

Fish in a Manmade Pond

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Economic oppression remains ubiquitous. In the West we are moving towards, or are already at, a condition of corporate governance enforced by the state apparatus. This is not capitalism as it is commonly understood— allowing for the ostensibly free pursuit of capital, an open market economy— nor is it democracy, or even sovereign nation states. It is a new corporatocracy, in which powerfully entrenched (international) corporations reign supreme, and define policy and economic planning in perpetuity.

The increasingly significant player in this world is international capital, money itself, unencumbered by the state apparatus. Indeed such capital seeks to dismantle the state structure to loosen all constraints on its expression. Long-term this is faulty— states' power, prestige, the foundational pillars of money and military might (etc) decline— but in the short-term it allows exponentially increased profits.

Is this the final stage of capitalism? Abstract Money bets on and inflates itself, and then through itself controls the world's resources, with general assent? The absurdity of the situation is paramount: Money defines itself, Money regulates itself, money decides what money is worth. Money determines world power and productive capabilities, but this is based on mutually agreed upon beliefs in the value of money— which are illusory, and allow for unprecedented conscious deterioration of the natural world.

This worsening destruction of the environment and endemic 'climate change' is apparently the most serious and destabilizing consequence of the corporate policy. The crisis appears poised to dramatically alter present economic arrangements in a way that few in power and indeed mainstream culture acknowledge in its full implications. Very simply it serves as a blatant rebuff of profit-seeking corporate policies. Profit cannot be the goal, profit seeking profit at the expense of all else— inevitably in the end it undermines the foundational systems that give profit meaning. (The very concept of Profit is made irrelevant by a collapsing society, and fictitious notions of 'markets' fail to take into account the natural and human worlds, confining themselves to narrow, abstract, electronic networks of finance).

Yet despite the continually ominous economic systems of today the corporate age may be running itself out— in its ruin of the planet, its extreme inequality, in its warmongering, it has more than lost its legitimacy. The sense that humankind is at the 'end of history' with liberal capitalism as civilization's golden achievement and indefinite future is called into serious question as destabilization, chaos, and an increased worsening of the situation reign, and as humans we remain mired in an ineffectual system with only few and relatively minor and powerless alternatives.

A most striking feature of corporatocracy is its facelessness. Less and less is there a single leader to rally behind, or against. The U.S. president's evident impotence in effecting real change, his hewing to the course set out by policy makers before him, the transmutation of politics into an absolute theatricality, is evidence enough of the restrictive and impersonal political culture. Even power within corporations is diffused— the CEO governs with a board of directors, responsible to shareholders. More broadly power is spread out across an elite class— professionals, administrators, bureaucrats— without a singular leadership entity at the head, but a mess & maze of decentralized policy decision makers defining and operating the course of events and operations.

We may then see a certain optimism in the deterioration of the natural world, as it delegitimizes the corporate order and perhaps paves the way for a new one. Albeit this is a darkest optimism, for we teeter on the brink of apparent apocalypse, and the cost of this 'transition' is unconscionable. Moreover, we are aware that the ones hurting first, maybe most, are the most disadvantaged, which is criminal.

*Will Solomon lives in Vermont, where he records music and writes. He is a '13 graduate of Wesleyan University.