained by them (p. 232).

Further, this type of labor is alienating in the sense that the members of the labor force do not have the time to pursue their personal interests and engage in their choice of activity. Hence, they are not free to do the things which they desire to do--they are not emancipated. The form of emancipation the peoples of a free-market economy enjoy is a political notion of freedom; it is not the freedom which human beings truly lust for. Political emancipation is even unliberating. It makes people answerable to a system to which they are bound and does not lend them the freedom to choose the conditions of their lives. The only way this class of people can overcome this false sense of emancipation -mere political emancipation- and the alienation inherent in the nature of their working conditions is by becoming conscious of it. The class aware of its oppression, the proletariat, can change its living conditions, its state of unauthentic emancipation, by understanding the forces that oppress it. By realizing the disproportionate distribution of wealth and resources that have alienated the working class, they can work to overcome these forces of oppression.

The contention of many is that Marx's interpretation of the state of market economies, of Capitalist societies, is distorted, reactionary, and extreme. And there are a great many people who think that the problems and crises of certain communist countries today is proof that Marx was wrong

in his analysis of capitalism. But I think that Marx offered some valuable and incisive insights into the nature of capitalist systems, because he explored the implications and consequences of its assumptions regarding human values and human life. His interpretation of capitalism offers an alternative view of our, modern American, society; one that we are not usually taught in schools or think about on a daily basis, as he unveils an aspect of our lives, our interactions with and participation in a capitalist society, that is perhaps critical to our true understanding of ourselves; this insight can facilitate the overcoming of many of the social and economic ails that are experienced in our society today.

To Each According to their Need as an Ethics of Care

An underlying message in Marx's writings is that a society should take care of its people. The people should have a proportionate share of what they create and of the profits which ensue from the work that they do. Ideally, the government should provide laws and assume an economic structure that takes from each according to their ability and gives to each according to their need (Marx et al., *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1970, p. 169). This is the economic model for socialist countries that provide health care, education, and basic core rights to their citizens, as in Norway, Sweden, France, and Argentina, for example. The idea that it is wrong to give people what they need seems to be the assumption that most of us operate on in our daily lives, at least under capitalism, and it is the source of much of our unhappiness and why we have hell on Earth. The selfish one-eyed Cyclops of capitalism each man for him selfness. By selfness I mean an orientation of attitude and consciousness that is solely concerned with the survival of the self, and not for the welfare of the collective. Capitalism capitalizes on the self-obsessed.

Speaking to the way we can move into a new consciousness and transform the world, Amitav Ghosh (2016) called for a “passage from ignorance to knowledge” as we address the “Arc of the Great Acceleration” by recognizing that we must embrace a sense of the sacred in our climate activism. Citing Pope Francis’s recent homily for climate consciousness, the *Laudato si’* (praise be to you), Ghosh suggested that we can find the spirit to address climate change by adapting a religious sensibility in our quest. He says that “organizations with religious affiliations possess the ability to mobilize people in far greater numbers than any others” in part because “they do not partake of economistic ways of thinking” (p. 158).

One thing is certain: Capitalism is killing us. The way to survive and transform the world is to end capitalism. We simply must stop commodifying everything and then reifying its value for consumption. The Anthropocene, as described by Lorimer (2017), is the scientific proposal that the Earth has entered a new epoch as a result of human activities. By naming the phenomenon that is killing us (my words) the Anthro-not-seen, Lorimer cited De la Cadena’s description as “the long, undistinguished history and colonial present of the ‘war waged against world-making practices that ignore the separation of entities into nature and culture’” (p. 134). With capitalism preventing the crucial mission of stopping climate catastrophe by commodifying resources and processes that harm our environment, humanity is left in the rubble of this “cannibal” process by which capitalism commodifies everything and thereby undermines any value other than monetary, suggests political theorist Nancy Fraser (2018). “We face several crises at once: in the economy, in social reproduction, in the environment, and in politics. Without dramatic change we may” perish (p. 138). Echoing this sentiment about cannibal nature of capitalism and the climate crisis, Ghosh (2016) affirms that, “one of the reasons why climate change is a ‘wicked’ as opposed to a ‘normal’ problem is that the time horizon in which effective

action can be taken is very narrow: every year that passes without a drastic reduction in global emissions makes catastrophe more certain” (p. 157). Jennifer Wells (2017) noted that “the modern worldview also co-evolved with and co-produced harms—the Columbian exchange, capitalism, white supremacy, genocide, slavery, and settler colonialism (p. 10). One of the great harms is the commodification of everything so that human life can be extracted away from its primacy of being and reified as a fetishized product that can be discarded, harmed, and murdered.

Methods of Transformation

How do we change the world? Artists and imaginaries everywhere are envisioning the way we change, painting pictures of utopias, and creatively engaging in protest, demonstration and vocalization about the schism of our collapse and the vision of our rebirth and transformation as a societal entity. There are political and artistic movements, including environmental activist/artists and filmmakers, that are attempting to do this. Through art and care, social imaginaries are calling on us to wake up and change the way we live on the planet. A powerful method of transformation is based on love and joy. Finding a joy in the chaos of this world, a Utopia to rest in, summon, create together, is part of the call in the Anthropocene era. Whether we summon it within ourselves individually, or gather and collectively summon forth joy, reverence, a celebration of beauty and engage with love, it is a clear path, an endless resource, a homing beacon toward creating a new global social utopia, yes, to creating heaven on Earth. Heeding the call of Silvia Federici (2021), who fervently insists that we must have joy in our protests and activism and revolutions, or they will not succeed, I think we can recognize, as Hiromi Tango (2017) knows, that beauty (as in the colors of the rainbow she celebrates in her

art) can not only cheer us up and bring us joy, but also help us change the world. We can stop exploiting, harming, and killing each other and transform our planet to a beautiful, joyous world and this cannot happen without ending capitalism (Federici, 2020).

In this dystopic reality in which racism, sexism, classism, otherism, materialism and numerous other isms dominate our systems, institutions, communities, and relationships, how can we heal what has become broken in us, as individuals and collectively, so that we can emerge from the dystopic reality into a utopia social reality for all? Etienne Turpin and Heather Davis (2014) observed:

“the possibility of extinction has always been a latent figure in the textual production and archives; but the current sense of depletion, decay, mutation and exhaustion calls for new modes of address, new styles of publishing and authoring, and new formats and speeds of distribution (2014, 5).

Love, Gaian Consciousness, and Visions of Utopia

A way that many seem to think is our best course is through love and all its various expressions: equanimity, gratitude, care, responsibility, empathy, oneness, connection, and more. Ward (2002) says that in order to create a new world, and forge the path to Utopia, we must heal our trauma through systems like poly vagal theory created Dr. Stephen Porges (2001), and we must see the way through this chaos and discord to embrace our entanglement with love, -which leads to care, regard, taking responsibility, working toward transformation consciousness and holding the vision of utopia. We must embrace environmentalism, anti-racism and racial justice, eco-feminism, Gaia consciousness, wealth and resource equality and redistribution, ending capitalism, ending patriarchy, the right to free food, access to clean water, universal health care, availability of education, and safe housing. We must strive to live in a way that comes from the deep, ultimate care for others, including all beings on the planet (and off-planet), and commit to

caring about the needs of others while learning and knowing how to take care of our own, because we are one and ultimately connected. How do we change the world? Artists and imaginaries everywhere are envisioning the way we change, painting pictures of utopias, and creatively engaging in protest, demonstration and vocalization about the schism of our collapse and the vision of our rebirth and transformation as a societal entity. Individuals and communities around the world are trying to do this. Through art and care, social imaginaries are calling on us to wake up and change the way we live on the planet. A powerful method of transformation is based on love and joy. Finding a joy in the chaos of this world, a utopia to rest in, summon, and create together, is part of the call of the Anthropocene era. Whether we summon it within ourselves individually, or gather and collectively summon forth joy, reverence, a celebration of beauty and a way of living characterized by love, it is a clear path, an endless resource, a homing beacon toward creating a new global social utopia, indeed, the creation of heaven on Earth. I believe that through embracing the reality of our interconnectedness with each other, with Gaia, and even with the Cosmos, we can awaken a sense of love and awe which will lead to a shift in the way we live on Earth. We will stop exploiting, harming, and killing each other and transform our planet into a beautiful, joyous world, which can only happen with an end to capitalism.

In considering methods of transformation that can help us as we strive to shift from dystopia to utopia, any method of transformation must recognize love as a capacity of human evolution and a vital component of creating a real global utopia. One framework that has enormous power to influence and transform consciousness is the medium of film, as a powerful representation of ideas, form, and experience. The mytho-poetic noosphere -Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's (1964) sphere of thought that envelopes Earth- emanates from movies in a powerful coup de gras that operates usually below the level of conscious awareness in the viewer. Nicole

Seymour (2018) discussed the power of film to affect and shift consciousness and uses films like Mike Judge's (2006) *Idiocracy* to analyze and understand not only how film can mirror consciousness, but also how it can influence it by shaping our epistemologies and worldviews, our sense of right and wrong, and even our very ideas of reality itself. A film that satirizes a level of unconsciousness about our humanity and place in the world, *Idiocracy* asked us to see ourselves and change. It deftly predicted the state we live in now, with consumerism, climate crisis, and bigotry as a triad of 'de'-values that characterize our society. Does film have the capacity to shift consciousness? Will this art wake us up? This art that mocks and mirrors our reality has the potential to trigger a shift in consciousness, but it is also lost on those given to shallow humor and unconscious consumption of entertainment (Seymour, 2018).

Shifts in Consciousness

In Erik Olin Wright's (2011) work, he showed how a shift in consciousness is vital for creating a new society, but I wonder if we can do it. Silvia Federici and Rita Laura Segato (2016) talk about how to manifest social change, and I think it is important to listen to these two great women teachers of our time. They say we must march, demonstrate, and boycott. Fiercely embracing Marx's critique of capitalism as dehumanizing, they both teach us that not only must we demand and fight for an end to capitalism, but we must also actively transform patriarchal consciousness and embrace an integral consciousness akin to the etiological consciousness studies of Gebser, Combs, Wilber, and Kelly. Ending capitalism, to Federici and Segato, is the only way to prevent our current hell on Earth from ending life as we know it and creating a global utopia in which everyone is guaranteed to get what they need and given the opportunity to contribute what they can (Marx, 1970).

Overthrowing capitalism is one of the most immediately necessary ways to bring about a new world, as is challenging and transforming patriarchy. We need to commit collectively to living by and establishing a vow to protect human rights, ensure racial justice and equality, and defend women's rights as a vital part of protecting all life. Any method of organizing a global transformation will focus on and elevate life-affirming, life-sustaining systems that champion human rights and materialize concrete methods of protecting and nourishing all life. This type of movement is based on love as an evolutionary capacity to care. Without it, we will die.

Thom van Dooren, Eben Kirksey, and Ursula Münster (2016) told us that we can learn about how to create a better world through turning our attention to non-human systems in our ecology. By seeing how turtles, trees, and systems work in the natural world, we can get a sense of the communal co-creating and adapting drives that help natural systems and habitats survive and thrive. Amitav Ghosh (2016) similarly observed:

I would like to believe that out of this struggle will be born a generation that will be able to look upon the world with clearer eyes than those that preceded it; that they will be able to transcend the isolation in which humanity was entrapped in the time of its derangement (p. 159)

The question is, will we be able to transcend this state?

We cannot transcend the hell on Earth we live in as a result of the Anthropocene era, until we realize we are connected. Realization of our ultimate interconnectedness is the root philosophy of Hindu and Buddhist religions. It is the core of Sean Kelly's Gaian Consciousness, and what Jennifer Wells (2013) discusses in her book on complexity and sustainability. She characterized human beings as "entirely dependent on nature" and proposes that our survival as a species depends on our realization of this interconnectedness with Earth and all its living systems (p. 322). A crucial key to transforming the current hell on Earth is by realizing our oneness with planet Earth and its systems, biomes, and habitats, by embracing Gaian Consciousness. In order

to traverse the path to Utopia, we must be responsive to the fact of our oneness with nature and realize that we are entangled with the planet and with each other.

Love as a Capacity of Evolution

What are we talking about as we move from the great derangement to a great untanglement toward oneness, toward home? We are talking about love. Love, care, and inclusivity drive the way we organize our lives through discipline as a dharma and praxis based on the faith that we can create a beautiful world regardless of whether history of humanity proves otherwise. If we are lost, our way to be found is through love. Ending capitalism is an act of love. Our lostness comes from the way capitalism others. It creates a system of objectification, commodification, alienation, and dehumanization under patriarchal norms and ways of looking at reality. The epistemology that capitalism perpetuates is that everything can be relegated to monetary, material value, and this is the height of degradation, of the lack of sacredness, of hell. The truth is that we are animals and we do need survival and transformation as a matter of addressing our needs in ever increasingly complex hierarchies. But we are not merely material. We are, as Teilhard de Chardin says, spirits having a material experience. How, as spirits in this material world, will we transform society to a global social utopia? Silvia Federici and Rita Laura Segato teach us that protests work, marching works, demonstrations work, and gathering in collectives and creating public commons within which we can gather as collectives all work toward creating change. Le Guin (1985), like Federici, said that we must end statehood: “In a State, even a democracy, where power is hierarchic, how can you prevent the storage of information from becoming yet another source of power to the powerful—another piston in the great machine?” (p. 376). She even talked about owning and hoarding as unethical behavior, and

there is a great minimalist, non-consumerism movement happening as part of the Extinction Rebellion and environmental justice movements. In a Utopian society, everyone gets what they need and this reality is created through an ethics of care that is surely part of our evolutionary capacity.

Taking Heart, Hope and Kinship in the Chthulucene

Donna Haraway (2015) wrote that we must come together as co-creative kin, entangled with each other in what I call CosmoGaian ontology, to face the challenges wrought by the Chthulucene in which a voracious and hoarding capitalist fear mongering consciousness dominates and threatens to destroy the world. She talked about seeking kin and taking heart in the face of apocalypse. We can take heart from the brave environmental activists (2022) gluing themselves to DaVinci's *Last Supper* at the Milan Museum and to Boticelli's *Birth of Venus* at the Galleria Degli Uffiz in Italy. We can find hope in seeing works of art like the *Plastic Bottles Sculpture* at the UN in Lisbon. As part of a street festival for raising awareness about the need to stop using plastic, this piece of art reminds us that our plastic, flush toilet assumption that Philip Slater (1970) says is going to kill us. As George Lipsitz (2007) instructs, we have to teach and write and talk in ways that do more than create "ever more eloquent or ever more indigent condemnations of other people's suffering without doing anything about the suffering" (xiv). People taking direct action to make a change is what really matters.

Figure 1



UN Beat Plastic Pollution Installation Sculpture. In the public domain.

Figure 2



No New Oil Activists at the Milan Museum. In the public domain.

Survival Through Consciousness of Interconnectedness

Adrienne Marie Brown (2022) felt that one way we can transform society is in finding “the wounded places in” our communities, “where thinking and action are stagnant” and “bring the medicine of imagination”. She wrote that we can ensure collective survival through interconnectedness. Sean Kelly echoes her call, and so many others agree that only by reclaiming our oneness with the planet, with our mother, Gaia, and by realizing and affirming our connection to each other as a global family, can we overcome that which divides, harms, oppresses, and dehumanizes us and transform our world (Kelly, 2021). While some write nonfiction admonitions, others, like Ursula Le Guin (1985), showed us how to imagine a utopian world like the one she dreams into being in her spellbinding *Always Coming Home*. There are so many people, so many resources available to us to help us learn to embrace our fate as mortals, love each other, claim the planet as our home, and transform the world! The great elders of the Incan people of South America invite us to become Earthkeepers, making a sacred oath to embrace Gaia as our sacred Mother, and join together as a family that takes care of her and each other (Viloldo. 2000). How can we invite art and spark our imaginations (individually and collectively) to reclaim our birthright as creators of reality, and contribute to dreaming a new world into being, in the wisdom of the shaman of Indigenous peoples studied by so many, including Mircea Eliade, Alberto Viloldo, Michael Harner, Dr. Angeles Arrien)? Each of them teach that our transformation comes about through love. In her anthropological research of the wisdom of several cultures throughout history, Arrien (1993) identified the way of the healer as that “which pays attention to heart”. Indeed, the call of our time is for healers to pay attention that that which has heart, which I interpret as an expression of love, to chart our path to utopia.

As we envision the transformation of society, and reach toward a more just, humane world, I keep coming back to the essential question: What do people need? I think it seems obvious that a real global utopia is characterized by a reality in which everyone has their needs met. It is simple, yet the world we live in today is not organized that way. Everywhere, we have starving, oppressed, sick, unhoused, harmed people because our systems are not designed to give people what they need. This is one of the problems with capitalism and how it is dehumanizing. By commodifying everything and forcing everyone to exchange their life energy for life subsistence, people are abstracted away from the immediacy of their being. Silvia Federici talks a lot about this, and how we are distracted and forced into a competition and oppressed state in which everyone is working just to eat, just to pay medical bills, just to have a roof over their head and how we are not living free lives of dignity. We are not empowered or encouraged or given the resources to actualize our potentials in this rat race of dog-eat-dog dynamics. Giving people what they need -food, shelter, health care, education, housing, personal dignity, and freedom from harm is an essential part of utopian society. Part of this includes the abolishment of the police state and prison industrial system of oppression and dehumanization. It includes anti-racist education and dialogue in the commons. It includes replacing elected officials with those who champion these values. It includes changing the economy and redistributing wealth and resources so that no one goes without what they need.

The transition to a global utopia requires that we give people food, housing, education, healthcare, resources, support, training, encouragement, dignity, respect, care, and love. Wayne Roberts suggests that we can be “guided by a global and long-term perspective toward transforming ‘food systems’ (2008, 9), which will shift the way we address and manage food systems so that we do not live in a commoditized, alienated, and catastrophically unhealthy

relationship to food? Not only must we care enough to make sure everyone gets adequate nutrition, but we must give everyone what they need to live healthy lives characterized by dignity, love, and self-actualization. Can we abolish capitalism and create humane society so that prisons and police are no longer sensical mechanisms within society? Can we give everyone the food, shelter, health care, education, and resources they need? How do we do that? Who are people we can join and work with to bring about the dismantling of capitalism and the creation of a new world based on love? As social imaginaries, we recognize that we are in a state of entanglement, and this can be our dharma, our practice, and our way of transforming society.

Hope and Re-Enchantment

Part of this transformation of society from hell to heaven on Earth and paving the way to Utopia amidst the rubble of the collapse of post-colonial society, requires that we do not despair and that we maintain hope, the active hope that Joanna Macy and Christ Johnstone (2012) Mariame Kaba (2012) talked about. Hope is feckless without action and responsibility, Macy and Kaba teach us. This is what I think of when I read Jemma Deer (2021) and her ideas about decentering and rescaling, relativizing and deeply realizing ourselves as relatives of all life, marrying the rational with the unconscious, and restoring animism. By decentering our capitalist, patriarchal obsession and embracing the entire living Gaian system and all her inhabitants as part of ourselves and our family and calling upon the entirety of human imagination and intelligence, and reconnecting to and sacredizing Earth, we can and will create this new world. We cannot simply talk about it, though, as Silvia Federici proclaimed: "We must march, we must demand and force change" (2021).

If hope is not enough to create this new world, Ward believes that re-enchantment with the world will help us create heaven on Earth. Perhaps, through finding, as he suggests, a connection to the planet by going out into nature and connecting to others by doing work that shows care and love, we can find a way to become re-encharnted with the world and climb out of the dark hole of the disencharnted hell that so often characterizes modern life under capitalism. Eric Olin Wright (2011) made the following observation:

Symbiotic strategies of emancipatory transformation imply that movements in the direction of a long-term metamorphosis of social structures and institutions in a democratic egalitarian direction is facilitated when increasing social empowerment can be linked to effective social problem-solving in ways that also serve the interests of elites and dominant classes. (p. 252)

I see this as a description of the way we must find, collectively, a way to reshape our social structures in accord with social empowerment and end the separation of classes by a redistribution of wealth and resources so that non go without. I find an echo in Sean Kelly's (2010) work when he announced that we are on a threshold of a new planetary wisdom culture in which we work as a whole toward collective wellness. Indeed, the only way we can conquer capitalism, the world destroyer, is by embracing love as our natural state, and individually and collectively using love as an imperative to change the world.

Ultimately, we are in this together and we must look out for each other—and that is the hard part, and perhaps the real utopia—so we can stop hating each other enough to harm and kill. By embracing each other as a part of us, and finding a deep love and care, we can change. Without it, we will perish. Yes, our path to utopia is forged on the path of love, which entails care, compassion, empathy, gratitude, equanimity, and healing our individual and collective trauma, cultivating an appreciation for nature, and engaging the realization of our interdependence and entanglement with it each other, with nature, the planet, and the Cosmos.

An answer to being lost is realizing that, as Ursula Le Guin (1985) suggests, we are always coming home to the moment. It captures the Zen wisdom to “be here now.” According to Le Guin, “What was and what may be lie, like children whose faces we cannot see, in the arms of silence. All we have is here, now” (p. 10). The only reality that exists is now now, now, and part of our transformation includes embracing what is, and sensing that deep, intrepid sense of our oneness to all and the joy that arises in this knowing.

This sense of interconnectedness and joy can catalyze a consciousness shift in humanity so that, individually and collectively, we will take action to reorganize the way we live on the planet to bring about societal transformation. Perhaps the path to Utopia, to our true orientation on the planet, with what Sean Kelly calls Gaian consciousness, is paved through the cultivation of gratitude, equanimity, and a deep sense of care that begets responsibility for Earth and all her inhabitants and systems (often referred to as Gaia). Traversing the path to utopia can lead us to reshape our lives, make inspired and love-informed choices, and take necessary actions to change the world. Through embracing our connection to each other and the planet, by embracing Gaian consciousness and claiming our rightful place here in reality, and doing so with love, hope, and creative imagination, in community, with patience, and a sense of the sacredness of now, we can shift society and create a new global utopia.

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