



‘The Pre and Perinatal Grounds of Capitalism and the Free Market Economy’ (1992): A Contemporary Commentary

By David Wasdell

Editor Richard House writes: In May 1992 in Cracow, Poland, David presented a ground-breaking paper many years ahead of its time at a conference of the International Society of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Medicine. This is one of the most radical and prescient critiques of capitalism I have ever read, and I asked David if he would revisit his ‘Pre and Perinatal Grounds of Capitalism and the Free Market Economy’ and write a brief contemporary commentary on the paper. We’re delighted to print his current thoughts here, as an important contribution to today’s urgent current cultural conversation about climate emergency and our collective human future.

David writes: As the end-game of the climate emergency reaches its climax, I am delighted to see the re-release of this 27-year old presentation. It was first delivered on the very day that Canary Wharf was declared insolvent (or ‘went down the tubes’! – as the local papers proclaimed). The Reichmann Brothers were bailed out by their bankers (‘too big to fail!’). The pain was distributed through hundreds of local businesses, their employees and dependents.

The main thesis of the study is based on the understanding that the psychodynamic grounds of environmental relations are laid down in the foetal context, fixated in the trauma of birth and activated in subsequent social behaviour.

Terror of growth-limiting lack (or resource depletion) re-stimulates psychotic defences at

the very heart of the ideology of world capitalism. In today’s world, ‘environmental resources’ are no longer confined to the natural context. Current behaviour of predatory parasitism treats the whole human population as ‘fair game’ for cannibalistic expropriation. The drive at all levels is to internalize resources of the other and add them to those of the self by all means available. The free-market culture is a fertile matrix for the emergence of multi-billionaires resourced by exponential impoverishment of the wider human condition. The weakest, most needy, most vulnerable and as yet un-born become losers in the power-battle for the means of survival.

The very concept of wealth itself can now be constructed as the accretion of debt. It is gathered by those whose power and influence, driven by the most profound and early resource-related traumata, emerge as the leading elite of economic and political systems.

A more recent chapter on the ‘Foundations of Psycho-Social Analysis: Origin of a Paradigm Shift’ can be found at <http://www.apollo-gaia.org/Psycho-Social-Foundations2018.pdf> [<https://tinyurl.com/y53gflvu>]. It gives an up-to-date account of the history and development of the ideas which lie behind ‘The Pre and Perinatal Grounds of Capitalism and the Free-Market Economy’. It also has active links and references to other resources which may be of interest to interested readers.

The original 1992 version of my paper is available online here:
<http://www.meridian.org.uk/PDFs/Capitalism.pdf>
[<https://tinyurl.com/yxz44l55>]

Please send any correspondence via the magazine editor. Thank you.

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