

Overview of *Paradigm Junction*

After the well-articulated article titled, "[Adding and removing complexity](#)" describing a few of many terminal incongruities of capitalism, Mary Logan's final paragraph asks: *"At the end of empire, the economic system at large has a death grip on profit-making subsystems, preventing the radical change that is needed. How do we begin to imagine what is really needed, rather than proposed incremental changes that only add to complexity and hasten collapse? Any ideas?"*

This essay is written to provide a relatively short answer to a simple question about how do we begin to imagine what a viable future could look like. It is a paraphrase of a story called, *Paradigm Junction* by Don Chisholm. Paradigm Junction (PJ) provides significant holistic background information before providing a backcast view of how human civilization might function in 50 years if appropriate steps were started today, and it also suggests approaches toward starting the change we want.

Any ideas?

Regarding a general lack of viable ideas, in a recent essay by Jim Kunstler called, [Heretics Unite!](#), with his classic colourful dialogue, he describes rule by the catholic church for centuries, and with modern politics still bubbling with religion, Kunstler's closing paragraph shows his frustration in the lack of alternatives to the growth era death-cycle.

*"It's especially disturbing to see the infiltration of the latest version of Jesus mumbo-jumbo - Southern Republican Nascar Evangelical orthodoxy - take over the collective mind of the USA. **The poverty of ideas this represents can't be overstated and the timidity of any opposition to it is a disgrace to our heritage.*** (Bold highlight mine)

I've occasionally dwelt on the issue over many years – especially after I received a [letter 20 years ago from Alexander King](#), co-founder [Club Of Rome](#) (COR). In one part he mentioned that COR had invited world leaders to a meeting to explain their controversial 1972 report, *Limits To Growth*. After the meeting the leaders gave the collective opinion that they understood the dire implications – but that they would be unable to do anything about it because voters would not let them. That, *the voters would not let them*, is the essence of the *death grip*, of Mary's question. The *Club Of Rome* used the label, *The human predicament*, to describe the collective issues. However, Mary's *death-grip* has more emotional impact, and since human emotions are a part of this discussion I'll use death-grip.

The death-grip grows ever tighter as corporatization of governance continuously gains powers in dozens of ways in pursuit of the myth – infinite growth. These including favourable international trade agreements based on the lowest environmental standards – and recently the rights of personhood. Besides controlling human behaviour through commercial mass media, the key source of their strength is the corporate banking/fiat money system. By capitalizing on innate human self-interest, the power of money now controls voters through all classes: The vast majority are controlled through the need for jobs while those able to afford financial investments are controlled through financial self-interest. It is instructive to note that, within this system, monetary flow rate has been shown to be a regulator of human activity, both in resource throughput and in procreation considerations (noted later as a key dynamic element of the envisioned soft landing).

Regrettably, today the cause and effects of individual segments of the death-grip are siloed (packaged separately) and are expounded separately in books, conferences, articles, journals, newspapers and email discussion list. But the death-grip is a holistic multidisciplinary dynamic problem: To begin to address it requires a multidisciplinary holistic approach utilizing systems-thinking with primary focuses on three overriding considerations:

#1: The wellbeing of the Gaian system;

Lovelock's Gaia label denotes the interactivity of nature as unitary system.

#2: Human nature and;

#3: Human wellbeing.

Before serious consideration of, *a prosperous way down*, or more realistically, *a survivable way down toward prosperity*, one must acknowledge that there can be no escape from death-grip of the existing sociopolitical/economic system (old-paradigm) – it cannot be fixed – it's kaput. It's time to stop looking inside this box where many constitutional foundations were formed to accommodate a primitive infinite-earth mentality. As we begin to explore solutions outside today's socioeconomic box we need recognize that very large segments of the central institutions and legal structures of today's world could function equally well with a new sociopolitical guidance system (new-paradigm). This thought was expressed long ago by Stafford Beer, socio/political systems designer and cyberneticist, in his '57 book, *Designing Freedom*. Beer wrote:

I am proposing simply that society should use its tools to *redesign* its institutions, and to operate those institutions quite differently. You can imagine all the problems. But the first and gravest problem is in the mind, screwed down by all those cultural constraints. You will not need a lot of learning to understand what I am saying: what you will need is intellectual freedom. It is a free gift for all who have the courage to accept it. Remember: our culture teaches us not intellectual courage, but intellectual conformity.

Today relatively few have openly escaped the intellectual conformity that binds the soma-like death-grip. But escapee numbers are rapidly growing, some from economic insiders who recognize the [Ponzi nature](#) of the dismal science, and some are simply informed intelligent people. This has resulted in such outcomes as *transition* or *resilient-community* movements, or *Occupy Wall Street* or equivalent unrest elsewhere – and countless others who compartmentalize the reality and keep dealing with day to today. It is with those who have mentally escaped the death-grip where fertilization of a viable desirable change plan may begin to take root in the shape a new-paradigm.

"How do we begin to imagine what is really needed, ...?"

(The thoughts below are drawn from a backcast envisioning of future from 50 years after today's transition juncture - Paradigm Junction.)

Buckminster Fuller's '69 *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*, offers a useful starting metaphor. After all, our planet is a spacecraft. Instead of aluminum or titanium we have an atmosphere to shield life from the perils of space. The atmosphere is an interactive component of the Gaian system that includes life of which humans are a part. For any vessel the top duty of captain and crew is to preserve and protect the ship – and then ensure completion of the mission.

What will be needed?

To preserve and protect the ship today will require a dynamically orchestrated reduction of the human footprint until completion of the mission. The mission is to reduce the human ecological footprint until it can be sustained within the Gaian system. From there it gets a bit more complicated. Without getting into details here's an overview list of vital needs as now envisioned in *Paradigm Junction*.

- We need, before anything can happen, a core group of visionary multidisciplinary social architects to define/refine new-paradigm ideas to create foundational documentation: And then to form shadow government to reach out to where there seems to be fertile ground, such as organizational initiatives where people today acknowledge outwardly that our mother ship is sinking.
- We need to plan on a period of overlap between the old and the emerging new-paradigm;
- We need scientific instrumentation to provide continuous data on the state of Gaia, such as biodiversity or climate stability;
- We need statistical data to provide continuous information on human well-being and happiness;
- We need statistical data to provide continuous information on essential infrastructure, such as energy sources, flow and grids, distribution of food and essential goods and services, many of these are provided by corporations;
- We need to have a general agreement on relevant aspects of typical human nature based on environmental psychology. For example, we tend to be genetically programmed to respond to short-term self-interest even at the expense of long-term well-being. Each of us have an aptitude(s) in which we usually specialize, and often we know little about many other areas of knowledge. Such characteristics we cannot change. But we can design the new-paradigm such that short-term human well-being becomes the driving force toward negative growth in human-activity.
- We need to assess suitable existing institutions (see Beer above) and to initiate a phased change in their operational goals;

Dynamics and feedback:

Money is the lifeblood fluid of civilization's trade and commerce. It is a proven dynamic regulator of human activity in both resource throughput and procreation considerations. Highly programmable humans, now influenced by corporate media, are today groomed to be spenders for the good of the corporate Holy Grail of economic growth. But this must change. The heart of the change processes can be a commodity-based transparent monetary system where the quantity of money and its flow rate are regulated as an integral control element of the new-paradigm. The future commodity basis for money will have a variety of factors, some related to both Gaian and human well-being. The definition of wealth in the new paradigm will be as suggested by Riane Eisler. She states simply:

*Real wealth is a measurement of a robust ecology
and the general health and happiness of the people.*

To have a goal, to measure progress toward it, and to make corrective adjustments via feedback, are the basic components of all stable dynamic systems. Many if the items listed above in the, "We need ..." section now exist, and will be integral components of dynamic governance in the new-paradigm.

When considering how to make the needed changes not only acceptable but desirable to the majority, those who have knowledge of evolutionary biology (see Wiki) will be important participants among the multidisciplinary social architects. After all, it is the human animal and some of our strange ways that is our principle focus. Years ago psychologist Robert Ornstein stated in this regard that we need a *conscious evolution*, which could occur rapidly.

Historic norms that may not be suitable in the new-paradigm:

Human nature prevents rapid change in beliefs such as religion or in long evolved cultural practices. Fortunately, there will be little need to try because there is an essential common denominator that may adequately influence human behavioral change where needed. It is the money system. Since many religions ban usury (but ignore the fact) the monetary system of the new-paradigm should appeal to them!

Architects of the future should call for only essential change. Nevertheless, some historic social inventions may not be suitable in a viable future. Corporate or private ownership of the commons is one, unregulated individual monetary accumulation is another. The shareholders of large corporations would change from wealthy individuals to regional governments. Most borders between countries have been drawn as a result of war - not a promising method: In order to accommodate geological or cultural realities, borders lines should be open to change whether nation, state or county.

These human-created norms from the old-paradigm will not change easily. But there may soon be a catalyst. Anyone paying attention knows there is a strong likelihood of massive global financial collapse in the near future. Instead of *Disaster Capitalism*, as coined by Naomi Klein's book title, perhaps we can hope for *disaster reorganization* in the direction of cooperative-regionalism (as alternative to social chaos and wars for the last scrap of nature's resources).

What might a world of cooperative regionalism look like?

The idea of cooperative-regionalism is a cornerstone of the envisioned new-paradigm. Efforts toward regionalism are already emerging in many areas as innate human response to impending doom from growing acceptance there will be collapse of either Gaian nature or global economics or both that lead to terminal chaotic anarchy.

The job of the social architects is to design a system that can accommodate both local and global cooperation and to facilitate exchange of essential goods & services. Thoughts behind cooperative regionalism are drawn from dozens of writer thinkers in the areas of economics, psychology, energy and system dynamics, including natural systems. Schumacher Briefings #9, *Gaian Democracies: Redefining Globalization and People-Power* by Roy Madron makes a useful insight by suggesting we should utilize natural systems as a background model of governance for spaceship Earth. An animal body is a significantly independent system that is made up of multiple subsystems – brain, heart, lungs, etc. Each of these operate semi autonomously. And most subsystems are made up of lower level subsystems right town to the individual living the cell where DNA, we recently learned, magically contains a map of the whole system. And yet none of these highly autonomous elements are viable unless the whole interactive system is viable and living – whether speaking of your body or the Gaian interactive system.

To envision the system/subsystem concepts in geological sociopolitical terms, here are suggested names and hierarchical steps:

- 1: *Region*, may consist of several towns and counties or be a large city;
- 2: *BioRegion*, may consist of several *Regions*; (province or state size)
- 3: *Assembly Of BioRegions*, may consist of several *BioRegions*; (nation size)
- 5: *Global Governance*, where representatives of all *Assembly Of BioRegions* meet. (UN)

While the steps appear similar to today's world, in a sustainable world there will be significant differences in levels of control and autonomy. Following Beer's suggestion, "I am proposing simply that society should use its tools to *redesign* its institutions, and to operate those institutions quite differently." This requires a holistic dynamic approach and systems-thinking that must focus on three overriding considerations, repeated from above:

- #1: The wellbeing of the Gaian system;
- #2: Human nature and;
- #3: Human wellbeing.

The UN is still in the business of global diplomacy and the UN also directs a global peacekeeping force with bases in each *Assembly Of BioRegions*. Individuals at the UN have been appointed by the *Assemblies of BioRegions*. But the top UN priority deals with #1 and basically sets the course for the good ship civilization. There are scientists from a variety of disciplines, statisticians and specialists in energy, psychology, dynamic systems and a new form of economics. To facilitate meaningful communications between specialists in these disparate fields of interest, a method called, [*Structured Dialogue Design*](#) (SDD) process will be used. The outcome of this process establishes guidelines that must be followed by *Regions* wishing to participate in the global economy. The UN headquarters of the *Bank Of Gaia* establishes policy and monetary regulations based on outcomes from the SDD process. When *Regions* comply with UN guidelines, negative growth in human activity at the optimum rate will be achievable.

Each *Assembly Of BioRegions* is a hierarchical filtering point to deal with issues of their sub-tier group of *BioRegions*. They operate a small scale version of the UN decision makers and can provide feedback regarding policy. They participate in selecting UN representatives. They operate a military peace keeping force.

Each *BioRegion* is also a hierarchical filtering point to deal with issues of their sub-tier group of *Regions*. They also organized regional audits to check for compliance to agreed standards. In this regard, the whole system of governance operates somewhat like a quality assurance system with dynamic feedback, checks and balances.

Individual *Regions* have far greater autonomy than today. For example, their unique semi-autonomous money system would enable a large degree of control over their region's human-activity level, including non-approved immigration. Among other data, they will publish a monthly real wealth-per-capita report. The *Region* establishes procreation guidelines for their region to maximize the wealth/capita ratio. Those who would really like more children than the *Regional* guidelines suggest can be influenced by their neighbours and/or through local punitive measures. The regional government has control over import/export trade with neighbouring regions and with the rest of the world. A section of a regional government is responsible to buy and sell shares of large corporations in a stock market-like forum. *Regions* are the only shareholders. Trade is essential to any *Region*. Since regional governments decide what other *Regions* they will trade with, any

For a graphic summary of the hierarchy of governance see:

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/4b-DynamicSociety050-APC.pdf> and

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/4c-UN-Wheelhouse.pdf>

Below is a copy of the index page to all chapters.

Chapters may be updated from time to time

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/PI-Synopsis.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/1a-Cover.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/1a-Index.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/1b-GlossaryOfTerms.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/1c-Preamble.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/1d-TheNewStory.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/1e-BioOfWriter.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/2a-TheTriad.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/2b-DynamicSystems.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/3a-MCP.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/3b-ParadigmFlaws.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/3c-GraphicBeforeAfter.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/4a-ThoseWhoEnvisioningA.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/4b-DynamicSociety050-APC.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/4c-UN-Wheelhouse.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/4d-TheViewFrom050APC.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/4e-DynamicFlows.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/5a-AreWeReadyToEnact.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/5b-ChapterAndVerse.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/6a-Appendic-MCP.pdf>

<http://gaiapc.ca/PI/6c-Appendic-OurJouneyIntoToday.pdf>

Relevant Links:

Psychology

From: *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary psychology generation*

The Psychological Foundations of Culture JOHN TOOBY AND LEDA COSMIDES

We suggest that this lack of progress, this "failure to thrive," has been caused by the failure of the social sciences to explore or accept their logical connections to the rest of the body of science-that is, to causally locate their objects of study inside the larger network of scientific knowledge. Instead of the scientific enterprise, what should be jettisoned is what we will call the Standard Social Science Model (SSSM):

<http://www.cep.ucsb.edu/papers/pfc92.pdf>

>>

Multidisciplinary discussions:

Structured Dialogue Design (SDD): In an article for the *Institute for 21st Century Agoras*, Kenneth Bausch's article starts: *What would a "national dialogue infrastructure" look like?*

<http://www.globalagoras.org/category/sdd/>

>>

<http://www.resilience.org/author-detail/1007645-mary-logan>