

# Conscious vs mechanical evolution: transcending biocentrist social ontologies

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**Abstract:** This article expounds a new theory of humanity that problematizes the discrete, biomaterialist and materially rational individual of Modernity through sensitivity to the human potential for Conscious Evolution [evolution of the ‘invisible self’, which is to say the cultivation of reason, free will, intuition and the other ‘high epistemological faculties’ that allow humans to actualize the potential for self-mediation of the biological desires and animal (irrational) passions]. After defining Conscious Evolution, comparing it with Mechanical Evolution and providing a brief overview of the epistemological processes involved in Conscious Evolution, we examine the ways in which Modernism axiomatically, logically and practically negates the potential for Conscious Evolution and self-mediation as well as the manifestations of this negation in Modernist epistemology and Modernist social systems like Economic Theology or ‘the police’ that, due to their biomaterialist understanding of humans as discrete, biological, materially rational individuals, aim to mediate biological desires and animal passions through external, forceful, hierarchical domination rather than the cultivation of Conscious Evolution and subsequent actualization of the potential for self-mediation. This critique of epistemological and social systems that seek to *create* order through external, forceful, hierarchical domination sets the stage for a follow up paper titled “Conscious Evolution, Social Development and Environmental Justice” that critiques contemporary Planning Theory and Practice and calls for planning of social systems from a theoretical perspective where seeking to cultivate Conscious Evolution and the actualization of the social order implicit in the self-mediation made potential by Conscious Evolution is possible (which is to say that (r)evolution of theory must precede (r)evolution of practice).

**Keywords:** Conscious Evolution, Modernity

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## 1. Introduction

The birth of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s ‘Biological Man’ from the primatology labs, natural history museums and general ‘world view’ of the United States in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century observed by Haraway (1989), which is to say the ‘secularization’ of the axioms and logics by which humans were rendered as biomaterialist individuals isolated by Foucault (1990), lead western society to ‘know humans’ as essentially

discrete, biological, materially rational beings (as, first and foremost, a *body*). Mind was reduced to being caused by and contained within matter just as reality and its first cause were reduced to passing time and physical space (i.e., the world of motion) (Barnesmoore, 2016). In short, as Modernism began to erase the eternal (what Spinoza (2002) termed Infinite Substance, which in its infinite dimensional quality is incommensurable with the world of motion to which Modernism reduces reality) from the public ‘world

view' received through popular culture, state education, mass media discourse, political discourse, etc. Humanity began to *forget how to remember* their intimacy with eternal dimensions of self (i.e., with the *simplest* and most *universal* aspects of reality from which Descartes (2002) argued that the rational process must rise).

This biomaterial reduction of humanity to discrete, biological, materially rational individuals has had many woeful social and intellectual consequences, but the most problematic may come in the way that it has expanded and constrained potential conceptions of evolutionary theory (and thus, conceptions of human telos). Reduced to biology, humans are understood as simply 'another rung' in the hierarchies of domination produced by the finite reality of passing time and physical space, scarcity and subsequent desire for competition and hierarchical domination that fuels *Mechanical Evolution*. As a result, and following the form of antecedents like Christianity that assumed 'evil human nature' was to be brought into order through forceful, hierarchical domination, Modernism develops social systems like 'the police', 'the courts' and 'the prison' under the assumption that order in human society can only be produced through hierarchical domination (as seen when 'irrational life' is faced with scarcity). This article endeavors to provide a new theory of humanity (of human evolution and social order in particular) by eschewing the dogma of Modernity's conception of humans as essentially discrete, biological, materially rational individuals and returning to a more traditional cosmology wherein Infinite Substance is the first cause (the origin of humanity's essence) upon which the rest of reality is ontologically dependent, where humans are understood as an emanation of Infinite Substance and where humanity is thus understood as a conscious being with a self-subsistent reality (with regard to matter) that is manifest in a biological vessel (upon which it thus has no essential ontological dependence). This is in contrast to the Modernist assumption that 'mind' is produced by and ontologically dependent upon 'Body'.

We begin with an exploration of Ouspensky's (1951) distinction between conscious and Mechanical Evolution and then transition to discussion of humanity's potential for *Conscious Evolution* and subsequent potential for self-mediation of the biological desires and animal (irrational) passions that give force to the form of *Mechanical Evolution* (i.e., subsequent potential for social order without the hierarchical domination of *Mechanical Evolution*). From here we eluci-

date the epistemological cultivation (the cultivation of the *invisible self*) of which Conscious Evolution consists as well as the connections between epistemology and the potential for ethical action (in the case of this study mediation of the biological desires and animal passions) in the virtue ethics tradition through an examination of Zhuang Zi's (1968; 2004) Daoist Psychology and the term 'Wu-Wei'. From here we examine conceptions of order in the Modernist epistemology and the axiomatic foundation of Economic Theology (its conceptions of humans and its conception of order in manifestation) in order to illustrate the ways in which Modernism actively negates the potential for Conscious Evolution by reducing humans to discrete, biological, materially rational individuals and relegating Infinite Substance to the sphere of unreality (madness). Finally, we conclude with reflections on the relationship between humanity's *potential* for Conscious Evolution and the *potential* for social development. These concluding remarks set the stage for a follow up paper "Conscious Evolution, Social Development and Environmental Justice" that examines the influence of conceptions of humanity as discrete, biological, materially rational individuals and paternalist conceptions of order as created through external, hierarchical domination upon Modernist Social Science Theory and Practice (as expressed in Planning Theory and Practice) and argues that a revolution against the practices of Modernity must be rooted in a revolution against the axioms and associated logics that structure the potential for practice in Modernity (which is to say that a (r)evolution of theory, especially as it pertains to the nature of humanity, must precede a (r)evolution of social practice if it is to be truly revolutionary).

## 2. Conscious vs. Mechanical Evolution

In his *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution*, P.D. Ouspensky (1951) argues that we must distinguish between mechanical and Conscious Evolution.

"As regards ordinary modern views on the origin of man and his previous evolution I must say at once that they cannot be accepted. .... We must deny any possibility of future *Mechanical Evolution* of man; that is, evolution happening by itself according to laws of heredity and selection, and without man's conscious efforts [toward] and understanding of his possible evolution."

"Our fundamental idea shall be that man as we kn-

ow him *is not a completed being*; that nature develops him only up to a certain point and then leaves him, either to develop further, *by his own* efforts and devices, or to live and die such as he was born, or to degenerate and lose capacity for development.

Evolution of man in this case will mean the development of certain *inner* qualities and features which usually remain undeveloped, *and cannot develop by themselves.*" (Ouspensky 1951, pp.7–8)

In short, Ouspensky is arguing that the potential for epistemological evolution divorces humanity from the inevitable, temporal, biological process of *Mechanical Evolution*. We argue that this also divorces humanity from necessary, reflexive articulation by the form of *Mechanical Evolution* (by material scarcity and the subsequent desire for competition and hierarchical domination). Following a Platonic line of epistemological reasoning, we take 'the development of inner qualities and features' as a process of remembrance (of Self and our implicit intimacy with Infinite Substance — 'ascension to a dimension where self is only Self', the Infinite Substance).

Similarly, Haraway (1989) argues:

"...For Darwin's widely read narratives in the nineteenth century, many people in the twentieth century Euro-centric west pay evolutionary physical anthropology the homage of their assumptions. What has been *read* from fossils and simians becomes common sense, becomes the foundation of other stories in other fields constituting what can count as experience. Evolutionary theory is a form of imaginary history.... ...Imaginary history is the stuff out of which experience becomes possible." (Haraway 1989, p.188)

Haraway highlights the ways in which our imagination of humans as discrete, biological, materially rational individuals who are thus necessarily subject to reflexive articulation by the form of Mechanical Evolution influences 'stories in other fields' like Social Science Theory (where it is therefore assumed that social order must be produced through the same desire for hierarchical domination that produces order in the 'society' of biological life confined by a lack of reason to the form of Mechanical Evolution). It is thus that we have systems like neoliberal capitalism that work to produce social order through competition and order through forceful, hierarchical modes of domination like 'the police', 'the courts', 'the prison', etc. As we see below, socialization in systems of thought and pra-

ctice predicated on competition, forceful-hierarchical domination and the associated axioms-logics that reduce humans to a discrete, biological individuals actually negate the potential for Conscious Evolution.

Once humans develop the capacity for reason and thus free will [i.e., will that is not reflexively articulated by external stimuli (Mill 1869)], evolution shifts from a *biological* to an *epistemological* process. The selection of biological traits over time and space no longer guides the evolution of humanity (which is to say that physical motion is no longer the force turning the wheel of evolution and that the natural environment is no longer the basis of adaptation). Instead, free will provides the force by which the epistemological wheel of Conscious Evolution turns and culture (which is to say the axioms, logics, ideas, educational practices, access to education, etc. of a given society) provides the environment of adaptation.

### 3. Epistemology of Conscious Evolution

"The environmental crisis [of Modernism] requires not simply rhetoric or cosmetic solutions but a death and rebirth of modern man and his worldview. Man need not be and in fact cannot be "reinvented" as some have claimed, but he must be reborn.... ...The world of nature must once again be conceived as it has always been — a sacred realm reflecting the divine creative energies." Nasr (1996, p.6)

Meng Zi's tale of 'The Old Man from Song' (2A2) is most illustrative concerning the conceptions of epistemological cultivation (of 'creating the order of knowledge') that typify Modernism (and conceptions of order in the paternalist tradition more generally). The man from Song goes into the fields one night to help his crops grow by pulling on the young sprouts — in the morning his family walks out into the field to find all of the plants dead. In short, this story critiques the Paternalist notion that order in nature is to be *created* through forceful, hierarchical domination by arguing that *order is implicit in nature* (and the Infinite Substance from which the order of nature is derived); instead of order, such attempts at domination cause only death (which is to say the decay of order from the perspective of biological life). Taken to the epistemological level and Paternalist notions of Conscious Evolution (prior to the 'secularization' of Paternalism in Modernism and total loss of sensitivity to the potential for intimacy with Infinite Substance and Conscious Evolution therein), this is the charioteer of

Plato's (1792) *Phaedrus* attempting to *dominate* the noble and ignoble horses or the Rational *dominating* the Spirited and Appetitive in Plato's (2006) *The Republic*. As we see below, the Rational Citizens and Charioteer are reduced to a peripatetic husk that 'dominates' (creates order-knowledge) biological desire and the animal passions through acquisition and systematization (hierarchical categorization and materially rational theorization) of *facts* rather than through intimacy with the Infinite Substance and its emanations (force, form and consciousness) by the discrete, biological, materially rational reduction of humanity in Modernity, but the basic notion that order is to be produced through hierarchical domination is retained.

Descartes (2002) provides us with a model of reason that elucidates the human potential for Conscious Evolution and the subsequent potential for social order as self-regulated via intimacy with Infinite Substance (which is to say the potential for a free society that transcends the external domination of Mechanical Evolution). For Descartes, the rational process must be founded upon a 'clear and distinct perception of' (intimacy with) the 'simplest and most universal' aspect of reality (which is to say with Infinite Substance, which is simplest in its infinite and thus unitary dimensional quality (*Spinoza, Emendation of the Intellect*) and most universal in its omnipresence). The simplest and most universal aspect of a perfect circle, for example, is not the mathematical equation used to symbolize it or the atom used in necessarily failed attempts to bring it into manifestation, but the self-subsistent, eternal, invisible Truth (the idea) symbolized by the equation (i.e., the aeonian form that *is* perfect circle, that all manifest circles *emulate*). Reason, then, can be understood as the capacity to know the world from the perspective of the eternal, unmoving 'bedrock' of reality (from the perspective of intimacy with Infinite Substance and its emanations); the foundation of reason is the unchanging Truth of Infinite Substance rather than Facts (which are Truth with motion). In comparison with the Materialist conception of reason, the cultivation of reason (of the order of knowledge) in Descartes' model is a process of inward cultivation (of cultivating intimacy with the 'invisible self') rather than of external domination by facts and their hierarchical categorization and materially rational theorization.

"24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the

rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every [Modernist]... that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand[s of Time]: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matthew 7: 24-27, KJV)

Foucault's (1970) work on knowledge as resemblance in *The Order of Things* also elucidates a model of reason founded upon sympathetic intimacy with the 'invisible self' (the conflation of Infinite Substance and 'Invisible Self' is not accidental and points to 'the central mystery' of human existence...). Knowledge as resemblance of *convenience* rises from a shared environment of manifestation. Knowledge as resemblance of *emulation* rises from two manifestations of the same form, force or mode of consciousness. Knowledge as resemblance of *analogy* compares what is known about an environment (convenience) with what is known about the forms manifesting in an environment (emulation) in order to extract the 'essence' of form and environment. Knowledge as resemblance of *sympathy* takes what is 'known by reason' about environments of *convenience* and forms of *emulation* and brings it to bear in a single, silent, intuitive movement of 'mind' (which in silence is as much emotive, a feeling, as it is intellectual, a thought). In this light, Conscious Evolution can be understood as the cultivation sympathy with Infinite Substance (the 'invisible self') that allows for knowledge as resemblance of sympathy (for rational knowledge).

#### 4. Virtue Epistemology

The Daoist Virtue Epistemology of Zhuang Zi illustrates the connection between intimacy with Infinite Substance and behavior beyond the constraints of the peripatetic mind, biological desires and animal passions. First, the story of Cook Ting:

"Cook Ting was cutting up an ox for Lord Wen-hui. As every touch of his hand, every heave of his shoulder, every move of his feet, every thrust of his knee — zip! zoop! He slithered the knife along with a zing, and all was in perfect rhythm, as though he were performing the dance of the Mulberry Grove or keeping time to the Ching-shou music.

"Ah, this is marvelous!" said Lord Wen-hui. "Im-

agine skill reaching such heights!"

Cook Ting laid down his knife and replied, "What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now — now I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and following things as they are. So I never touch the smallest ligament or tendon, much less a main joint.

"A good cook changes his knife once a year — because he cuts. A mediocre cook changes his knife once a month — because he hacks. I've had this knife of mine for nineteen years and I've cut up thousands of oxen with it, and yet the blade is as good as though it had just come from the grindstone. There are spaces between the joints, and the blade of the knife has really no thickness. If you insert what has no thickness into such spaces, then there's plenty of room — more than enough for the blade to play about it. That's why after nineteen years the blade of my knife is still as good as when it first came from the grindstone."

However, whenever I come to a complicated place, I size up the difficulties, tell myself to watch out and be careful, keep my eyes on what I'm doing, work very slowly, and move the knife with the greatest subtlety, until — flop! the whole thing comes apart like a clod of earth crumbling to the ground. I stand there holding the knife and look all around me, completely satisfied and reluctant to move on, and then I wipe off the knife and put it away."

Excellent!" said Lord Wen-hui. "I have heard the words of Cook Ting and learned how to care for life!"

(Zi Z 1968, pp.50–51)

Second, the story of Khing the Carver:

"Khing, the master carver, made a bell stand  
Of precious wood.  
When it was finished,  
All who saw it were astounded.  
They said it must be  
The work of spirits.

The Prince of Lu said to the master carver:  
"What is your secret?"

Khing replied: "I am only a workman:  
I have no secret. There is only this:  
When I began to think about the work you  
Commanded  
I guarded my spirit, did not expend it  
On trifles, that were not to the point.  
I fasted in order to set  
My heart at rest.  
After three days fasting,  
I had forgotten gain and success.  
After five days  
I had forgotten praise or criticism.  
After seven days I had forgotten my body  
With all its limbs."

"By this time all thought of your Highness  
And of the court had faded away.  
All that might distract me from the work  
Had vanished.  
I was collected in the single thought  
Of the bell stand."

"Then I went to the forest  
To see the trees in their own natural state.  
When the right tree appeared before my eyes,  
The bell stand also appeared in it, clearly, beyond  
doubt.

All I had to do was to put forth my hand and begin.  
"If I had not met this particular tree  
There would have been No bell stand at all.  
"What happened?  
My own collected thought  
Encountered the hidden potential in the wood;  
From this live encounter came the work  
Which you ascribe to the spirits."  
(Zi Z 2004, pp.127–128)

Both Cook Ting and Khing the Carver transcend attempts at ordered action through domination (through external imposition of form upon the Ox or the Tree) and instead act intuitively from the perspective of sympathetic intimacy with the forms emanated by Infinite Substance (with the implicit order of the Ox and the Tree derived from Infinite Substance). This silent mode intuitive thought via sympathy with Infinite Substance is called Wu-Wei (effortless action, non-action, action without action, etc.) in the Daoist

Tradition. Wu-Wei can be defined as action that is silently and thus atemporally enlivened by what Foucault termed knowledge as resemblance of *sympathy* (which is to say rationally intuitive action enlivened by a clear and distinct perception of or intimacy with Infinite Substance and its emanations). In Wu-Wei, there are no decisions, only action enlivened by sympathy with the force, form, consciousness and the implicit desire for harmony (manifest as the natural trend to equilibrium in passing time and physical space) that enliven the prima materia to form our sensorially experienced reality.

The question, then, is how do we come into intimacy with Infinite Substance? Intellectual reflection, ecstatic experience, silent meditation, extrasensory experience and ‘remembrance’ are but a few of the routes to intimacy that have been posited through the centuries, but this is a question for the study of mysticism and goes beyond the scope of this inquiry. More generally, and returning to the topic at hand in this inquiry, the question becomes how do we create a social organization that expands potentials for actualizing the potential for intimacy with the infinite and Conscious Evolution pursued by mystics? The best way to begin answering this question of social planning with the intention of cultivating intimacy at the social scale (given the banality of ‘world view’ for the Modernist subject) may be to problematize the axioms and associated logics of Modernism (i.e., we must problematize the axioms and associated logics-practices of the Modernist society that negate the potential for intimacy with Infinite Substance before we can begin to understand, let alone pursue, the development of a society that is oriented towards fostering cultivation of intimacy with Infinite Substance). For example (as we mentioned above), Modernism ‘builds the house of reason’ upon the sands of time (upon Facts) and posits the only barriers to reason as access to facts and the analytic-peripatetic capacity for systemization (hierarchical categorization of facts and materially rational theorization); in defining reason as process founded upon Facts (Truth with motion) rather than a process founded upon Truth (Infinite Substance) and thus constrains the potential for Conscious Evolution by intimating that Conscious Evolution (epistemological cultivation) consists of an attempt to accumulate and systematize facts rather than remembering and thus cultivating intimacy with the ‘Invisible Self’ (and thus Infinite Substance).

## 5. History of Modernism: Axiomatic Negation of Potential for Conscious Evolution

### 5.1 Birth of Modernity

Foucault’s (1970) *The Order of Things* observes the birth of ‘Modernist Order’ from the ashes of ‘knowledge as resemblance’. Barnesmoore (2016) argues that the shift isolated by Foucault can be described as a shift from order as implicit potential to be actualized within manifest reality (manifest in the resemblance of convenience, emulation, analogy and sympathy) to order as something that is bereft from and thus must be imposed upon manifestation. The order of knowledge is no longer derived from the implicit order of resemblance, and instead is to be *created* through dominating facts with hierarchical modes of classification (Foucault 1970; Barnesmoore 2016). Recalling our notes on epistemology above, this is the move from the order of knowledge (reason) as recollection and expression (Wu-Wei) of intimacy with Infinite Substance to the order of knowledge as created through peripatetic domination of facts by hierarchical categories and materially rational theorization (i.e., the move from infinite substance to facts as the foundation of the rational process). This move to ‘creating the order of knowledge *within time*’ through forceful, external, hierarchical domination is (like the Modernist impetus create social order through forceful, external, hierarchical domination) necessitated by the reduction of reality to passing time and physical space and the relegation of the Infinite Substance from which the implicit order of reality rises to the sphere of unreality (and thus madness) implicit in said reduction of reality. Having denied the existence of any reality, intelligence or order beyond passing time and physical space (the ‘Newtonian world’), Humanity now takes itself as the progenitor (first cause) of ‘order’ in the accepted reality of manifestation as ‘chaos’. In short, are motion, change, difference and the subsequent notion of ‘chance’ a product of chaos (a lack of order) or the expression of the implicit order of manifestation that allows the infinite (being) to enter into the finite world (the world of becoming)?

### 5.2 Biological Dominance in Modernist Evolutionary Theory

Foucault (1977) observes the ‘discovery’ of “evolution in terms of ‘progress’” at the social level and “evolution in terms of ‘genesis’” at the individual level” — “a macro- and a micro-physics of power” which crys-

talized the potential for “the integration of temporal, unitary, continuous, cumulative dimension in the exercise of controls and the practice of dominations” (Foucault 1977, p.160). In this discovery, “the ‘dynamics’ of continuous evolutions tends to replace the ‘dynasties’ of solemn events” (Foucault 1977, p.161). The continuous dynamic evolution of biology replaces the solemnity of epistemological evolution. At the heart of the microphysics of power defined as the genesis of the individual by Foucault is exercise, which “imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated” and thus “[bends] behavior towards a terminal state... [making] possible a perpetual characterization of the individual either in relation to this term, in relation to other individuals, or in relation to a type of itinerary... [assuring]... growth... observation... [and] qualification” (Foucault 1977, p.161). Exercise (ritual), then, attempts to externally impose temporal order (both in daily life and in the sense of a linear progression towards a fixed teleological imperative) upon the ‘chaos’ of the individual whose time has not been systematized.

Foucault makes an interesting note on the origins of exercise as the mechanism for disciplining time:

“The brothers of common life... strongly inspired Ruysbroek and Rhenish mysticism... transposed certain of the spiritual techniques to education... of clerks... of magistrates and merchants: the theme of a perfection towards which the exemplary master guides the pupil became with them that of an authoritarian perfection of the pupils by the teacher; the ever increasing rigorous exercises that the ascetic life proposed became tasks of increasing complexity that marked the gradual acquisition of knowledge and good behaviour; the striving of the whole community towards salvation became the collective permanent competition of individuals being classified in relation to one another... In its mystical or ascetic form, exercise was a way of ordering earthly time for the conquest of salvation. It was gradually, in the history of the West, to change direction while preserving certain of its characteristics; it served to economize the time of life, to accumulate it in a useful form and to exercise power over men through the mediation of time arranged in this way. Exercise, having become an element in the political technology of the body and of duration, does not culminate in a beyond, but tends toward a subjection that has never reached its limit.” (Foucault 1977, pp.161–162)

Whereas the systematization of time was originally

a tool for cultivating intimacy with Infinite Substance (‘the conquest of salvation’) and the potential for self-mediation of the biological desires and animal passions implicit therein (though admittedly a tool that can still fall into Paternalist notions of order as domination depending on how it is rationalized), Modernism has transformed the systematization of time into a technique for external, hierarchical imposition of social order (which is to say a technique of domination and subjugation rather than liberation). In short, the goal of facilitating transcendence of time gave way to the goal of trapping individuals in time (and thus irrationality and the form of Mechanical Evolution). This movement encapsulates the shift of Bio-Paternalism from Abrahamic Religion (which accepts the existence of Infinite Substance and thus the potential for conscious evolution) to Modernist Science (which denies the existence of Infinite Substance and thus the potential for conscious evolution).

### 5.3 Paternalism and Economic Theology

In his recent *Global Frontiers of Social Development in Theory and Practice*, Brij Mohan (2015, p. xxiii) argued, “in a material world, economy is king.” For the purposes of this article, we flip this notion on its head and argue that matter is king in an economic world (view), which is to say that the axioms and associated logics of Modernism and its Economic Theology work to render matter as king (in reducing reality to a material world). Reality is reduced to matter, and matter is king (the first cause upon which all realities are ontologically dependent, the basis of reason — Fact is rendered as Truth).

Bio-paternalism can be understood through two related axioms:

1. Order is to be *created* within and imposed upon the finite world of time (motion).
2. Order is to be created through external, hierarchical domination.

As we noted above this bio-paternalist ethos (and the implicit limitations therein) is demonstratively illustrated in Meng Zi’s (2A2) tale of ‘The Old Man From Song’ Returning to human evolutionary theory, this insight can be restated as ‘beings capable of Conscious Evolution have their own order, and attempts to impute the order of Mechanical Evolution upon beings capable of Conscious Evolution produces a decay of order (devolution).’ As we see below, Economic Theology is blind to this insight and attempts to impute the order of Mechanical Evolution upon human so-

ciety through external, hierarchical domination rather than through attempts to actualize humanity's implicit order of Conscious Evolution; as with the old man from song, all that is reaped through such attempts at external, hierarchical imposition of order is devolution.

Economic Theology, the archetypal Modernist expression of Paternalism, can be understood through a single, multifarious axiom:

- 1.1 'Reality' is reduced to passing time and physical space.
- 1.2 Matter is the first cause, and all of reality is contained within passing time, physical space and their associated dimensional qualities (motion, 'chance', change, difference, etc.).
- 1.3 Humans are essentially discrete, biological and individuals.
- 1.4 Matter produces and contains mind — 'practice precedes theory'. Mind is produced by and contained within the brain (the brain produces consciousness rather than as acting as a vessel for consciousness).
- 1.5 Human epistemology is a purely material process of dominating facts with hierarchical categorization and materially rational theorization.
- 1.6 The human telos lies in material production and survival, in the competition and hierarchal domination that turns the wheel of Mechanical Evolution (selection) — in the survival of the species...
- 1.7 Human success, virtue, meaning, etc. comes in the success of 1.6.
- 1.8 Meaning-value is articulated in purely material terms, in number, letter, speech and other modes of quantification, which is to say that the basis of meaning-value is 'fact' (motion) as Truth (Infinite Substance) has been relegated to the sphere of unreality.
- 1.9 The world is necessarily Nihilistic in of 1.8. Meaning-value is articulated by fact, which, in being typified by the qualities of motion ('chance', change and difference) lacks eternity and thus the potential for truth and meaning-value. Without Eternity, there is no Truth (for there is no eternal standard to articulate Truth), and if there is no Truth there can be no meaning-value (as Truth is the Eternal standard upon which we articulate the meaning-value of manifestation).
- 1.10 Human Evolution is a biological process explained controlled by the form of Mechanical

Evolution.

- 1.11 Social Evolution, which in the modernist 'world view' is to say the imposition of social order upon (creation of social order within) the 'chaos' of the biological desires and animal passions, is to be attained through external, hierarchal domination by 'the police', 'the courts', 'the market', etc.

"Idealism and matter of fact are... not sundered, but inseparable, as our daily steps are guided by ideals of direction." (Geddes 1915, p.vii) The ideals of Bio-Paternalist Modernism, as expressed in the axioms of Economic Theology, define humans (and reality in general) in a manner that relegates the Infinite Substance (let alone intimacy with the Infinite Substance) to the sphere of unreality, irrationality and thus madness — these ideals guide our steps in reality towards epistemological cultivation through accumulation of facts and material goods rather than experiences and ideas.

Free Will is a necessary element of conscious evolution. Conscious Evolution (remembering intimacy with Infinite Substance) cannot be rationalized from the 'world view' established by the axioms of Economic Theology. Free Will is dependent on reason (i.e., we cannot direct free will without rationalization). As such, Economic Theology's 'world view' negates the potential for conscious evolution through negating the potential for rationalization of (and thus for turning Free Will toward) Infinite Substance or the human potential for remembrance of our implicit intimacy with Infinite Substance and the actualization of the potential for self-mediation of the biological desires and animal passions therein (i.e., our capacity for Conscious Evolution).

#### **5.4 Scarcity, Competition and Hierarchal Domination: The Unreasoned 'Social Order' of Trees & Algorithms**

Trees and Algorithms provide us with useful metaphors for understanding true relationship between scarcity and the desire for hierarchal domination and competition in 'beings' that lack reason. Trees grow straight up when there is direct sunlight. It is only when sunlight becomes *scarce* that plants begin to grow (via an internal impetus reflexively-instinctually actualized by external environment) over each other in order to *compete* for sunlight (i.e., scarcity brings on the desire for hierarchal domination and competition). Interestingly, the only other context in which



Trees don't grow straight up and down is when form is imposed upon them by external forces like wind (which can be likened to Modernist social systems that seek to produce social order through external domination by military and police 'forces'). Plants only seek to dominate each other in environments of scarcity.

For an algorithmic example of the above metaphor, a computer program designed by Karl Sims (1994a; 1994b) to replicate the process of Mechanical Evolution in the digital sphere demonstrates the ways in which scarcity works to produce the desire for hierarchical domination and competition. In the digital simulation, a being is 'selected' for survival and continued evolution by capturing and possessing a green cube located between the being and its 'opponent'. At a certain point, beings in the simulation stopped evolving in a manner that allowed them to simply move to the cube quickly and instead began to evolve in a manner that allowed beings to prevent the competitor from getting to the cube that allowed beings putting the cube in a place where the competitor cannot reach it (Sims 1994a; 1994b; 1994c). Again, however, we see that scarcity and discrete individuality are the causal factors in producing the desire for hierarchical domination and competition. In this light, we argue that social systems like Capitalism (especially Neoliberal Capitalism) that were designed (based on biomaterialist, discrete conceptions of humanity and subsequent conceptions of human evolution as purely mechanical) to produce social evolution through scarcity, competition and hierarchical domination actually work to socialize humans in (and thus constrain human thought, behavior and conception of being to) a mode that negates the potential for conscious evolution, self-mediation of the biological desires and the animal passions and thus causes 'devolution' or a 'decay of conscious social order' (which is to say decay of intimacy with Infinite Substance and thus reason).

### 5.5 The Rise of Systems Theory

The birth of the discrete, biomaterialist individual of Modernism may be most clearly illustrated in the shift from Carl Akeley's taxidermy and the 'Eugenics Model' of the American Museum of Natural History to attempts by Robert Yerkes to produce consciousness in primates via technical means and the Rockefeller Foundation's 'Systems Engineering Model':

“‘Man’s curiosity and desire to control his world [(the desire for hierarchical domination)] impel him

to study living things”. With that banal but crucial assertion about the foundation of human rationality in the will to power [over the world of motion], Yerkes opened his book. For him the tap root of science is the aim to control. The full consequences of that teleology become apparent only in the sciences of mind and behavior, where natural object and designed product reflect each other in the infinite regress of face-to-face mirrors, ground by the law of Hegel’s master-servant dialectic....

.... Since the first and final object of Yerkes’s interest was the human being, the pinnacle of evolutionary processes, where the structure of *domination of brain over body was most complete*, greatest curiosity and utility were centered on natural objects yielding greatest self-knowledge and self-control.” (Haraway 1989, pp.61–62)

Evolution can no longer be conceptualized in terms of intimacy with Infinite Substance. Instead, Conscious Evolution is in a sense reduced to cultivation of Material Reason in the form of Mechanical Evolution (i.e., individual and social evolution is reduced to hierarchical domination of body by brain produced by competition between body and brain. Indeed (as we saw above), the order of knowledge in Modernity was to be *created* by dominating facts with hierarchical classification and materially rational theorization, meaning that human evolution to be a process of brain *dominating* body and the cultivation of mind was to be a process of discernment and classification *dominating* facts (again, creation rather than actualization of potential). In short, rather than Conscious Evolution through turning the will towards cultivating intimacy with Infinite Substance and its emanations (an actualization of latent order), the ideals of Modernism reduce Conscious Evolution to a mode of Mechanical Evolution involving the domination of facts and body by the brain and thus lead our 'steps in everyday life' away from the path of Conscious Evolution (i.e., one is lead to believe that accumulating facts rather than fostering intimacy with 'the silence' is the route to epistemological cultivation, which is to say an individual is lead to accept the assumption that 'some day we will have all the Facts, and then we will know the Truth').

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Definitional Constraints

“Silence itself — the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers — is less the absolute limit

of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies.” (Foucault 1990, p.27)

To understand the power of a definition we must understand the potentials negated therein — if the human is a discrete, biological individual, what is it therefore not? We argue that the Modernist definition of humanity as a discrete, biological entity (Foucault, *History of Sexuality VI*) negates the potential for Conscious Evolution in defining humans in a manner that eschews the ‘invisible’ dimension of self. If reality consists of passing time and physical space, then Infinite Substance is necessarily relegated to the sphere of unreality (madness). Modernism, then, negates the potential for Conscious Evolution by framing Infinite Substance (and thus intimacy with Infinite Substance) upon which reason and Wu-Wei must be founded as a figment of the insane imagination. We must redefine humanity and reality in terms that are sensitive to Infinite Substance and humanity’s potential for Conscious Evolution if we are going to have the (r)evolution of theory (‘world view’, ‘mind’, consciousness) necessary for the development of social systems (for the planning of social order) that will socialize the public in a manner that expands potential for Conscious Evolution (and thus social development and ethical outcomes like environmental justice).

Moving from a conception of humans as beings with the potential for Conscious Evolution, it is clear that the desire for hierarchical domination and the forceful expressions of this desire (the motions) that turn the wheel of Mechanical Evolution are not necessary for human evolution or existence. Indeed, shedding the desire for hierarchical domination through coming to ‘know thy self’ can be viewed as one of the first steps (or maybe the product of one of the first steps...) on the path of Conscious Evolution (which is to say the path of cultivating the higher potentials of human consciousness and transcending force for reason). As we mention force and reason, the irony of Latour claiming to not be Modernist and then attempting to simply extinguish the distinction between force and reason (which of course is an expression of the axiomatic root of the Modernist reduction of mind to matter) is prescient in the context of this discussion and the Modern academy’s inability to aptly study and combat the shared axioms of Paternalist Religion and Paternalist Science (which of course

renders them unable to combat the class oppression that is rendered possible/publically legitimated by via said shared axioms). Modern human social systems socialize the general public in a manner that constrains their potential to transcend the form of Mechanical Evolution and then use their being trapped within the form of Mechanical Evolution (and its associated norms of irrational thought, behavior and conception of being, which are oriented towards forceful, hierarchical domination) as evidence to legitimate public domination by the very authoritarian social systems of hierarchical domination that socialized them (which is to say that the evidence legitimating authoritarian social structures is ontologically dependent upon the very same authoritarian social structure and to say that authoritarian social structures are not ontologically dependent on human nature but instead upon perversion and privation in the actualization of human nature — authoritarianism is produced by a smudge in the mirror rather than by the light being reflected...). In other words, humanity is reduced through academic theory, education, media discourse, political rhetoric, etc. to a biomaterialist conception that is necessarily trapped within the form of Mechanical Evolution in order to legitimize social systems designed based on logic derived from the form of Mechanical Evolution (which is to say social systems designed based on the assumption that competition and forceful, hierarchical domination creates, rather than actualizes, order).

## 6.2 Implications for Social Planning

Modernist social systems like Economic Theology or ‘the police’ that, due to their biomaterialist understanding of humans as discrete, biological individuals, aim to mediate biological desires through external, forceful, hierarchical domination rather than the cultivation of Conscious Evolution and subsequent actualization of the potential for self-mediation must be abandoned for social systems that actively foster Conscious Evolution. As we argue in our follow up paper “Conscious Evolution, Social Development and Environmental Justice”, to create the potential for planning such social systems (which eschew the biomaterialist notions of social order implicit in the Paternalist tradition and its Modernist iteration) we must first develop a ‘world view’ (an ontology) in which Conscious Evolution is possible. Change towards fostering Conscious Evolution in the *practice* of social planning must, in short, be preceded by moving away from the dogma of Modernism (especially the reduc-

tion of reality to passing time and physical space, the notion that social order is created within manifestation through hierarchical domination, the reduction of mind to matter, etc.) towards an ontology and *theory* of social planning in which it is possible to even conceive of social systems oriented towards fostering Conscious Evolution (which is to say outside the logic of Mechanical Evolution and the biological individual).

To put it another way, Conscious Evolution unlocks the potential for reason and thus free will, which thus allows humans to mediate their own biological desires. In a society oriented towards actualizing the potential for Conscious Evolution, there will be no need for external, hierarchical domination by ‘the market’, ‘the military’, ‘the police’, ‘the courts’ or ‘the prison’ as consciously evolved beings can mediate their own biological desires without recourse to force and domination. We must therefore throw off social systems like Modernism that socialize people into a ‘world view’ that constrains (if not negates) the potential for Conscious Evolution and then uses this ontologically dependent state of being to dominate the subsequently

unreasoned expression of biological desire through external forces like ‘the market’, ‘the police’ and ‘the courts’ (which produce an environment of physical competition that compounds socialization in the Modernist ‘world view’), and instead plan social systems from the perspective of a ‘world view’ that is sensitive to the human potential for Conscious Evolution and self-mediation and accepts Infinite Substance with which we must recall our intimacy to facilitate the process of Conscious Evolution as real (indeed, as Truth). One could thus interpret this argument as resonant with ‘Anarchism’ or ‘Libertarianism’ in the sense expressed by authors like J S Mill (1869) in *On Liberty* wherein the actualization of the potential for free will through escaping reflexive articulation by external stimuli via use of reason is a necessary prerequisite for social systems that argue personal liberty must be the foundation of a free society.

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