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The Long Journey into Today

Below are a few notes of historic socio-political changes that were stepping stones toward key elements of the human dilemma.

A long time ago:

Step 1: *Displacement of feminine balance: The beginning of androcentrism*

Riane Eisler, in her book, *Chalice & The Blade*, makes a historical review of many sources indicating that in early human societies the female had a much larger role than today. Going back to the Stone Age, 30,000 years ago, nude figures of goddesses adorned rocky cave walls. Evidence of female leadership continued throughout the following 20,000 years, through the Neolithic era, where cooperative societies lived in relative peaceful communities. This lasted until about 3000 BCE when Western cultures and religions began to emerge, dethroning the female goddesses. Female equality has never returned although today progress is being made in some societies.

Step 2: *Making humans external to nature*

Elsabeth Sahtouris, in her '2000 book, *Earthdance: Living Systems in Evolution*, points to another detrimental detour on the road toward our human dilemma. Sahtouris states that in ancient Greece, philosophers divided into two schools of thought about the world. One was that all of nature, including humans, was alive and a spiritual, self-creative world, much like the Gaia model today, a view similar to that of many aboriginal societies. But the other school argued that "real" world could be known only through pure reason, not through direct experience, as it was God's geometric creation--permanently mechanical. This mechanical/religious worldview superseded the older nature-centric beliefs, and became the foundation of the whole Western worldview and a foundation stone in today's fatally-flawed paradigm. A principal tenet of this flawed doctrine is to see ourselves as separate from the rest of nature.

Step 3: *Removing spirituality from nature*

As the human appetite for increased throughput of Earth's wealth of natural resources grew, this growth paradigm demanded that the natural human spiritual affinity toward nature had to be blunted. The *International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* promotes critical inquiry into the relationships among human beings and their diverse cultures, environments and religious beliefs and practices. They recently produced an award winning, *Encyclopedia of Religion And Nature*. Under the subject: "left biocentrism, they conclude: *"In order for industrial capitalism to commodify the Earth, Earth-based spirituality had to be undermined. Left biocentrists believe that addressing this is a crucial part of any engaged green politics in the twenty-first century."*

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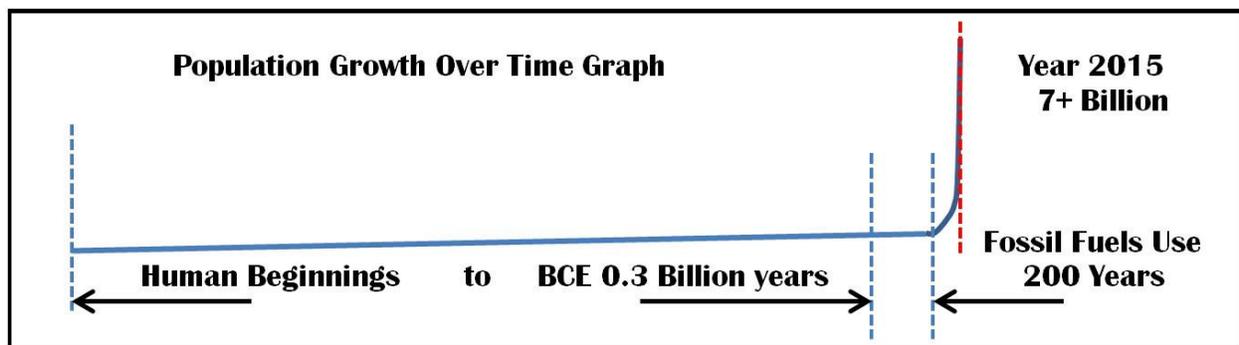
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More Recently:

Mentally separated from their earthly roots both emotionally and spiritually, the male-dominated societies of the world were aptly labelled, *the dominator societies* by Daniel Quinn, in his book *Ishmael*. The dominators went forth and multiplied, explored, occupied and invented ownership of the land. All of this to improve the well-being of their own specific group(s), always at the expense of other societies and/or at the expense of nature. Writer J.W.Smith, in his book, *The World's Wasted Wealth*, states that all wars are resource wars. The dominator characteristic has fuelled many such wars in the past millennia. We are now driven by the *growth imperative* to seek evermore territory and resources. But the dominator mind ignores stark scientific evidence that human activity is far beyond Earth's renewable limits. Such limits are rejected by this AbReality (human-created: see endnote) based views.

Rapid Growth Enabler One (a physical reality): Energy:

Using energy provided only by the human body, by horses, wind and wood, we could never have enabled our population to grow much more than, perhaps 500 million.



Pandora's Box of energy-intensive fossil fuels provided an abundant, easy-to-use energy source to satisfy (intoxicate?) the dominators' unrestrained growth imperative. Rapid exponential growth became the norm in the 20th century and the green revolution helped the human body count zoom to today's over 7 billion. With such extreme growth came the belief that energy, technology and the invisible hand of economics can solve all of humanity's problems. But there are problems in energy paradise - *Peak-oil* and *global-warming*. Such blunt, limiting realities simply do not fit today's AbReality based capitalist-driven growth paradigm; limits are ignored, denied, avoided and those who say there are limits may be called heretics by our leaders.

Rapid Growth Enabler Two (an AbRreality): Pronatalist Religions & Cultures:

In concert with industry's need for labour, and with the feminine balance long suppressed, dominator influence pervaded some influential religions and cultures. They created prohibitions against birth control and glorified the family with many children. This is certainly not true of all religions and cultures but applies principally to certain segments of Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Many of these pronatalist forces, where women are less that equal, still present significant obstacles in the pathway toward

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a sustainable civilization. (Fortunately, a few splinter branches of these religions appear to reject gender imbalance, homophobia and prohibitions on birth control.)

Rapid Growth Enabler Three (an AbReality): Money

Early monetary systems had been commodity-based, whereby a physical commodity such as gold or silver was used to back up the value of issued currency. With exponential growth in human population and in goods and services, no physical commodity was suitable as a value base. In the 1960s, following the Keynesian suggestion, the world standard US\$ was disengaged from gold. It became fiat, meaning, *a command decree, or let it be*. Now a mathematical number, money can be created as debt with no limits, unlike the planetary resources that money can still buy. Trillions of dollars enter the global system each year, bestowing wealth and political power on the elite top few from where the trickle down economy should theoretically provide for all. But there are seriously wicked problems in money paradise... irresolvable within the current paradigm.

Dominator Schools of Thought and the rise of Neoconservatism:

The *Chicago School of Economics*, refers to a think-tank led by Milton Friedman that has shaped the course of world history significantly since the 1950s. This group shifted US economic thinking from the Keynesian *laissez-faire* approach. Keynes had encouraged free markets with macro regulation by government to assure the public best interest was served. But Friedman recommended libertarian rules, which are basically no rules or regulation on corporations, accompanied by the progressive deregulation and privatization of government services and civil infrastructure. Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Regan championed these concepts in their respective countries - TINA, *There Is No Alternative!* declared Margaret Thatcher.

Metaphorical summary of today's paradigm:

The prevailing political forces that guide human civilization are now in the hands of the imaginary dominator, a masculine, archetypal character who is greed driven, has no feminine balance, has no spiritual affinity toward Gaia and humanity's roots in our natural world and is inhibited by from recognizing limits-to-growth on a finite planet. We are on borrowed time, far beyond sustainable limits.

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Note: AbReality – Details in Chapter 2a, described in Glossary:

Abstract Realities. Human created systems of beliefs and of agreed ways of doing things: constitutions, economics, religions, corporations, etc. In his '79 book, *Mind and Nature*, Gregory Bateson described in detail the meaning of *Abstract Reality*.

This applies to money, governments, laws, etc.