

**András László**

## **Spiritual economy** *from welfare to wellbeing*

The question that triggered off my reflections in this paper is as basic as it is provocative : *how on earth could human beings create a production system—our economy—in which the human being doesn't matter anymore?* The paper reviews the economic worldview and unmasks its mistakes, the myths of the economic thinking throughout history, and the inadequate preconditions of economic scientific inquiry. The paper then throws light on emerging economic tendencies. It concludes with an outline of a spiritual economic/wellbeing framework that is grounded in a radical awareness/consciousness shift and gives a thoroughly new interpretation of the basics of the economic system and—as a matter of fact—our whole way of living.

*There's only one social science. The pervasive force of economic science is that our categories—scarcity, costs, preferences, opportunities, etc.—can really be universally applied. In this sense, economic science is indeed the universal grammar of social science. There's, however, a reverse side of the medal as well. Whilst it's getting increasingly difficult to differentiate the scientific work conducted within anthropology, sociology and similar scientific disciplines from that in the economic sciences, economists on the other hand should increasingly take notice and be aware of the degree of limitation forced upon them by their own tunnel vision when exploring and comprehending the nature and social interaction of the human being.*  
(Hirshleifer, 1985)

*It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.  
I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.  
It doesn't interest me how old you are.  
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for dreams, for the adventure of being alive.  
It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon.  
I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals  
or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain!  
I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.  
I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own; if you can dance with wildness and let ecstasy fill you  
to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, be realistic, or remember the limitations  
of being a human.  
It doesn't interest me if the story you're telling me is true.  
I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you bear the accusation of betrayal and  
not betray your own soul.  
I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore trustworthy.  
I want to know if you can see beauty even if it's not pretty every day, and if you can source your life from God's  
presence.  
I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand on the edge of a lake and shout to the  
silver moon, Yes!  
It doesn't interest me where you live or how much money you have.  
I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair, weary, bruised to the bone, and do what  
needs to be done for the children.  
It doesn't interest me who you are, how you came to be here.  
I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.  
It doesn't interest me where or what with whom you have studied.  
I want to know what sustains you from the inside, when all else falls away.  
I want to know if you can be alone with yourself; and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty  
moments.*  
(*The Invitation*, inspired by Oriah Mountain Dreamer, Native American Elder, May 1994)

## I. Preludium

At the dawn of this 3rd millennium the world is driven by the economy and ruled by the big corporations. Corporate culture interpenetrates and captivates our societies. The stock exchange has become the holy gauge, *business* the buzzword. The stock market price index controls the mood of masses of people. One could even, for a moment, have the impression that the economy is close to the heart of the people. Don't get fooled, though. It's only a perception, and an illusion at that. The truth for most people is that the *economy* has become so big as to be elusive. And the people themselves, where do they fit in? They don't seem to matter anymore.

People are at the complete mercy of the economy instead of the economy being for the benefit and in the service of the people. Is it really true that we are living times of unprecedented economic welfare, or shall we rather say that we are living in the world dominion by money? Whichever way, there is no denying that the interests of the people are definitely not the priority. It is ironic that when pondering on the source of the modern economy, more often than not the following thought comes to mind: *people are not there to sustain the economy, are they?*

How on earth could it be possible for us human beings to create a production system, our economy, in which the human being doesn't matter anymore?

Many would argue this is the wrong question. Global free market economy has resulted in a degree of wellbeing never experienced or equalled before, hasn't it? This may be true when considering numbers and indicators. However, considering all those factors that cannot be expressed in numbers and indicators but reflect precisely the human quality of our existence, where does this leave us in terms of the so-called evolution? The economy is completely serving gross domestic product, the stock exchange, and the shareholders. What of the people behind the institutions? Their voice is hardly being heard, or does not matter at all.

Let's take, for example, the mantra of growth. Businesses are scaling up and growing bigger all the time to meet the demands of an ever-globalizing world economy. *Bigger equals better*. Have you also noticed your bank changed names several times over the past few years? Why do you think airline companies are merging for the sake of 'survival'? Almost every day, our newspapers report on the newest mega-merger. It may be true that these mergers serve the interests of their shareholders, but what about the interests of the people? The boards of directors pride themselves on the scaling advantages, but do these accommodate the ever-growing frustrations of the employees of multinationals? Right. Not at all.

Isn't it interesting and odd that a lot of CEOs treat their business in a way they would never treat their family, and the earth in a way they would never treat their garden?

It's really an odd world, isn't it? *Household*—the original meaning of the word 'economy'—means something completely different at the level of a country than it means at the level of a family. It's really an odd world, isn't it? We delude ourselves and others by maintaining that all those abuses—such as violations of human rights, environment pollution, child labour, and stress—are the inevitable consequences of 'evolution'.

Are we indeed saying that inhumaneness is a prerequisite for humanness?

All those multinationals and international organizations—such as The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO)—are functioning according to rules and directives they have consciously chosen and set up. Free trade, national income, interest rate, debts, growth, productivity, effectiveness, etc. are all carefully chosen concepts. The meeting of heads of state and government leaders in the

American city of Bretton Woods in 1944 has to a considerable extent determined the evolution of the world economy until today.

This has often been forgotten.

We—or at least the experts we have chosen—are responsible for the way the world economy has evolved. We can make a similar choice now to commit ourselves to new economic ways.

New economic agreements could lead to a completely new economy—a humane economy that serves the people and not the other way round.

*A humane economy:* isn't the sole legitimate purpose of the economy the well-being of the people, especially of the poorest and most deprived ones? Wellbeing means to satisfy all the needs of the people. Not just their commercial and consumer needs, but their desires, endeavours and aspirations that have no monetary estimate: dignity, peace, security, freedom, education, health, leisure time, the quality of the environment, the well-being of future generations, etc. The methodology of a humane economy, therefore, differs completely from the dominant mathematical and neoclassical economism and scientism of the 20th century.

A humane economy is an economy of the whole human being!

*Wholeness.*

*It there a God? Is there not a God? In the separateness from space, time or any illusion, Being and Not Being is the same. Do I have eternal life? Do I not have eternal life? Beyond space, time and every illusion: Being and Not Being is the same. All you know will only help you to adjust yourself to the changing, but won't give you any certainty on the unchanging. Knowledge does only exist in the changing and deals only with the changing, because in the knowing you can separately ponder on the Being and the Not Being, the right and the wrong, the round and the hollow; in the wholeness, however, all these are untouched and the same, and therefore, cannot be named at all. Wholeness is not one and not many, not me and not the other, not something and not nothing. If you want to know wholeness, do not ask anything, because with regard to it, every "yes" and every "no" does mean the same. If you want to know wholeness, go deep into yourself, underneath your persona, and where you reach the no further, where anything is identical with everything: that's wholeness. (Sándor Weöres)*

The pressure of maximizing consumer values makes the individual but a caricature of a whole human being.

The activities of a whole human being are determined by values that are not just a function of speculation, self-interest or exchange, but also of habit, gift, cooperation, moral rules, social conventions, political institutions, etc.

Why do most economic theories characterize the human being merely in a distorted and partial way? Are you surprised that, as a result, most people are uneasy and distressed about the economy?

The answer might be that the economy is mostly based on a limited model of human behaviour: *homo economicus* is a rational economic actor whose life's purpose is to maximize welfare by means of uncompromising economic calculations.

The great tragedy of modernity is that *homo economicus* in no way matches the behavioural complexity and subtlety of human nature. The chronic tragedy is that the economy is based on the assumption that this *homo economicus* is, in essence, the sole representative of humankind.

Man is a social being, not merely a private, economic actor. S/he is as much a citizen as a consumer, not to mention that s/he is also a divine being. If modern economy deprives

humans of their social, ethical, spiritual, and divine natures, it constructs a dangerous and self-destructing world.

Why, do you think, the commercial and political forces of society want us at any cost to be convinced that the way to happiness is through material enrichment and self-centered profit maximizing?

The economy is situated right at the middle of these forces, and persists in maintaining that the essential nature of the human being is egocentric and intent on making a fortune.

Why then for millennia have sages and saints of all religions declared that the root cause of all suffering is dissociating the consciously formed picture about ourselves from our real being? What we think about ourselves, and usually believe as well, is not identical with whom we really are.

Isn't the real purpose of life to find ourselves and find out who we really are?

Isn't the real goal of the economy, then, to create the necessary conditions for all of us to fulfil that purpose?

## **II. The economic worldview**

Duality. According to the Eastern mystical traditions, duality means the mode of consciousness that radically separates the active subject and the object of consciousness.

During European Enlightenment and the scientific and industrial revolution of the 17 and 18th centuries, this image of duality and division was reinforced. As a result, modern economy is a quintessential expression of this dualistic worldview.

There is yet another worldview—a symbolic worldview—that goes beyond exclusive rationality and also reemphasizes, upgrades and integrates the different forms of knowledge.

What picture do we get from the overall economic worldview?

Don't you have the distinct, pervading feeling that those behind the prevailing economics have built a distorted worldview and have been imposing it upon us ever since? A worldview that is rigid, partial and doctrinal. A worldview lacking compassion. A worldview objectifying the human being and, in doing so, stripping him from his humaneness.

This worldview symbolizes the world's one-sidedness. Economists have constructed a huge machine to explain the world. They view human being through this construction and express human behaviour through equations, "analyzing" human beings as economic actors through ever more complex and incomprehensible models.

The different schools of neoclassical economy emphasise the objectivity of their analyses. Yet in their construction they have neglected something important. The economy is a living system! The economy is continuously made by living beings. These human beings are characterized by a complexity that no model can yet include.

Modern economies still gravitate around the pitfalls of the 19th century scientific and mechanistic worldview that is based upon analytical reasoning that breaks down its constituents to understand their functioning.

The dilemma they face is you cannot determine the essence of a human being by breaking down and analyzing its constituents, even when these form a part of a particularly complex model. *For the essence of a human being lies in his wholeness.* Human beings are emotional beings. And it is precisely in the denial of the emotional and spiritual nature of the human being that lies the mistake and delusion of modern economy.

Rational comprehension is not whole. But, in fact, modern economy is not the rational, value-free science it pretends to be. It is driven by an enormous emotional need that it cannot face, much less reconcile.

The withdrawal of economics into the intellect, into analysis and artificial model construction, is an emotional response to fear.

In short, modern economy is characterized and driven by patriarchal behaviour patterns—the need for control, competition, pursuit of omniscience and obsessive rationality.

### **III. The economic mistakes, exposed myths—faulty premises of the economic sciences: a historical flash overview**

*Where three economists are together, you can be pretty sure that at least four economic strategies will be born. (Friedman, 1968)*

The ever-widening gulf between the extremes of wealth and poverty have been a great concern to the economists over the last centuries. These extremes have taken different forms in different historical periods. Economic models and social systems have tried to work out a solution to this basic problem. However, the problem has not been resolved and the gulf is ever widening.

It seems that systems and models that support the lower ego alone lack equilibrium.

It seems furthermore to be true that economic methods and principles that take account merely of the struggle for life and "survival of the fittest" are denying the spiritual essence of the human being.

All ideologies and systems—feudalism, colonialism or capitalism—strive for power. The battle for the mind keeps on dominating. The rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer. Reason is increasingly clouded as people are exposed to chaos, confusion, uncertainty, danger of terror and fear.

Economic problems can only be solved with a common spiritual, moral and practical approach.

Economic science is a comparatively new scientific discipline; it is hardly three centuries old. It is not surprising, perhaps, that as the limbo is paved with good intentions, economic history is full of mistakes at the level of estimates, concepts, diagnosis, decision-making as well as argumentation.

### **Growth**

Growth is the sacred basis of the current economic order. Anyone trying to question the concept of growth is hooted down immediately. Don't get me wrong. I don't want to argue that growth is not an important factor in the evolution of humankind. Growth has a lot of manifestations though.

You cannot grasp human mental and spiritual growth in statistical figures. In human life, "more" is not always "better". Not every upward trending curve is a reflection of real growth. Yet any growth is good news for the economy.

Beneficent growth is a myth. Where has it taken us? We've got an economy where the human being is not at the centre of economic affairs anymore.

It may be true that economic growth has resulted in generally higher income and more money. It is also true that economic growth has not resulted in generally greater wellbeing.

In his critical and seminal book *The Growth Illusion*, Richard Douthwaite comes to the same conclusion.<sup>1</sup> One of the main problems with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is that every activity is being counted without any differentiation. At the same time, anything that cannot be expressed in terms of money is being ignored, irrespective of the fact that it may be important for the general wellbeing.

The tragic observation, therefore, is that Western growth since the 1970s has turned out to be useless and meaningless. True there is a lot more money, but has life become better as well? Just consider the ever increasing debts of most countries, and you see how we became captives of growth: captives of money and the interest rate spiral that sustains it.

## Free trade or free trade?

The founder of modern economic scientific theory, *Adam Smith*, couldn't have guessed in the 18th century that today's world market is not only characterized by a free flow of commercial goods but also of money. The free flow of capital is completely undermining the theory.

Let me mention two important books which support this conclusion: David C. Korten's *When Corporations Rule the World*<sup>2</sup> and Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker's *Limits to Privatization—How to Avoid Too Much of a Good Thing?*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Irish economist and journalist concluded that during the period between 1955 and 1988 Great Britain's GDP had doubled, yet at the same time the rate of crime, divorce, suicide, absenteeism and chronic diseases rocketed. He concluded that material growth did not make Britons happier. According to Douthwaite's finding, economic growth is not the most efficient method to achieve social improvements. Even GDP is not authentic in this respect. If you consider, for example, the *Physical Quality of Life Index* used by experts of for developing countries, human life quality indicators clearly show that a poor country like Kerala, where according to traditional economic theory there has been stagnation for years, the PQL Index is 88%, while health care and education is at the same level as in Western countries.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Korten gives a detailed, scientifically well underpinned analysis of the basic, deeper causes of the economic and political crisis. He convincingly documents how as a result of the interplay between ideological, political, technological power an ever increasing economic and political power has been concentrating in the hands of a few capitalist corporations, multinationals and financial institutions, separating their striving for selfish short-term profits from their pursuit of real human interests and values. He shows the devastating human, social and ecological impact of an emphasis on, and enforcement of, narrow financial criteria. He highlights in a crystal-clear way the reason why the survival of humanity depends on taking up the alternative of a community-based and human- and life-centered approach going well beyond the uncriticized traditional and outdated dichotomy of communism and capitalism. He also outlines the concrete steps that have to be taken in facing economic globalization by emphasizing a rebalancing of economic life.

<sup>3</sup> This book is the first thorough audit of privatizations from around the world. It outlines the historical emergence of globalization and liberalization, and through analyses of over 50 case studies of best- and worst-case experiences of privatization, it provides guidance for policy and action that will restore and maintain the right balance between the powers and responsibilities of the state, the private sector and the increasingly important role of civil society. The book questions and heavily criticizes the results of privatization: it is not proven at all that private funds and management produced greater efficiency, better economic performance and higher levels of service. It's unequivocal, though, that the growing strength of the private sector has eroded public goods such as health, environmental sustainability and democratic accountability.

Trade indicates reciprocity: an interplay of import and export. What is the situation today? As a result of globalization, trade has become an export war. Most countries want to finance their rocketing public debts by ever increasing exports. No country is striving for a sound equilibrium of its balance of trade. The only thing that matters is to have a surplus. A lot of countries openly choose imbalance instead of trading on the basis of reciprocity. Under the disguise of mutual development, each country is invading the trade market of others. This is not trade, but war, isn't it?

So it's not surprising that public opinion is getting fed up with free trade. The huge demonstrations in Seattle, Canada in 1999 meant a turning point in the functioning of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The basic question of the WTO is still what kind of unified trade rules are needed in world trade. Wouldn't it be better to rephrase this question as follows: how can you set up trade rules so that the different cultures, people, and countries can thrive in the best possible way?

In his book *Localization, A Global Manifesto*, Colin Hines (Hines, 2000) worked out very efficient alternatives with regard to globalization. Notably, localization means to install a trade policy that positively discriminates for local production and trade. This kind of policy supports the community and by the same token redresses the imbalances (multinationals being economically blind to local interest).

## **Enterprise and household**

The stock exchange has become a symbol of the *valuelessness* of our modern societies. For the motto is clear: values don't matter, money does!

Companies are increasingly expanding in size and power. They serve processes that can influence the life of several generations. Isn't it odd that the shareholders—the companies' owners—are not prepared (nor legally required) to assume any common responsibility for the management and the strategy of a company, as a result of which they can't be held responsible? Doesn't capital investment entail any responsibility? Do shares only give a right to a dividend?

The economic sphere complains that ever more government decrees want to exercise control over the functioning of companies. At the same time, the basic thesis of *Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker's* visionary book is exactly that privatization without limitation or benevolence will gradually disrupt the world.

Outdoors, a lot of companies *are getting involved in things* they wouldn't dare to think of indoors, and this to the degree that now there is not much difference between enterprise and depredation when considering how companies function in society.

A company should be treated no different than a human being: with respect, dignity, and love. <sup>4</sup>

## **Work and Life**

Our own work is our most important contribution to the economy.

The way we perform our work determines the place we allot to ourselves within the economy. There is still a lot that we can improve. Just take a good look around, and you'll notice that the human being hardly matters. In the frenetic rhythm of daily life we are caught up in the rat race and completely stressed out. Gradually we have no time for anybody or anything anymore. Gradually the nightmare depicted and predicted by Aldous Huxley in his

*Brave New World* is becoming a reality: a society without families where children grow up in crèches and public nurseries.

The huge challenge therefore is to build together a wellbeing society in which care and respect for each other takes its place besides material progress (striving).

Don't you think it's high time that we dare to take responsibility for ourselves and face ourselves: how long are we willing to continue such a *soulless* way of living, working and producing?

We have to reinvent ourselves and our work permanently.

I would like to draw your attention to two basic books—as meaningful as ever—in this regard: *Matthew Fox: The Reinvention of Work—A New Vision of Livelihood for our Time*<sup>4</sup> and *Jeremy Rifkin: The End of Work—The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era*.<sup>5</sup>

A new overall social/societal and economic model is needed in which each human individual is recognized for his/her unique value and, by taking responsibility for him/herself and others contributes to building a humane and sustainable society and economy.

Not to mention the courage it takes for us to dare to reconnect with our most inner spiritual and divine being.

#### **IV. New (sustainable) economic tendencies**

This chapter concisely outlines the new economic tendencies with reference—where possible—to the corresponding websites and links.

##### **Creative economy**

In his book *The Creative Economy—How People Make Money From Ideas*, John Howkins defines a *creative product* as an economic good or service that results from creativity and has economic value.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> An Anglican and Episcopal priest, author of sixteen books, director of the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality in Oakland, California, and editor-in-chief of *Creation Spirituality* magazine, Matthew Fox argues that our times need a *metanoia*, a change of heart, a change of ways. Changing our ways, according to the author, includes changing the way we define work as well. Today's job crisis is a symptom of something much deeper, he says: a crisis in our relationship with work and the challenge to reinvent it. He concludes that work is essentially a spiritual activity and also a sacrament that in the tradition of the seven sacraments can be resacralized.

<sup>5</sup> The author argues that we have entered a new phase in history in which the number of jobs have been steadily and inevitably declining. In our Information Age, work has become increasingly virtual. It is true that the emerging "knowledge sector" create new markets and jobs; however, every nation will have to face one of the biggest challenges ever: what to do with the millions and millions of people whose labor is increasingly less needed, or not at all, in an ever more automated global economy. Therefore, it's of extreme urgency, he thinks, that we thoroughly rethink the very nature of work itself. This will relay the foundations of society that will trigger off a great social transformation and a rebirth of the human spirit.

<sup>6</sup> The author summarizes the concept of a *creative economy* as follows. The raw material of the creative economy is human talent that gives birth to new and original ideas and, subsequently, are translated into economic capital and saleable products. Unlike in a traditional economy, in a creative economy production sources are less important. Money is not the most valuable currency, ideas and intellectual property are. These are intangible assets and moving very fast. Managing creativity emphasizes the spirit of enterprise as well as the work performed in time. Technology is important; however education is more important. Investments in education, research and innovative thinking gradually increases the value of creativity.

Further, he analyzes the several forms of intellectual property, the four most common of which are: copyright, patents, trademarks and designs.

### **Economic ethics**

In his book *Ecology, Economics and Ethics*, László Zsolnai argues that modernism had reached a deep crisis by the end of the 20th century. Modern management—he says—has caused serious ecological and human problems in countries of the first, second and third worlds.<sup>7</sup>

*The modernistic paradigm has proved to be incapable of solving the huge problems it generated. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that the world religions and the great metaphysical systems of humanity have been gaining substantial ground.*

He shows that Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Taoism (Confucianism) preserve the word and our existence. According to Zsolnai, they offer a better alternative to overcome the ecological and human crisis than do modern management systems.

### **Human economy—spiritual capital**

Darwin Gillett produced his paper on *Spiritual Capital* for *Fortune Magazine* back in the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, he has founded the *Institute for Human Economics*. His newest book *Human Economics* is forthcoming. I will deal with these issues at length in the fifth part—*Spiritual Economy*—of this paper.

### **Distributive economy—social capital**

On the French website of *La Grande Relève*, the following important issues are being discussed: the economy serving all of us, wealth production without damaging nature, problems of unemployment and exclusion, and social capital capable of funding basic earnings as well as a more equitable distribution of the economy, coined the "distributive economy".<sup>9</sup>

### **Gift Economy**

Michael Jones and many other researchers have worked out a completely new conceptual system: the *gift economy*. They thoroughly question the basis of capitalist economy and open up new perspectives to solve the most urgent problems of a more equitable management system, economy and poverty, etc.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The author makes a revolutionary stand for business ethics. As opposed to the (still) traditional view that business ethics is but a simple asset—much as other assets—to improve the company's functioning and generate added value, the basic thesis of this book is that ethics constitute an essential and organic part of economic activities, interpenetrating all their levels: the individual, the organizational, the social and the global. If management applies ethics with the sole purpose of achieving more efficient results, then its efforts will fail. The book introduces new approaches and presents concrete action plans.

<sup>8</sup> [www.humaneconomics.org](http://www.humaneconomics.org)

<sup>9</sup> [www.perso.wanadoo.fr/grande.releve/bienvenue/htm](http://www.perso.wanadoo.fr/grande.releve/bienvenue/htm)

<sup>11</sup> [www.gift-economy.com](http://www.gift-economy.com)

## Love Economy<sup>13</sup>

The world-renowned alternative economist and futurist researcher Hazel Henderson dwells on the following issues in her writings and activist activities: ecologically sustainable human progress, responsible business and investment, cultural biodiversity and the new earth ethics economism. She has also published quite a lot on a completely new economic approach: a *love economy*. She recently founded a new and successful company, and created her own television programme called *Ethical Marketplace*.<sup>14</sup>

## Non-violent economy

The author of the world famous *Small Is Beautiful*, E.F. Schumacher, already back in the 1950s was pioneering the view that our planet is humanity's most important capital asset. As a result, he designed a Buddhist economy. He has also been led the way with appreciating concepts such as the third world, sustainable development, depletion of resources, fossil goods, etc.

He argued that the purpose of the economy is the physical and spiritual wellbeing of all men, women and children.<sup>15</sup>

## The quaternary economy

The French sociologist professor Roger Sue claims in his remarkable book *The Richness of Men—Towards a Quaternary Economy* that today's societies and economies only acknowledge economies that have been created by the market and through work. They have completely neglected the *associative life* that organizes and functions, in a sense, because of not being profitable. Yet, it has a vital role and touches upon central issues in domains as different as health care, education, social action, culture, and leisure time. At the heart of associative life lies mutual exchange and relationships with others, also important in business but contrasting with selfish profit-making and deceptive business behaviour.<sup>16</sup>

## The mystical economist

In his extraordinary fascinating book *The Mystical Economist* (Hamilton, 1994), Australian Clive Hamilton argues that instead of serving the wellbeing and prosperity of people, the dominant economy until now has maintained and promoted the behaviours and attitudes that prevent us from living an accomplished and happy life.<sup>17</sup> His analysis is crystal-clear and highly accurate.

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<sup>13</sup> [www.hazelhenderson.com](http://www.hazelhenderson.com);

<sup>14</sup> [www.hazelhenderson.com](http://www.hazelhenderson.com); [www.calvert-henderson.com](http://www.calvert-henderson.com); [www.ethicalmarketplace.com](http://www.ethicalmarketplace.com); [www.ethicalmarketplace.org](http://www.ethicalmarketplace.org); [www.via3.net](http://www.via3.net).

<sup>15</sup> [www.schumachersociety.org](http://www.schumachersociety.org)

<sup>16</sup> The present mutation of our societies is indeed enabling the development of a human economy. An economy in which the human factor gradually will have a key role to play: relationships and not goods will create more economic growth. What if the organizations of today would appear to become the enterprises of tomorrow?

<sup>17</sup> He puts great emphasis on human nature and the place and role of economic rationality in it. At last, we're faced with an economist who tries out new ways instead of paying lipservice to the still dominant, but worn out, obsolete and outdated economic paradigm of power, profit and results. His analyses are sharp as a razor. The author, once and for all, transcends the duality that since Descartes and before determined our life, thoughts and feelings. It's high time to restore this lost unity.

## **The future of money**

The world-renowned Belgian economist, *Bernard A. Lietaer*, who was responsible for the creation of the European currency unit (ECU) and held many important international financial positions, currently teaches depth psychology at the American Sonoma State University and sustainable economic theory at the Institute for Sustainable Resources and Agriculture in Berkeley, California.

His pioneering books include: *The Future of Money—Creating New Wealth, Work and a Wiser World*<sup>18</sup> and *The Mystery of Money—Emotional Meaning and Action of a Taboo*<sup>19</sup> He has also developed completely new financial instruments: *Community Currencies: A New Tool for the 21st century*.<sup>20</sup>

## **Money and Spirituality**

In his remarkable book *Money and Spirituality—Can the World’s Material Crisis be Overcome?*<sup>21</sup>, the famous and successful German financial manager and scientist, Dr. Hans Wielens, not only highlights the relationship between money and spirituality, but also tries to bridge the gap between the world of money and that of an integrating spirituality. The book encourages a broad interdisciplinary dialogue and has already prompted a lot of debate.<sup>23</sup>

## **V. Spiritual Economy/Abundance**

Don’t you think it’s about time we lifted the economy to a higher evolutionary level—as a matter of fact a spiritual level?

The 20th century has been widely proclaimed as the supreme century of reason and rationality; however, it turns out to be one of the most inhumane periods in human history. Rationality has obviously been incapable of fulfilling the high hopes placed in it.

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<sup>18</sup> In the international financial casinos of this world, stock exchange and foreign currency speculators are revolving 2000 billion dollars daily for sheer profit maximizing. Currency values are exposed to huge price fluctuations. Are we close to an overall stock exchange or foreign currency clash? The internationally respected financial expert not only re-examines the current money system, but also reviews the mentality that goes with it. His final conclusion: the current money system needs to be supplemented with a complementary currency system – the future of money.

<sup>19</sup> Do we really witness the end of money and power games? The author gets to the bottom of one of the last taboos of our current era: the yin and yang of money. Money systems do not arise out of the blue. They are the creations of men. One of the world’s foremost financial experts, at the same time a depth psychologist, draws an overall historical framework and demonstrates how psychological behavioural forms, mythological ideas and cultural images have been shaping the emotional foundation of our money systems. He argues that our biggest challenge is to create a money system that boosts creativity and genuine wellbeing.

<sup>20</sup> [www.futuremoney.de](http://www.futuremoney.de) and [www.transaction.net/money](http://www.transaction.net/money)

<sup>21</sup> The author defines the crisis of today’s society in terms of a confusion and crisis with regard to the information and meaningfulness of the material world. We, therefore, desperately need an overall spirituality that views money and economics as positive elements of our reality and treats them as such, and (re)connects them with the spiritual dimension of being.

<sup>23</sup> [www.transpersonal.com](http://www.transpersonal.com); [www.verlag-vianova.de](http://www.verlag-vianova.de)

Daniel Goleman, in the mid 1990s, was the first to describe with scientific exactingness another type of intelligence besides the *IQ* (intellectual quotient or rational intelligence). He coined it *EQ* (emotional quotient or intelligence), according to him at least as important as *IQ*.<sup>24</sup>

There is, however, a third type of intelligence, known as *SQ* (spiritual quotient or intelligence). *SQ* is responsible for harmonizing the vibrations of our mental and emotional bodies as well as lifting our actions, decisions and the world's events to a higher level so that we can live them as a greater whole.

In their revolutionary book *SQ—Spiritual Intelligence*, Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall present the three kinds of intelligence thus:<sup>25</sup>

*Human intelligence has its roots in our genetic code, and in the whole evolutionary history of life on this planet. It is influenced by our daily experience, our physical and mental health, our diet, the amount of exercise we get, in the kinds of relationships we form, and by many other factors. But neurologically speaking, everything that bears on intelligence is routed through or controlled by the brain and its neural extensions into the body. One kind of neural organization enables us to do rational, logical, rule-bound thinking. It gives us our IQ. Another kind allows us to do our associative, habit-bound, pattern-recognizing emotive thinking. It gives us our EQ. A third kind makes it possible for us to do creative, insightful, rule-making, rule-breaking thinking. It is the thinking with which we reframe and transform our previous thinking. This gives us our SQ. If we want to understand IQ, EQ, and SQ, a very important part of the story lies in understanding the brain's different thinking systems and their neural organization.*

To underpin *SQ* in a scientific way, the authors share the following interesting thoughts:<sup>26</sup>

*Many students of religion, as well as many humanistic and transpersonal psychologists, have described three psychological processes. Ken Wilber, for instance, calls them the prepersonal (the instinctive), the personal (ego-level phenomena) and the transpersonal (going beyond the limited ego self to the core of its being). The rational, IQ, layer is used very often—perhaps too often—in our technology-driven Western culture, to interact efficiently with the public world of written texts, timetables and linear or goal-oriented planning. At home, in our private lives, we can relax into a mixed rational-associative (IQ-EQ) mode, where different sides of ourselves are given expression. Both our emotions and our dreams are more associative, connected to the middle layer of the self. Beyond this are deep sleep, states reached in deep meditation, or a process drawn on when need to be creative. It is from this third layer, the deep (SQ) centre of the self, that surface phenomena get put into wider context and integrated with one another. This tertiary process is associated with spirituality and spiritual intelligence in their widest sense. At its most simple neurological level, I have described SQ as ability to reframe or recontextualize our*

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<sup>24</sup> Does our *IQ* determine our fate? Not at all in a way we would think. This book explains the reasons why people with a high *IQ* can fail miserably and not so talented people can achieve surprising successes.

<sup>25</sup> According to the authors, spiritual intelligence (*SQ*) starts where mind (*IQ*) and emotion (*EQ*) have become helpless and powerless. Thanks to *SQ*—the urge to come up with reassuring answers to the big questions of life—we can lift our actions and life into a larger system of interrelations. Anyone has access to this faculty. The question merely is: to what extent are we able, and to what extent are we ready, to use this faculty? At the end of the 20th Century, there is scientific research at our disposal supporting the reality of *SQ*. What the authors in fact are saying is that the longing for finding the final purpose of life and understanding our values originates in the human mind. *SQ* is necessary to make *IQ* and *EQ* work efficiently. *SQ* is the highest form of intelligence.

*experience, and thus an ability to transform our understanding of it. There is a mathematical theory known as 'hyperspace' that sheds some light on this at the most basic level.*

When contemplating what a material economy means, we usually speak about goods and services as well as money exchange. The goal of the economy is described as a means of "growing" or "making rich".

Spiritual economy is basically an exchange of energy to enhance our creative potential. Its goal is empowerment.

Both types of the economy work to create the conditions for abundance. What is different is the nature of the conditions and how the concept of abundance is defined.

In the economy of material goods abundance is a quantitative concept: we live in abundance when all material needs have been met and we still have a surplus.

In spiritual economy abundance is a qualitative concept: we acquire it when no obstacle is hindering the free flow of energy within us.

These two kinds of economy often are opposed to one another: to get wealthy spiritually we should be able to accept material poverty; to accumulate economic wealth we should give up some spiritual ideas, "since this is the real way of living".

Yet these two economies should complement one another in order to create a sustainable planetary culture on this earth.

The economic wealth of physical life is based upon the fulfilment of the fundamental survival and growth needs of all organisms at both the individual and the ethnical level. The concept of growth can be approached from two sides. First of all, growth is important from the point of view of survival to fulfil some basic working conditions; on the other hand, unfolding growth is fundamentally necessary for all organisms to fulfil their inner potential so that behavioural breakthroughs and new opportunities can surface.

The spiritual evolutionary level is characterized by eternity where the focus is not survival but growth. Yet, the benefits from the spiritual evolutionary level—such as serenity, love, enhanced creativity and joy—cannot be earned. You receive them as a gift.

What is the real meaning of work then? In the physical economy you usually work for survival. In spiritual economy on the other hand you mostly work to grow. We all live thanks to the *life gift* of others.

Isn't the happiest and most successful person the one who gives himself, his energy, his ideas, his joy to others without "presenting the bill" or wanted to "cash in"? Such a human being incorporates the essence of "commun-ity" by becoming for others a source of energy, mental nourishment and empowerment. This does not result in the exhaustion of his own resources, on the contrary, it brings about a broader whole in which the other can be recharged and evolve.

The challenge of a spiritual economy is to express the unlimited—the infinite—by means of the limited.

The growth of human consciousness and behaviour—viewed from this perspective—can be looked at as an educational training during which we develop our life-giving means to enhance our creative potential to a higher degree. It's a learning process during which we can better manifest the power of the infinite in a finite world, without destroying it.

The fundamental mechanism of this learning process is inter-relationship, inter-connection, commun-ity.

When interconnecting through mind and heart and learning how to empower one another, how to cooperate in symbiosis and synergy, we are bringing about a "good-will and energy field of consciousness" that not only recalls but also manifests the spiritual power of the universe.

From this point of view the growth created through spiritual economy is not characterized by becoming bigger, accumulating ever more wealth, but by interconnecting and broadening our love for one another. This is qualitative and not a quantitative expansion.

You could rightly question the very reason for existence of such an economic approach in today's material world dominated and ruled by competition.

Nowadays it's very trendy to speak about "information economy" as having replaced the industrial economy. Where information flows, the concepts of economy and wealth get new meanings. In an industrial economy it is logical that you protect your own goods and services and make them continuously competitive. In the information economy such an attitude only reduces economic potential. Information grows and becomes richer by sharing it. In this respect your wealth is not determined by how much you have or what you know but by the richness and openness of your relationship network, for this is responsible for producing new insights. These insights are proportionate to your ability to be an organic part of an empowering system and contribute to it.

*Shakespeare* once said that *the more you give the more there will be*.

Wealth and love are, therefore, energy products that reinforce one another.

*Albert Einstein*, when pondering his famous relativity theory, once wrote the following: *A human being is a part of a whole that we call the universe. Limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as being something different from the other, as some optical illusion of consciousness. This illusion is at the same time his prison where he limits himself and his dreams. The challenge, therefore, is to free himself from its prison by expanding his com-compassion to embrace all living creatures and all parts of nature.*

Spiritual economy, grounded in the whole and transcending all self-limiting particularism, serves the accomplishment of the whole human being.

## **Spiritual capital**

How does today's CEO galvanize his company to realize the best possible growth and achieve the best possible profitability?

Traditional economy still focuses on optimizing the use of financial and physical capital.

Yet, the concept and school of *human economics* is spreading more and more. *Human economics* is basically engaged in creating and using *human capital*.

Because the corporate success is increasingly defined by *knowledge works*, *human capital* has become the central source of the economy. The greatest challenge for the CEO, therefore, is how to attract and encourage human capital in the best possible way and how to make the best use of it.

*Intellectual capital* lies at the very centre of human economics. Yet, *spiritual capital* is possibly still more important. It is the only type of capital that is capable of getting into flow all the resources of a company.

According to Darwin Gillett, to whom I referred earlier in this paper, a company should integrate and bring into play three kinds of capital to ensure a sustainable and sustained growth path and success: financial, intellectual and spiritual capital.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can also witness a major shift in focus from industrial companies based on physical assets to companies based on technology and knowledge.

Darwin Gillett (Gillett, 2002) defines *spiritual capital* as follows: *Spiritual capital is the energy of the human spirit, which, when fully expressed in service to the highest good for all those connected with and affected by the company, fuels corporate success, in its broadest*

sense. This means employee fulfilment, the service of customers, respect for the environment and the community at large, as well as sustainable financial success.

In their latest book *Spiritual Capital—Wealth We Can Live By* (2004), Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall define *spiritual intelligence (SQ)* and *spiritual capital* in the following way: *Spiritual intelligence is the intelligence with which we access our deepest meanings, values, purposes, and highest motivations. SQ, spiritual capital, and sustainability are crucially linked. SQ's sense of meaning, values, and purpose generates spiritual capital. Spiritual capital's wealth of meaning, values, and higher motivation are necessary to sustainable capitalism and a sustainable society.*

Material capital relates to rational intelligence: "what I think". Social capital refers to "what I feel". Spiritual capital relates to spiritual intelligence: "what I am".

According to *Danah Zohar* and *Ian Marshall* complex adaptive systems have ten distinctive characteristics: self-organizing, bounded instability, emergent, holistic, adaptive, evolutionary mutations, destroyed by outside control, exploratory, recontextualizing, and order out of chaos.

And a person or an organization high in SQ will display the following twelve principles of transformation: self-awareness, spontaneity, vision and value led, holism, compassion, celebration of diversity, field independence, tendency to ask fundamental *why?* questions, ability to reframe, positive use of adversity, humility, and sense of vocation.

Spiritual capital, according to Darwin Gillett, thus, consists of three components: emotional energy, heart power and will power.

*Emotional energy is the source of social relationships that people seek in their work. In all too many business settings, however, those emotions are stifled, instead of setting free enormous amounts of energy. Heart energy is one of the most underutilized of corporate resources. Heart power manifests in: passion, integrity, caring, courage, and trust and faith. According to Viktor Frankl the will to meaning is the greatest motivator of the human spirit. Will power focuses energy on purpose to make it happen.*

The American *Business Week* magazine already—and deliberately—argued in a cover story of one of his 1999 issues that corporate culture and a spiritual business approach would in time become *the* competitive edge in the corporate world.

## **VI. Coda**

### **"Spirituality as the fourth bottom line"?**

Already the triple bottom line is getting increasingly important; indeed, 45% of the world's top companies publish triple bottom line reports.

We are witnessing new phenomena such as ethical investments, business value shift, multiple stakeholders. These new concepts provide evidence that an important awareness shift is taking place in today's economy: a shift from the *command-control ego-driven* organization to a *learning and healing* organization.

According to Sohail Inayatullah, professor at the Queensland University of Technology, in his most interesting and thought-provoking article *Spirituality as the Fourth Bottom Line*, the company's key organizational asset becomes its human assets, its collective memory and its shared vision.

A spiritual awareness shift not only revisits and redefines basic economic principles, but could also lay complete new foundations for the whole template of our way of life. The spiritual approach can, therefore, become an organic part of the global solution.

From a macrohistoric point of view this would mean that the spiritual approach would contribute to building a new *transmodern* model of civilization. This model would integrate the different phases of modern evolution: industrial revolution, enlightenment and postmodernity, putting into perspective previous values and approaches.

But for spirituality to become associated with the fourth bottom line, the bottom line itself must be defined with new parameters. Measuring the immeasurable will not at all be an easy task.

Professor Inayatullah suggests the following indicators to measure the spiritual awareness shift of a company:

1. *Is the company really neo-humanistic (that is, expanding identities beyond nation-state, race, religion and even humanism)?*
2. *Is there a link between the highest and lowest income, that is, are they progressively related, as the top goes up, does the bottom go up as well?*
3. *Is the prosperity ratio rational, especially in terms of purchasing capacity for the bottom?*
4. *Does gender social and environmental inclusion go beyond representation to include ways of knowing?*
5. *Does the leadership of the organization really demonstrate through example the spiritual principle?*

### **There is a spiritual solution to every problem**

I highly recommend the remarkable book of Wayne W. Dyer, *There Is A Spiritual Solution To Every Problem* (Dyer, 2001).

According to the author, everything in our universe is nothing more than energy. This means that everything—at the very core of its being—is vibrating to a certain frequency. Slower frequencies appear more solid and this is where our problems show up. Faster frequencies—such as light and thought—are less visible.

Life's big challenge for each of us is to make a choice which kind of energy field we want to resonate by. When we take responsibility for our higher self, decide to live and act by a higher frequency, we shift our awareness and access spiritual guidance. What then transpires is a clear vision that problems are mere illusions fabricated by the mind. Beset by problems we believe we have been separated from our inner source.

The essence of inner transformation, therefore, is to disconnect yourself from the world of problems created by the mind (remove the bind in the mind, so to speak) and reconnect with your inner (divine) resources.

There is a spiritual solution to every problem. Yet, the challenge is to learn to re-establish this inner connection.

Spiritual economy/wealth is, therefore, in essence to plug into the subtle vibrational energy field and stimulate its free flow in harmony with both the individual and universal forces. Csaba Varga argues in his *Metatheory* paper *that this theory will be called to bring about a new world, a new reality, a new consciousness, a new human being. It will make perceptible and give a feel for a new thought on an inevitably higher and more complex abstract integrated level.* Spiritual economy/wealth—as I explained it throughout this paper—could well become "the subtle driving force and accelerator" of this Metatheory.

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