

# **Money – Work - Generosity**

## **21-22 July 2018**

**All the documents**

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## A) What is subsistence?

### 01) 09.30 – Introduction (15')

Rules: 1) Try not to go astray in our sharing and discussion. Focus on the theme / on the questions. 2) Contribute with awareness to the evolution of the debate. 3) Do not confront others but you may challenge them. 4) Keep it confidential.

About the topic of this workshop: The economy and market forces dominate our lives and decide of our priorities. To be free of this domination we need to discern what is creative in our economic system and what is harmful. Then we may be able to choose better priorities and reorganise the way we exchange goods and services and especially the way we relate to these things in our own lives and before all how we relate to one another. Our main problem is that we are intoxicated by the surrounding way of thinking and we can't think clearly. We get confused. Among people in a frantic trance it is difficult to keep serene.

### 02) 09.45 - A few basic laws (30')

A) Let's look first on some dimensions of life and their corresponding activities. What is the impact of money? See 2 diagrams (next pages).

B) Then a few basic laws that seem to rule our relationships between people and how we relate with goods, services, exchanges, etc:

- 1) **The great inversion by market - life at the service of things:** Money and market, instead of being helpful means for a better sharing of natural and social resources in a spirit of equity and solidarity, have transformed our human relationships into struggles for power and competition. The tools have become the masters. Money replaces human relationships. The meaning of life is denied.
- 2) **We are all responsible for the world we are shaping:** the world is what we make it; as people we are the main actors; there are no other actors than us people: corporations are people, governments are people. We cannot blame big corporations because we have indeed established their power by consuming the goods they produce. We are responsible for the world in which we live because we made it. Even if we do not all enjoy the same level of power, we nevertheless are all deeply involved.
- 3) **Each choice is a vote:** each good I consume is the product of a chain of transformation that implies different resources and workers in given ecological, social conditions. Each time I choose to buy a good, I express that I agree with the way it has been produced, with the values it represents, with the impact it has (physically, socially, spiritually). This is my responsibility to choose what is truthful. Without us corporations would be nothing and have no power. Of course we all have the tendency to deny what we know about the true meaning of things when it goes against our interests or privileges.
- 4) **Marketing is based on whitewashing:** when produces are aligned on the shelves of our supermarkets, they do not show any more in which ways they have been produced. Their clean appearance makes them look innocent. This is a form of whitewashing that allows selling them. If they would reflect the injustice and exploitation (of nature or people) that they went through, we would not buy them because we would feel guilty. Whitewashing of the goods is also the whitewashing of our conscience and the whitewashing of our capacity to choose how we want to live and what matters most in life.
- 5) **Our empowerment is proportional to our inner freedom:** we tend to feel that we are powerless and that we have to adapt in order to earn our subsistence, but we have the power of our own choices that allows us transforming the way we live. We are too often trapped by our own desires and give up our own empowerment for some minor advantages the system provides to us. (=> p6).

## 02 – Dimensions of life and money

Being alive and experiencing

Being grounded in our own inner life

Meditation

Spiritual search

Prayer life

Listening to the inner voice (to the Spirit)

Relating to nature and the laws of the Universe

Being taught about the meaning of life

Observing

Becoming more aware

Consciousness

Looking for subsistence means

Doing what needs to be done to ensure subsistence for our family

Creating new forms in our practical life

Imagining

Inventing

Dreaming

Leisure time

Washing

Cooking

Eating

Gardening

Harvesting

Hunting

Building

Maintaining the house

Cutting wood for the fire

Raising children

Telling a bed story

Share tender time with the partner

Going fishing

Sport

Games

Reading

Learning

Science

Knowledge

Relating to our loved one (small family)

Relating to our friends

Relating to our neighbours

Relating to the people in our local community

Being involved in activities with others

Volunteering

Exchanging goods for money

Exchanging services for money

Helping each other

Reciprocity = exchanges without accounting

Practising a trade

Practising a profession

Earning an income

Baking bread

Farming

Research

Helping

Supporting each other

Etc.

Being alive and experiencing

Being grounded in our own inner life

Meditation

Spiritual search

Prayer life

Listening to the inner voice (to the Spirit)

Relating to nature and the laws of the Universe

Being taught about the meaning of life

Observing

Becoming more aware

**Money**

Looking for subsistence means Leisure time      Washing      Hunting

Doing what needs to be done to ensure subsistence for our family

**Money**

Inventing      Cooking      Eating      Gardening

Harvesting      Building      Maintaining the house

**Money**

Art      Raising children      Telling a bed story      Going fishing

Sport      Games      Reading      Learning

Science      Knowledge

**Money**

Being involved in activities with others      Relating to the people in our local community

**Money**

**Exchanging goods for money**      **Exchanging services for money**

**Farming**      **Practising a trade**

**Practising a profession**      **Earning an income**

Dreaming

Consciousness

Baking bread at home

Creating new forms in our practical life

Having tender time with the partner

Research

Supporting each other

Helping each other

Reciprocity = exchanges without accounting

Relating to our loved one (small family)

Relating to our friends

Relating to our neighbours

Volunteering

Cutting wood for the fire

In other words, our freedom of spirit (i.e. our ability to make the right choice independently of our own interests) is the measure of our own empowerment.

The purpose of this workshop is to reflect on these forces and to see how we may face them in our daily life and how we may use them in a more creative way that opens onto the depth of life.

Q: Comment the 5 statements above and try to illustrate them with examples out of your own life.

### 03) 10.15 - Subsistence and needs vs desires (30')

**A) Needs or desires:** We say often: we need to... but indeed we mean: we wish to... What is the difference between needs and desires? Are our needs so well established, or are they the products of cultural influences (fashion, mimetic tendencies, competition, etc.) or the products of our own personal struggles?

What are our main needs and the resources that we truly need? Where do we find the resources to satisfy our needs? How do needs and desires impact differently on these resources?

Q: This is a kind of "serious" game: If you had to leave for an unknown destination to settle and live there for ever, what would you take? You have to choose what you take with you according to the following rules:

- You may assume that everything is provided there for your physical subsistence: simple healthy food, simple shelter that protects you from rain, cold and heat, simple clothing. Everything necessary is provided for simple cooking, bedding, etc...

- All usual services (health, medias, transport, communication) are still working normally but you cannot use technology to connect to them.
- Choose 10 items (or categories of item – no limit on quantity!):
  - 1) that do not rely on any technology which needs a source of energy other than your own organic energy and
  - 2) that do not rely on money (shopping, trade).For instance you cannot use a computer, a drill or a mobile phone but you can take a hammer (hand tools) and a paper pad with pen.

**B) The positive perception of subsistence:** subsistence does not include only the minimum under threat, but just what we need to answer our deepest needs: material, emotional, affective, intellectual, spiritual. Subsistence is not survival. It is full living.

### 04) 10.45 - The hunter-gatherers model (15')

**Important notion 1 – abundance is given:** Nature provides what we need. No need for storage. Trust that it will be provided.

#### *The Original Affluent Society by Marshall Sahlins*

*Hunter-gatherers consume less energy per capita per year than any other group of human beings. The original affluent society was none other than the hunter's society in which all the people's material wants were easily satisfied. To accept that hunters are affluent is therefore to recognise that the present human condition of man slaving to bridge the gap between his unlimited wants and his insufficient means is a tragedy of modern times.*

*There are two possible courses to affluence. Wants may be "easily satisfied" either by producing much or desiring little. The familiar conception based on the concept of*

*market economies states that man's wants are great, not to say infinite, whereas his means are limited, although they can be improved. Thus, the gap between means and ends can be narrowed by industrial productivity, at least to the point that "urgent goods" become plentiful. But there is also a Zen road to affluence, which states that human material wants are finite and few, and technical means unchanging but on the whole adequate. Adopting the Zen strategy, a people can enjoy an unparalleled material plenty - with a low standard [material] of living. That, I think, describes the hunters. And it helps explain some of their more curious economic behaviour: their "prodigality" for example - the inclination to consume at once all stocks on hand, as if they had it made. Free from market obsessions of scarcity, hunters' economic propensities may be more consistently predicated on abundance than our own. "In poor nations the people are comfortable", whereas in rich nations, "they are generally poor".*

*"Mere subsistence economy", "limited leisure save in exceptional circumstances", incessant quest for food", "meagre and relatively unreliable" natural resources, "absence of an economic surplus", "maximum energy from a maximum number of people" so runs the fair average anthropological opinion of hunting and gathering. [...] Current low opinions of the hunting-gathering economy [may be seen as a form of] Bourgeois ethnocentrism. [...] Modern capitalist societies, however richly endowed, dedicate themselves to the proposition of scarcity. Inadequacy of economic means is the first principle of the world's wealthiest peoples. The market-industrial system institutes scarcity, in a manner completely without parallel. Where production and distribution are arranged through the behaviour of prices, and all livelihoods depend on*

*getting and spending, insufficiency of material means becomes the explicit, calculable starting point of all economic activity. [...] Yet scarcity is not an intrinsic property of technical means. It is a relation between means and ends. We should entertain the empirical possibility that hunters are in business for their health, a finite objective, and that bow and arrow are adequate to that end.*

*[...] Marginal as the Australian or Kalahari Desert is to agriculture, or to everyday European experience, it is a source of wonder to the untutored observer "how anybody could live in a place like this". The inference that the natives manage only to eke out a bare existence is apt to be reinforced by their marvellously varied diets. Ordinarily including objects deemed repulsive and inedible by Europeans, the local cuisine lends itself to the supposition that the people are starving to death. It is a mistake to suppose that the native Australians "have small means of subsistence, or are at times greatly pressed for want of food".*

*Many and "almost ludicrous" are the errors travellers have fallen into in this regard: "They lament in their journals that the unfortunate Aborigines should be reduced by famine to the miserable necessity of subsisting on certain sorts of food, which they have found near their huts; whereas, in many instances, the articles thus quoted by them are those which the natives most prize, and are really neither deficient in flavour nor nutritious qualities". To render palpable "the ignorance that has prevailed with regard to the habits and customs of these people when in their wild state", Grey provides one remarkable example, a citation from his fellow explorer, Captain Stuart, who, upon encountering a group of Aborigines engaged in gathering large quantities of mimosa gum, deduced that the*

*"unfortunate creatures were reduced to the last extremity, and, being unable to procure any other nourishment, had been obliged to collect this mucilaginous". But, according to Grey, the gum in question is a favourite article of food in the area, and when in season it affords the opportunity for large numbers of people to assemble and camp together, which otherwise they are unable to do. He concludes: "Generally speaking, the natives live well; in some districts there may be at particular seasons of the year a deficiency of food, but if such is the case, these tracts are, at those times, deserted. It is, however, utterly impossible for a traveller or even for a strange native to judge. Whether a district affords an abundance of food, or the contrary... But in his own district a native is very differently situated; he knows exactly what it produces, the proper time at which the several articles are in season, and the readiest means of procuring them. According to these circumstances he regulates his visits to different portions of his hunting ground; and I can only say that I have always found the greatest abundance in their huts."*

### ***The lilies of the field (Gospel – Matthew 6:24-34- St Francis of Assisi)***

*"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can't serve both God and Mammon. Therefore I tell you, don't be anxious for your life: what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothing? See the birds of the sky, that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you of much more value than they? "Which of you, by being anxious, can add one moment to his lifespan? Why are you*

*anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith? "Therefore don't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day's own evil is sufficient.*

Q: Is this text to be taken literally? There is a form of abundance in nature that we have lost touch with. What is this logic of abundance? Describe.

**Conclusion: Money and market create penury.**

### *11.00 - MORNING TEA*

### **05) 11.30 - Chayanov's law and its corollary (30')**

**Important notion 2 – self-limitation allows harmony:** Work according to needs and means; and then celebration of life.

Chayanov's law: "The greater the ratio of workers to consumers in a household, the less each worker produces; production stops as needs are covered". As the consequence of the law of numbers for communities that live on a subsistence basis (i.e. mainly traditional and rural societies), the intensity of production per worker decreases in proportion to the number of consumers per worker. It means that workers in charge of more dependants work harder than the ones who

have to feed fewer. In other words the intensity of work depends on the range of the needs multiplied by the number of dependants. Production will even stop when needs are satisfied or when abundance is provided. Corollary of Chayanov's law: when needs are satisfied one may spend time celebrating life (making friends, dances, rituals).

Q: How do you practise Chayanov's law and its corollary in your own life?

**Conclusion: when needs are covered we can celebrate life (live to the full... if life is not already lived to the full!)**

## **06) 12.00 - Subsistence as a duration (15')**

**Important notion 3 – inversion of our usual understanding of work: first comes subsistence that makes work possible (and not the contrary).** Subsistence provides the conditions to be able to work and not work the conditions to be able to subsist. We need first to be fed and clothed before we can work and be creative. And not the contrary as we believe too often, i.e. that we have to work to be able to be fed and clothed. Subsistence comes first, before work. It is why we care for our children to be in full possession of their potentials and they can thrive because they are cared for. The same is true for all of us.

And subsistence is linked with duration. Whether our work is productive or not, we have the same needs: 3 meals a day if possible, some 8h sleep, a good roof and warm and protecting clothes, not mentioning affective needs. The increase of our work does not increase our needs. When subsistence is ensured we can work without having to produce or we may work for free. This brings a great freedom for creativity, generosity and creating links. On the contrary our system believes that for each hour more I work I need to be paid the same amount. It means that if we work more we should become rich. I hope you can see that this is nonsense.

Finland recently has made the experience of distributing a minimal income given without conditions to a certain group of people in need, in order to allow them to thrive. It seemed to be very effective. Many similar experiences have been made elsewhere too. A basic minimal income (kind of old age pension for life) could replace any form of salary and we could work for free. We all could get a minimal income and be free to work as we want to.

Q: Although we all have to work for answering our needs, how do you perceive in your life that subsistence is indeed a duration and not a product of work, proportional to the time you spend working? How do you feel about a minimum income provided for all and equal for all.

**Conclusion: subsistence comes first (duration and not product); our social surroundings provide it; then we can work fully and participate in the thriving of our community (an offering).**

## **07) 12.15 - Traditional model - Ownership and access – The Commons (30')**

**Important notion 4 – the Commons - most wealth is common wealth (natural and social resources):** abundance depends on harmonious relationships with nature and on our social belonging.

What is the link between work and resources?

- 1) Natural resources: they are given free by nature. Life, water, air, wood, food.
- 2) Cultural and social resources: they are given free by society. Language, knowledge, education, skills, relationships, love, ethics, spiritual teaching.
- 3) These resources need work to be made available: wood that becomes a table, teaching in schools, books to be written and printed.

- 4) Work is time of subsistence. We need to be alive to be able to work and serve our family and community.
- 5) Things cost because work costs (is compensated for) because subsistence costs because work costs. Or everything could be free if work were free.
- 6) Most goods multiply when they are shared: justice, peace, love, knowledge.
- 7) Most goods cannot be divided: universal equilibrium of nature, gravitation, love, spirituality.

Ownership or access to use:

- 1) The gifts of nature and the wealth of common heritage are provided by our surroundings. We learned everything from our context. Even our skills are given to us, and developed thanks to our context. Everything is free: life, air, water, love, knowledge, culture, spirituality. Food grows because of the sun and the rain and the nourishment of the soil, etc.
- 2) Why do things cost?
- 3) What is best: private property or shared property? We tend to store goods on our shelves instead of making them available (accessible) for all. Access to use is much more efficient than ownership. Few things indeed are truly property. If tools are common to a whole neighbourhood, all people can access them and use them when they need them. The most essential goods should be common: schools, public libraries, public infrastructure, etc.
- 4) Making it accessible for all and keeping it as a common wealth. The Commons are the root of our prosperity. The more we share the more we get rich; equality generates harmony.

Q: Why are we so scared to share all available goods?

*13.00 - LUNCH*

## B) Money

### **08) 14.30 – Barter (30')**

#### **A) Game of bartering**

### **09) 15.00 - Money not only as transfer of value (90')**

#### **B) Game of selling.**

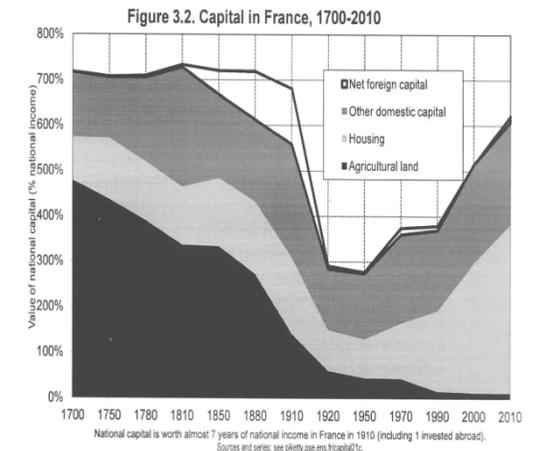
Q: What are, in the experience of these two games, the main differences of quality between the two systems (barter and exchange through money)? In what do they contradict the quality you expect to develop in your own life?

The use of money changes the value of things: e.g. land and work (see below)

#### **C) A few aspects:**

- 1) Pragmatic aspects of money.
- 2) Problem of conversion
- 3) Money as a yardstick
- 4) Speculation

Open discussion.



## 09 – Many aspects of money

### Pragmatic aspects:

- 1) Facility of transport (my ox in my pocket),
- 2) Subdivision of value (the leg of my ox and not the whole ox),
- 3) Dissociation of buyer and seller (the butcher takes my ox but I get my tools from the hardware shop),
- 4) Dissociation of items (I sell my ox and then think about my tools),
- 5) Multiplication of choices (I may buy my tools from different sources – choice of quality and provenance).
- 6) Money can also correct inequalities and injustice, as compensation or as redistribution of wealth. Note that this is not structural but only a correction.

### Problem of conversion:

- 1) What is the true value? How much should it cost?
- 2) Value and price are not the same.
- 3) Values fluctuate according to perceptions.
- 4) Prices fluctuate under the influence of market and speculation (retaining or flooding).
- 5) Market influences the prices but not the value (our personal valuation).
- 6) What does the price represent indeed?

### Money as a yardstick:

- 1) Measuring wealth (according to price and not value). Variations in the stick length! (see Piketty's graph p10).
- 2) GDP, exchange rates, local prices, market influence, land value, falsify the comparisons.
- 3) What cannot be sold: natural cycles, sunshine, air, light has no price (in the double sense of the expression).
- 4) Values without price: equity, justice, peace, love, etc.

### Speculation:

- 1) Because of conversion money may produce money: stock exchange, investment, interest rate, play on exchange rate, etc.).
- 2) The way to become rich without working: the same as above...
- 3) Is the practice of interest rates justified?
- 4) Usury is forbidden by Islam.

## 10) 16.30 - Income and profit – Market impact - Price calculation

Difference between income and profit:

- 1) Income is what I earn through my work, either directly if I produce the goods I need or indirectly through money that allows me buying what I need. What I earn helps me to answer my own needs and the needs of my dependents and satisfy our aspirations.
- 2) Profit is what I earn on top of that: it is the value I can detach from the goods that pass through my hands when I can sell them for more than what they cost me, i.e. to cover my costs in material, equipment and work.

Remember: subsistence is only time (duration). It is what income has to cover.

The just price: resources (free) + knowledge (free) + common experience (free) + the embodied past work (time of subsistence of others) + my time of subsistence (income) + my costs (equipment and tools = free resources + paid embodied work)

Q: Do you agree with this calculation?

17.00 – AFTERNOON TEA

## 11) 17.30 – 4 transformations that money brings into our lives (60')

- 1) From network to egocentrism
  - 2) Extension of needs and overconsumption
  - 3) Pyramid: wealth sucked up the ladder
  - 4) Search for profit as destruction of the Commons
- (See 4 diagrams on the next pages)

19.00 – DINNER

\* \* \* \*

SUNDAY MORNING

07.30 – MEDITATION

08.00 – BREAKFAST

## C) Work

### 12) 09.30 - What is work - Many forms of work (30')

*Judith Wright: Eve to her daughters*

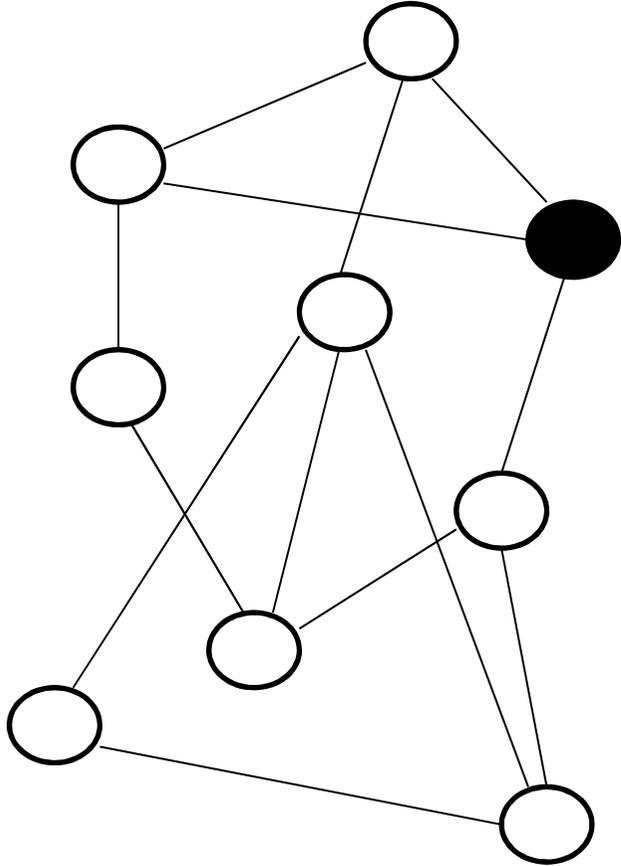
*It was not I who began it.  
Turned out into draughty caves,  
hungry so often, having to work for our bread,  
hearing the children whining,  
I was nevertheless not unhappy.  
Where Adam went I was fairly contented to go.  
I adapted myself to the punishment: it was my life.*

*But Adam, you know ... !  
He kept on brooding over the insult,  
over the trick They had played on us, over the scolding.  
He had discovered a flaw in himself  
and he had to make up for it.  
Outside Eden the earth was imperfect,  
the seasons changed, the game was fleet-footed,  
he had to work for our living, and he didn't like it.  
He even complained of my cooking  
(it was hard to compete with Heaven).*

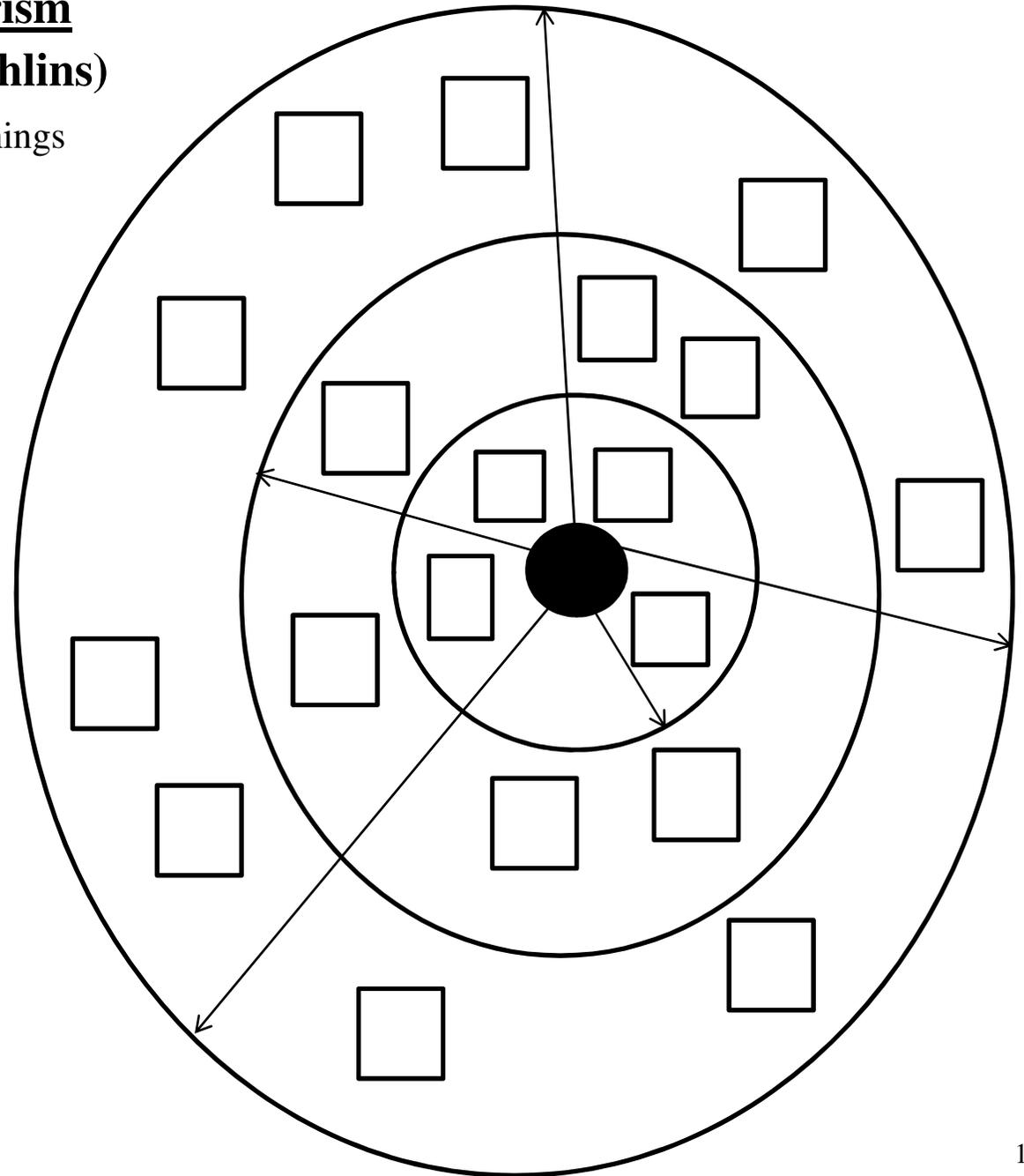
## Transfo 1: from network to egocentrism

**Money replaces relationships (M. Sahlins)**

in the next sketches: ○ = people □ = things



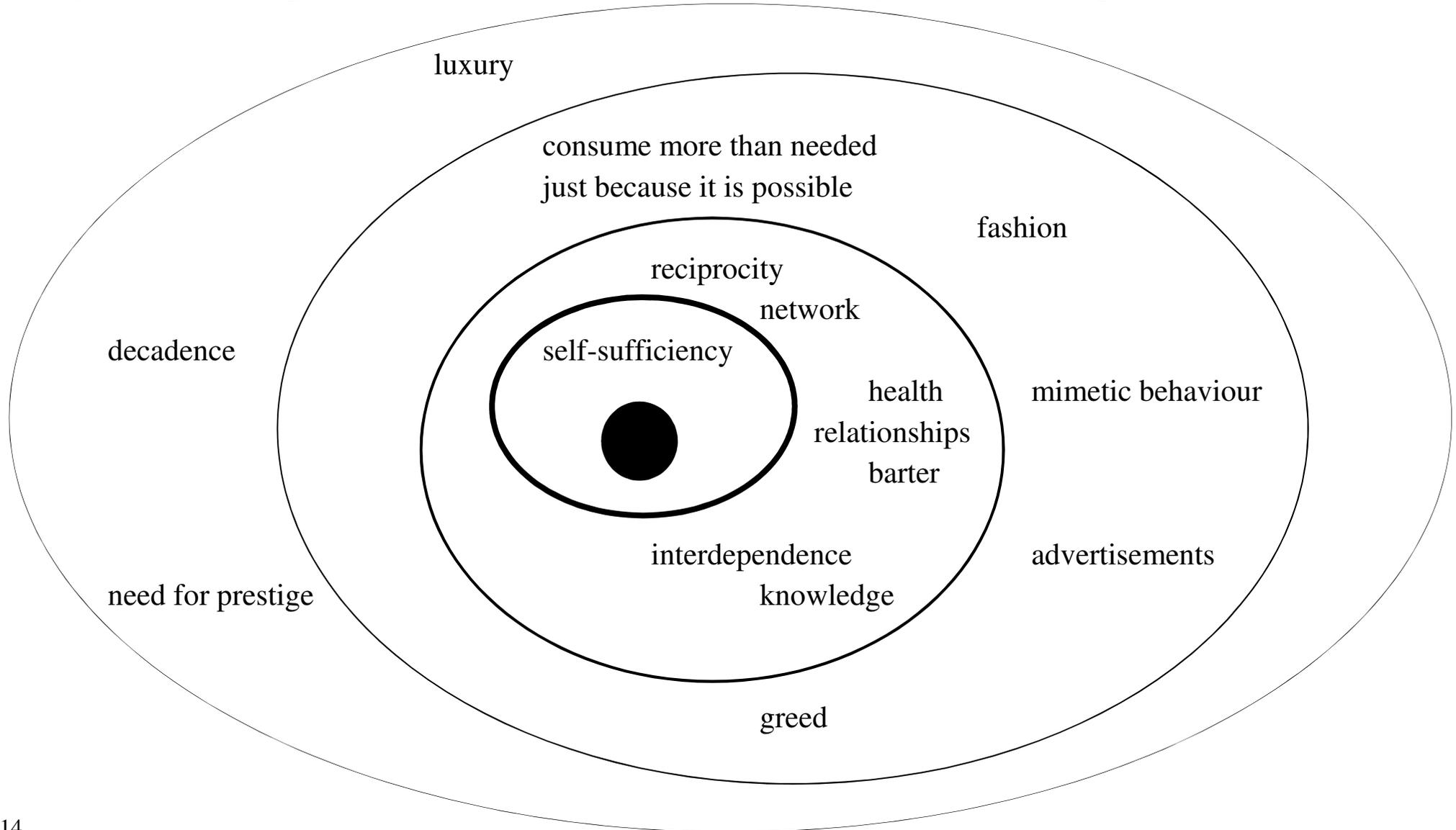
**An ever growing self-centeredness**



## Transfo 2: from self-sufficiency to over-consuming

Without money our needs would be more reduced (self-sufficiency and interdependence)

Money makes consumption easy and therefore increases our needs just because it is possible



## **Transfo 3: Pyramid and hierarchy**

### **A few richest drain the wealth of many**

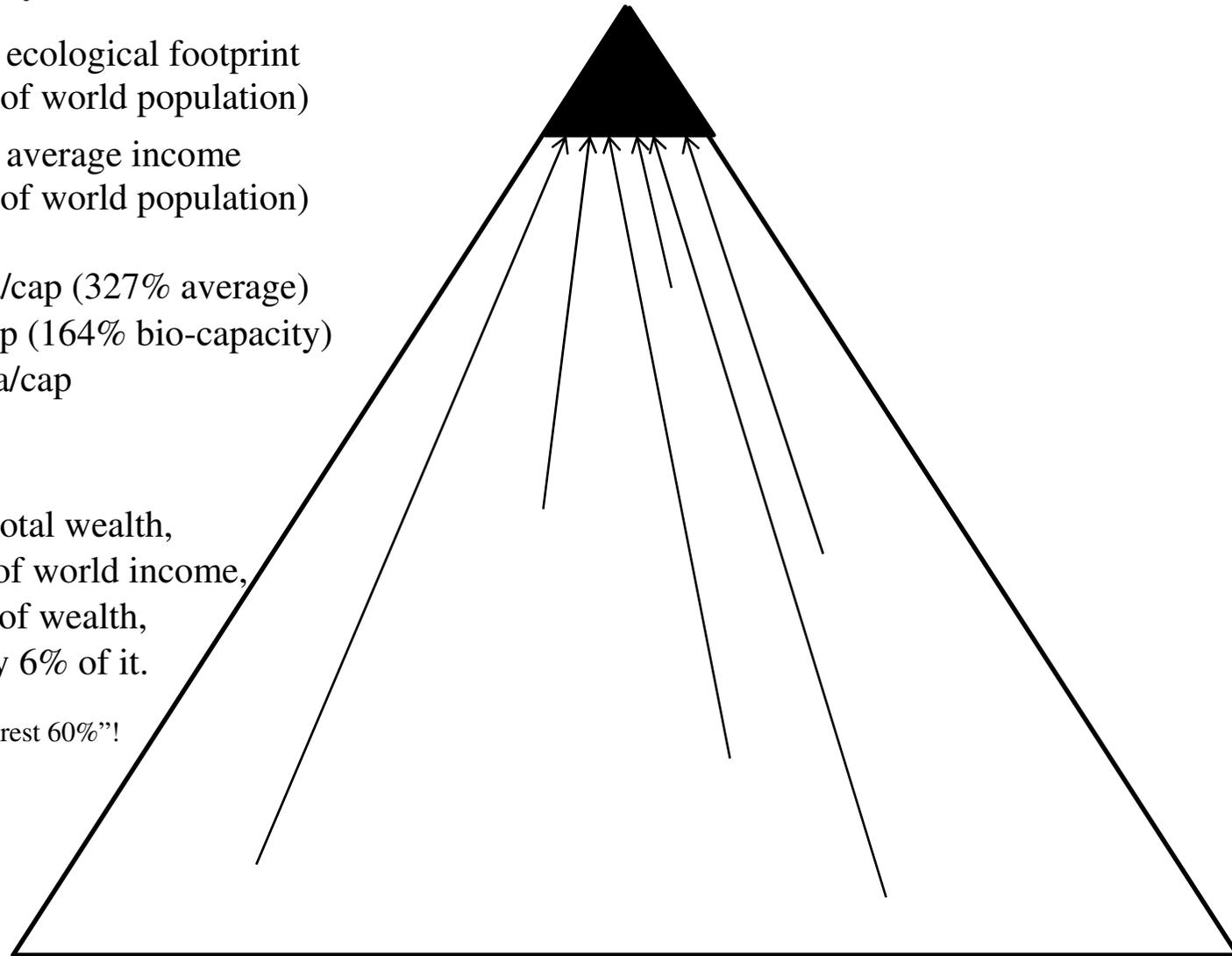
**Australia:** 4<sup>th</sup> / 187 countries for the ecological footprint  
(top 4 countries = 0.36% of world population)  
6<sup>th</sup> / 187 countries for the average income  
(top 6 countries = 0,55% of world population)

- Australia's footprint in 2016: 9.3 ha/cap (327% average)
- Average world footprint: 2.84 ha/cap (164% bio-capacity)
- Average world bio-capacity: 1.73 ha/cap

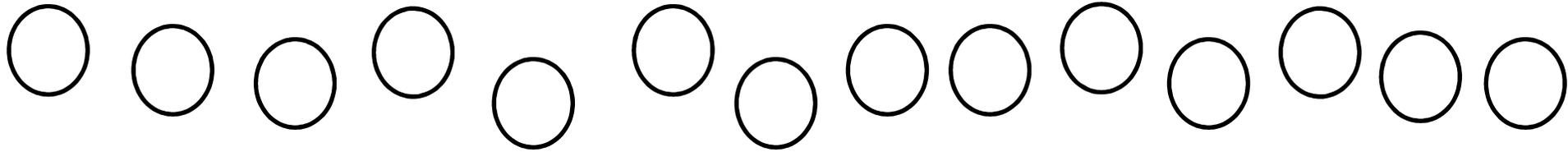
### **In the world in general:**

- the richest 1% owns 48% of world total wealth,
- the richest 20% (us) consume 80% of world income,
- hence the other 80% consume 20% of wealth,
- the “poorest” 60% (\*) consume only 6% of it.

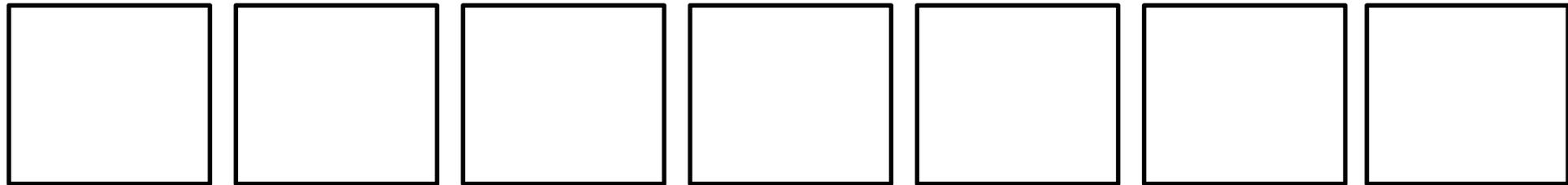
(\*) Examine the paradox of the expression “the poorest 60%”!



## Transfo 4: profit replaces purposefulness and spirit of service



People do not matter. They can be used. Their work and living conditions degrade.



Things do not matter either. They are just an opportunity for speculation. Quality degrades. Purposefulness disappears.



Profit consists in **detaching** from the goods sold the part of value I can **keep for myself**: this part is indeed the fruit of the work of others = this is a common good (common natural resources or cycles, knowledge, know-how, creativity, ethics, etc.). Profit is made possible to be detached because I can play on the difference between price and value. Profit destroys the Commons.

**Search for profit: 1) generates overproduction, 2) reinforces globalisation and competition, 3) prevents exchanges from satisfying real needs and 4) destroys good life conditions.**

*So he set to work.  
The earth must be made a new Eden  
with central heating, domesticated animals,  
mechanical harvesters, combustion engines,  
escalators, refrigerators,  
and modern means of communication  
and multiplied opportunities for safe investment  
and higher education for Abel and Cain  
and the rest of the family  
You can see how his pride had been hurt.*

*In the process he had to unravel everything,  
because he believed that mechanism  
was the whole secret—he was always mechanical-minded.  
He got to the very inside of the whole machine  
exclaiming as he went *So this is how it works!*  
And now that I know how it works, why, I must have invented it.  
As for God and the Other, they cannot be demonstrated,  
and what cannot be demonstrated  
doesn't exist.  
You see, he had always been jealous.*

*Yes, he got to the centre  
where nothing at all can be demonstrated.  
And clearly he doesn't exist; but he refuses  
to accept the conclusion.  
You see, he was always an egotist.*

*It was warmer than this in the cave;  
there was none of this fall-out.  
I would suggest, for the sake of the children,  
that it's time you took over.*

*But you are my daughters, you inherit my own faults of character;  
you are submissive, following Adam  
even beyond existence.  
Faults of character have their own logic  
and it always works out.  
I observed this with Abel and Cain.*

*Perhaps the whole elaborate fable  
right from the beginning  
is meant to demonstrate this; perhaps it's the whole secret.  
Perhaps nothing exists but our faults?  
At least they can be demonstrated.*

*But it's useless to make  
such a suggestion to Adam..  
He has turned himself into God,  
who is faultless, and doesn't exist.*

#### What is work?

Definition of work for you.

And what is not work? or maybe everything is work because it involves creativity.

Household work, maintenance, training, raising children, leisure, sport, relationships, neighbourhood, volunteering, community building, activism, meditation, etc.

#### Many forms of work:

Self-sufficiency (farmer), shadow work (home), self-employed (global), employment (wage according to duration), creativity, relationships, etc.  
We all combine and experience these different forms and many others.

**12 – All different kinds of work – shadow work and paid work: give examples out of your own life**

**Household**

**Self-sufficiency**

**Relationships**

**Community**

**Spirituality**

**Creativity**

**Learning**

**Leisure**

**Transport**

**Self-employmt**

**Employment**

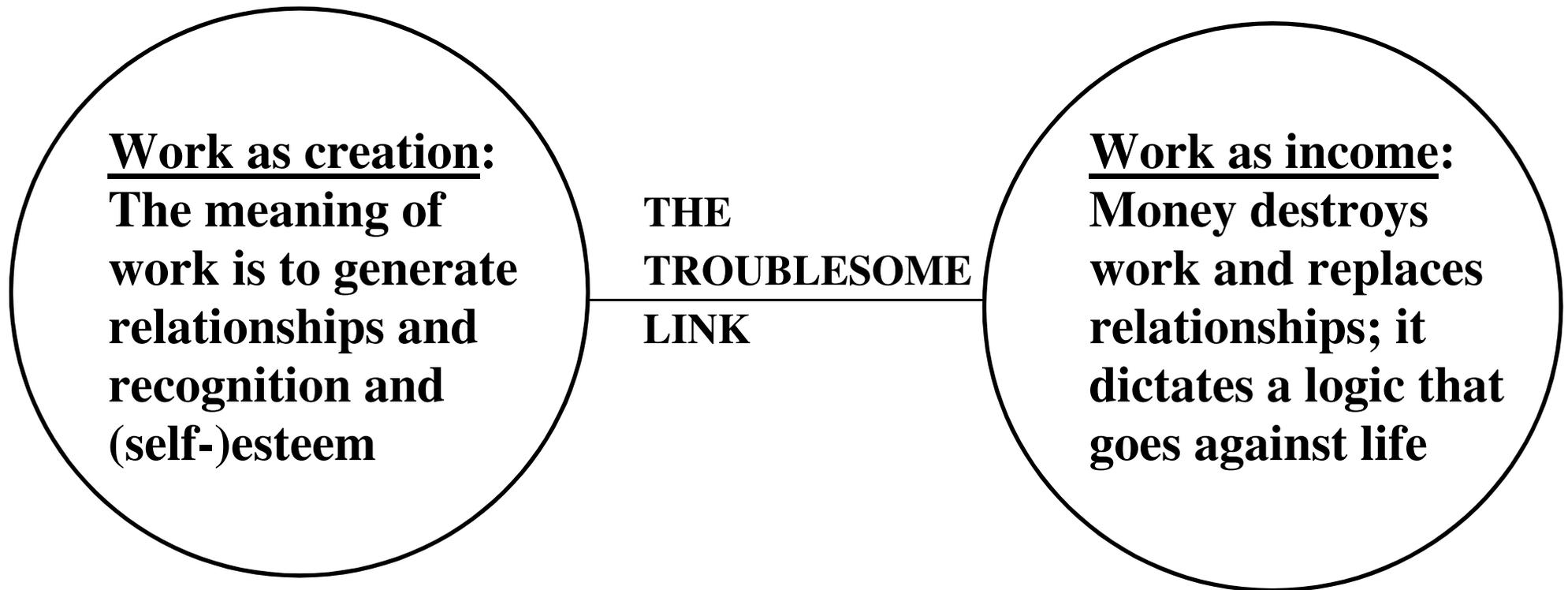
**Unemployment**

**Others?**

**Add your own**

# 13 – All kinds of work – shadow work and paid work – what is the impact of paid work?

<u>Shadow work</u>	<u>Self-sufficiency</u>	<u>Relationships</u>	<u>Spirituality</u>	<u>Learning</u>	<u>Creativity</u>	<u>Transport</u>
Cooking	Gardening	Raising children	Meditation	Reading	Dreaming	Going to work
Cleaning	Maintenance	Intimacy with partner	Teaching	Training	Imagining	Holidays
Washing	House repairs	Hospitality	Sacred texts	Keeping informed	Inventing	Visiting family
Clothes repair	Building	Friends	Prayer	Experimenting	Singing	
Shopping	Cleaning gutters	Neighbours	Celebrating	Leisure	Painting	
Health care	Cutting wood	Community			Playing instrument	
Sport	Self-employment	Volunteering			Activism	



# 13 – Where do the necessary resources for work come from?

What makes work possible? Enumerate and illustrate all components of work and where they come from (who provides them).

- 1) Choose examples of types of work – as varied as possible - from the previous page and 2) describe what their necessary resources are.
- 3) Describe finally what the worker is providing... if he does provide anything.

**Type: of work:**

**Resources:**

**Sources:**

**Providers:**

**Worker provides:**

**Type: of work:**

**Resources:**

**Sources:**

**Providers:**

**Worker provides:**

**Type: of work:**  
**Resources:**

**Sources:**

**Providers:**

**Worker provides:**

**Type: of work:**  
**Resources:**

**Sources:**

**Providers:**

**Worker provides:**

### 13) 10.00 - Work as a good for sale - The link work – money (30')

There is, in the transformation of work into a good for sale on market, a form of deep humiliation which is similar to the one of racism. Humiliation by money and humiliation by racism have both their roots in the same confusion: what is the value of human life and human person as such? what is the meaning of life (the purpose)? what is our common humanity?

For more clarity and to avoid any misunderstanding: there is no humiliation in the fact work is compensated for with money; the deep humiliation consists in the fact that money may force us to do a work that is in contradiction with our aspirations. We then become slaves. This is the present power money has over all of us when it becomes the dominant law of our world. Read the following text in transposing the issue of racism into the issue of money power.

#### ***Martin Luther King: The Current Crisis in Race Relations***

*In American life there is today a real crisis in race relations. This crisis has been precipitated, on the one hand, by the determined resistance of reactionary elements in the South to the Supreme Court's momentous decision against segregation in the public schools. Many states have risen in open defiance. Legislative halls of the South ring loud with such words as "interposition" and "nullification." The Ku Klux Klan is on the march again, determined to preserve segregation at any cost. Then there are the White Citizens Councils. All of these forces have conjoined to make for massive resistance.*

*The crisis has been precipitated, on the other hand, by the radical change in the Negro's evaluation of himself. There would probably be no crisis in race relations if the Negro continued to think of himself in inferior terms and patiently accepted injustice and exploitation. But it is at this very*

*point that the change has come. For many years the Negro tacitly accepted segregation. He was the victim of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. The system of slavery and segregation caused many Negroes to feel that perhaps they were inferior. This is the ultimate tragedy of segregation. It not only harms one physically, but it injures one spiritually. It scars the soul and distorts the personality. It inflicts the segregator with a false sense of superiority while inflicting the segregated with a false sense of inferiority. But through the forces of history something happened to the Negro. He came to feel that he was somebody. He came to feel that the important thing about a man is not the color of his skin or the texture of his hair, but the texture and quality of his soul. With this new sense of dignity and new self-respect a new Negro emerged. So there has been a revolutionary change in the Negro's evaluation of his nature and destiny, and a determination to achieve freedom and human dignity.*

*This determination springs from the same longing for freedom that motivates oppressed people all over the world. The deep rumblings of discontent from Asia and Africa are at bottom a quest for freedom and human dignity on the part of the people who have long been the victims of colonialism and imperialism. The struggle for freedom on the part of oppressed people in general and the American Negro in particular is not suddenly going to disappear. It is sociologically true that privileged classes rarely ever give up their privileges without strong resistance. It is also true that once oppressed people rise up against their oppression there is no stopping point short of full freedom. So realism impels us to admit that the struggle will continue until freedom is a reality for all of the oppressed peoples of the world.*

Market impacts on the value (not the price!) and the meaning of work. And consequently on our own value as human being.

The share of work in national wealth compared to the share of capital income.

**Labor is losing out**  
The share of national income paid to workers has been declining in many countries.  
(evolution of the labor share of income, percent)

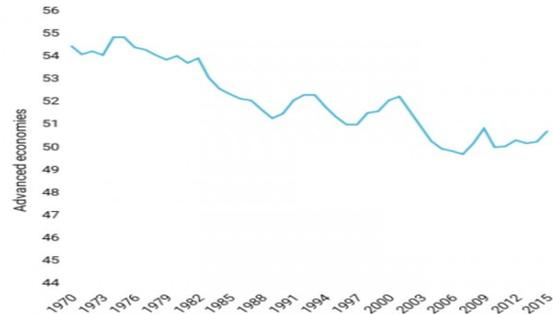
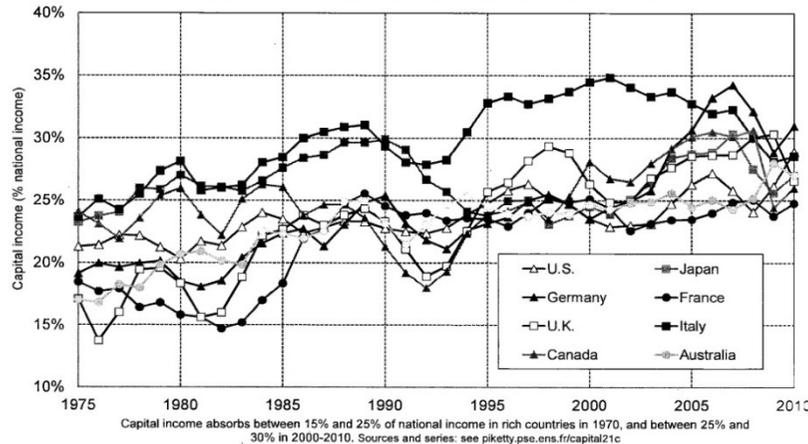


Figure 6.5. The capital share in rich countries, 1975-2010



Q: Marx: Privatisation of social goods and socialisation of private wastes. Why do we refuse to see that most of our wealth belongs to the Commons?

Q: How can one justify differences of income if our needs are similar (same duration of subsistence) and our knowledge and skills inherited from our social context?

What is the difference between work as a job (income earning) and work as creation (opus)?

In Karma the radical *cri* means creation.

Work as an opus (work of art - oeuvre) and not labour / trade (suffering – travail). The opus as a gift back to life and the community.

### 10.30 - MORNING TEA

## 14) 11.00 - The vernacular model – Reciprocity (60')

The vernacular model is the model of (home) subsistence that was practised traditionally: self-sufficiency and barter and exchange of services, with a minimum use of money because money is rare.

It has the following characteristics:

- Home economy: many activities, no specialisation.
- Subsistence and needs linked by Chayanov's law.
- Adaptation to natural laws because the survival of the community depends on nature.
- Self-limitation because there is no emphasis on material accumulation. Sufficiency is the reference measure (and not fashion).
- Reciprocity as a never ending process of exchanges of goods and services that never compensate each other but never stop either creating new links of dependency and friendship (community).
- Feminine and anti-patriarchal attitudes because women are very powerful in their role. (Understand well: subsistence is anti-patriarchal; it does not mean the structure of the society cannot be patriarchal).

- No unisex issue of professions that use us as cogs without considerations for our differences of gender. In our market society (in most cases) a woman has to practise her job as a man does. This is masculinisation of tasks and behaviours.
- Diversity and complementarity are the basics of the exchange system, instead of competition.

Today in our modern society money replaces relationships because it puts an end to each exchange by proposing the “right and final” compensation. By contrast reciprocity generates social links because it never tries to compensate fully what has been received but just creates a new “imbalance” through new exchanges that call in turn for more exchanges in future. Reciprocity is:

- A rough (and generous) calculation of exchanges that generate deep human relationships.
- A space for creativity and free exchanges.
- Work becomes a free gift to the community.
- Work becomes a link that generates social relationships and personal recognition.
- In work there is always an uncertainty of result because of creativity. When one searches for a solution it may pop up in a few seconds or take weeks of long investigations.
- LETS is a management tool, not a value.

Q: Examine reciprocity as a way to replace market exchanges. How much is reciprocity present in your life?

*13.00 - LUNCH*

## **D) Generosity**

### **16) 14.30 – The flow of life and creativity (30’)**

Economy should be a tool for service and not a dominant force: exchanges and work are meant to satisfy further deeper human needs. Yet nowadays economy has become the law that rules our lives and makes us slaves of a general greed for profit; our lives are driven by artificial desires that indeed do not matter much because they even do not answer our deeper needs. What would an economy at the service of mankind look like? This is the big shift we have to go through: an other way of perceiving the Reality of our world and of Life.

In the following text, the “self” means the separate entity we believe we are as separate human beings, or individuals.

### ***Ken Wilber: Translation versus transformation***

*In a series of books (e.g., A Sociable God, Up from Eden, The Eye of Spirit), I have tried to show that religion itself has always performed two very important, but very different, functions. One, it acts as a way of creating meaning for the separate self: it offers myths and stories and tales and narratives and rituals and revivals that, taken together, help the separate self make sense of, and endure, the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. This function of religion does not usually or necessarily change the level of consciousness in a person; it does not deliver radical transformation. Nor does it deliver a shattering liberation from the separate self altogether. Rather, it consoles the self, fortifies the self, defends the self, promotes the self. As long as the separate self believes the myths, performs the*

*rituals, mouths the prayers, or embraces the dogma, then the self, it is fervently believed, will be “saved”—either now in the glory of being God-saved or Goddess-favored, or in an afterlife that ensures eternal wonderment.*

*But two, religion has also served—in a usually very, very small minority—the function of radical transformation and liberation. This function of religion does not fortify the separate self, but utterly shatters it—not consolation but devastation, not entrenchment but emptiness, not complacency but explosion, not comfort but revolution—in short, not a conventional bolstering of consciousness but a radical transmutation and transformation at the deepest seat of consciousness itself.*

*There are several different ways that we can state these two important functions of religion. The first function—that of creating meaning for the self—is a type of horizontal movement; the second function—that of transcending the self—is a type of vertical movement (higher or deeper, depending on your metaphor). The first I have named translation; the second, transformation.*

*With translation, the self is simply given a new way to think or feel about reality. The self is given a new belief—perhaps holistic instead of atomistic, perhaps forgiveness instead of blame, perhaps relational instead of analytic. The self then learns to translate its world and its being in the terms of this new belief or new language or new-paradigm, and this new and enchanting translation acts, at least temporarily, to alleviate or diminish the terror inherent in the heart of the separate self.*

*But with transformation, the very process of translation itself is challenged, witnessed, undermined, and eventually dismantled. With typical translation, the self (or subject) is given a new way to think about the world (or objects); but with radical transformation, the self itself is inquired into, looked into, grabbed by its throat, and literally throttled to death.*

*Put it one last way: with horizontal translation—which is by far the most prevalent, widespread, and widely shared function of religion—the self is, at least temporarily, made happy in its grasping, made content in its enslavement, made complacent in the face of the screaming terror that is in fact its innermost condition. With translation, the self goes sleepy into the world, stumbles numbed and near-sighted into the nightmare of samsara, is given a map laced with morphine with which to face the world. And this, indeed, is the common condition of a religious humanity, precisely the condition that the radical or transformative spiritual realizers have come to challenge and to finally undo.*

*For authentic transformation is not a matter of belief but of the death of the believer; not a matter of translating the world but of transforming the world; not a matter of finding solace but of finding infinity on the other side of death. The self is not made content; the self is made toast.*

*Now, although I have obviously been favoring transformation and belittling translation, the fact is that, on the whole, both of these functions are incredibly important and altogether indispensable. Individuals are not, for the most part, born enlightened. They are born in a world of sin and suffering, hope and fear, desire and despair. They are*

*born as a self ready and eager to contract; a self rife with hunger, thirst, tears, and terror. And they begin, quite early on, to learn various ways to translate their world, to make sense of it, to give meaning to it, and to defend themselves against the terror and the torture never lurking far beneath the happy surface of the separate self.*

*And as much as we, as you and I, might wish to transcend mere translation and find an authentic transformation, nonetheless translation itself is an absolutely necessary and crucial function for the greater part of our lives. Those who cannot translate adequately, with a fair amount of integrity and accuracy, fall quickly into severe neurosis or even psychosis: the world ceases to make sense—the boundaries between the self and the world are not transcended but instead begin to crumble. This is not breakthrough but breakdown; not transcendence but disaster.*

*But at some point in our maturation process, translation itself, no matter how adequate or confident, simply ceases to console. No new beliefs, no new-paradigm, no new myths, no new ideas, will staunch the encroaching anguish. Not a new belief for the self, but the transcendence of the self altogether, is the only path that avails.*

*Still, the number of individuals who are ready for such a path is, always has been, and likely always will be, a very small minority. For most people, any sort of religious belief will fall instead into the category of consolation: it will be a new horizontal translation that fashions some sort of meaning in the midst of the monstrous world. And religion has always served, for the most part, this first function, and served it well.*

*I therefore also use the word legitimacy to describe this first function (the horizontal translation and creation of meaning for the separate self). And much of religion's important service is to provide legitimacy to the self—legitimacy to its beliefs, its paradigms, its worldviews, and its way in the world. This function of religion to provide a legitimacy to the self and its beliefs—no matter how temporary, relative, non-transformative, or illusory—has nonetheless been the single greatest and most important function of the world's religious traditions. The capacity of a religion to provide horizontal meaning, legitimacy, and sanction for the self and its beliefs—that function of religion has historically been the single greatest “social glue” that any culture has.*

*And one does not tamper easily, or lightly, with the basic glue that holds societies together. Because more often than not, when that glue dissolves—when that translation dissolves—the result, as we were saying, is not breakthrough but breakdown, not liberation but social chaos.*

*Where translative religion offers legitimacy, transformative religion offers authenticity. For those few individuals who are ready—that is, sick with the suffering of the separate self, and no longer able to embrace the legitimate worldview—then a transformative opening, to true authenticity, true enlightenment, true liberation, calls more and more insistently.*

*[Extract of One Taste, KW Journal 1997]*

*[Further in the same text, KW shows how both functions have indeed to combine one with another]*

Now that we have, with the help of KW, made more precise what true transformation is, let's see what this big shift consists in. In summary we saw so far that:

- All resources (social and natural) are given freely: life, knowledge, skills, material resources...
- Subsistence is nothing more than a duration (similar needs for all).
- Work is not a job (earning money) but a creation (opus) that is meant to create links between people.
- Things are nothing else than embodied work, i.e. embodied time.

**This is the big shift:**

**Everything is given (it is called the Commons). Subsistence is limited to a duration (time) that is easy to ensure (Chayanov's law + role of community). The only dimension we add through our work is our creativity as a free gift in return to our community in the duration.**

**In other words: all resources are given in a constant flow and work is time (i.e. flow). This is the perfect flow of Life that creates ever new relationships. Matter and things are only means and not purposes.**

Therefore there does not seem to be any sense for private property (except the personal use of personal items such as tooth brushes).

**Everything is the flow of time (life).**

**We do not own things but we belong.**

Q: After the work we did together this weekend, how do you react to the new shift as defined here above?

You may disagree; tell us then why!

## **17) 15.00 – Radical generosity: principles of gratuity and reciprocity (30')**

Everything is provided, even our own skills and gifts.

Reciprocity creates unending relationships.

Chayanov's law: beyond subsistence, everything can be given freely.

**The law of life is constant giving and gratitude for what is received. Generosity is the essence of the movement of life. Do not retain anything but help the flow to run.**

This is precisely the opposite of the message our economic system sends us.

Q: How do we swim against the stream in our own society (not opposition but creative practice of new ways of living)? How do we practise radical generosity if this is truly the essence of life?

## **18) 15.30 - Emptiness – pure relation (30')**

We need to transform our understanding of life, from a materialistic understanding of the world to a dynamic perception that sees that all we see around us is indeed defined by the true nature of the flow of Life.

This flow is not visible as such but it is possible to perceive it and recognise it in its effects or impacts on our lives, as the wind is not visible but we can see how it moves the trees. Who would deny the existence of the wind? We saw also at the last workshop how we see the sun rise and set as if it would be circulate around the Earth. But science tells us that it is an illusion and it describes what we should perceive: the Earth turning on itself. Then we can see it clearly and escape the first illusion. The same about materialism.

### ***Fr Bede Griffiths: the New Age***

*There is a general feeling today that we are at the end of an age, an age which began three centuries ago with the discoveries of Galileo and Newton and resulted in the gradual development of a materialist philosophy and a mechanistic model of the universe. This has in the course of time affected our whole society. The present industrial system and modern technology are the direct result of this mechanistic concept of the universe. The whole social, political and economic system of the West is governed by it, and even art, morality and religion are affected by it. So we live in a world which came into being in the last three centuries, and has come to a head only in the last century.*

*The basic principle of this world is its materialistic philosophy. This materialism is explicit in Marxism but it is implicit practically everywhere and it governs people's attitudes of mind and behaviour. Its basic principle is reductionism; it is the reduction of everything to certain material principles and to its material base. To take a simple example, all music can be reduced to vibrations on strings or in a pipe, mere vibrations in the air, and those vibrations may then be treated as being what music is, without concern for any other value which belongs to it. Fritjof Capra has shown convincingly in *The Turning Point* (1982) how this mechanistic system has come to dominate every aspect of science and of practical life today. He shows how modern physics was at first an attempt to explain everything in terms of atoms, where everything was reduced to material particles which obeyed mechanical laws and could be known by mathematical calculations. So the whole physical world came to be reduced to a machine. In biology the attempt still continues to explain all life in*

*terms of physics and chemistry, and to believe that living beings are simply more complicated machines. More seriously for practical purposes, in medicine the human body is conceived from a biological point of view as a mechanical system obeying physical and chemical laws, and to be treated simply as a physical entity and manipulated by genetic engineering, without relation to the psyche or to the whole human person.*

*Psychology is obviously less amenable to reductionism than medicine. Nevertheless many of its methods are conspicuously reductionistic. Behaviourism, for instance, is a serious attempt to reduce the human psyche to the status of a machine by analysing it only in terms of external behaviour. Another example is the psychoanalysis of Freud and the tremendously influential method based on his work, where the attempt is made to explain the whole human personality in the light of the unconscious, which is seen in terms of repressed appetites, instincts and desires. In Freudian psychology all the higher levels of consciousness, the motives of the heart, morality and religion are explained in terms of the unconscious. This is typical of the whole method. It is an attempt to explain the higher in terms of the lower and to reduce the higher to the level of the lower, so that, to take a glaring example, religion is regarded as repressed sex.*

*In sociology the attempt is made to reduce society to individual persons who are either left free to seek their own advantage or have to be organised by the state. From this arises capitalism and communism, in both of which systems society is reduced to a multitude of individuals. Finally, in economics this principle is most obvious where the whole aim is to conceive society simply in terms of production and*

*distribution. In Marxism society is deliberately reduced to the economic base, which is conceived as determining the whole. In capitalism society is judged in terms of monetary value so that the prosperity of a nation is evaluated in terms of its gross national product, by the money which is being circulated in it and the way it is being used.*

A metaphor: our solar system:

Earth: diam $13 \times 10^3$ km	or 1 u	or 1 mm
Sun: diam $14 \times 10^5$ km	or 100 u	or 10 cm
Distance Sun – Earth = $15 \times 10^7$ km	or 10'000 u	or 10 m

Take a grain of sand of 1mm diam. and take a grapefruit (some 10cm diam.) and place it 10m away from the grain of sand. It is roughly the proportions and distance between Earth and Sun.

Life is Emptiness. Emptiness is buzzing with life.

Matter is made of atoms which present roughly the same absolute proportion of almost total emptiness. Matter is insignificant. What is important here is that it is energy that holds all these particles together. This energy is physically attraction, i.e. spiritually the correspondent of love.

The understanding of materialism according to Fr Bede means that the metaphor of the solar system and structure of atom as an empty space animated by life and energy should not be understood in Newtonian ways but as a teaching about the true nature of life: we could interpret this metaphor as an expression that things and individuals (Sun, Earth, particles) are not real things and that only relationships (attraction, love) and flows (life) are significant.

As persons:

- 1) we are a point of perception and awareness of what is, in space and time; rather than a separate individual (self) that acts as an atom (*atom* has the same etymology in Greek as *individual* in Latin).
- 2) we are also a beam of light (a channel) that makes the others shine (or smile).

**All is emptiness. Things are irrelevant. Only relationships matter. Everything is time = life.**

- **We are like particles: points of nothingness that can be aware of what is: the flow of life and of relationships.**
- **We are only witnesses, more than actors. Creativity is a flow through us more than a flow we create.**
- **The flow generates links and community, the further dimension of our evolution.**
- **Relationship is the IN-BETWEEN (love) that links us.**
- **Love happens in emptiness (in-between), more than in ourselves.**

Q: How do you feel about these statements?

## **The basics – Summary**

### **Five basic laws:**

- 1) The great inversion by market: is not life at the service of things?
- 2) We are responsible for the world we are shaping.
- 3) Each choice is a vote.
- 4) Marketing is whitewashing.
- 5) Our empowerment is proportional to our freedom of spirit.

### **Four important notions:**

- 1) Abundance is given.
- 2) Self-limitation allows harmony.
- 3) Inversion: first comes subsistence that makes work possible (and not the contrary).
- 4) The Commons: most wealth is common (natural and social resources).

### **Four transformations through money:**

- 1) From network to egocentrism (money replaces relationships).
- 2) Extension of needs and overconsumption.
- 3) Pyramid: wealth sucked up the ladder.
- 4) Search for profit as destruction of the Commons. Overproduction.

### **Work as an opus (and not an income)**

- 1) Reciprocity as the means for developing ever deeper relationships.
- 2) Work relies on resources, knowledge and skills that are provided freely by society.
- 3) Work as creativity (opus – oeuvre) encompassing all aspects of life, and not labour (suffering - travail).
- 4) Chayanov's law: when subsistence is ensured, celebrate!

5) Creativity as the energy of life: a free gift. Work creates links, more than products.

### **The big shift**

- 1) Subsistence is limited to a duration (time) and is easy to ensure (Chayanov's law + role of community).
- 2) Everything is given: the Commons provide all necessary natural and social resources.
- 3) The only dimension we add through work is creativity: free gift as return to our community in duration.
- 4) In other words: all resources are given in a constant flow and work is time (i.e. flow). This is the perfect flow of Life that creates ever new relationships.
- 5) In other words: **we do not own but we belong.**

### **Radical generosity**

- 1) The law of life is constant giving and gratitude for what is received. Generosity is the essence of the movement of life.
- 2) All is emptiness. Things are irrelevant. Only relationships matter. Everything is time = life.
- 3) We are like particles: points of nothingness that can be aware of what is: the flow of life.
- 4) We are witnesses, more than actors. Creativity is a flow through us more than a flow we create.
- 5) We are beams of light that make the others shine (or smile). We are the channels for creativity and light.
- 6) The flow generates links and creates true community, which is the further dimension of our human evolution.
- 7) Relationship is the IN-BETWEEN (love) that links us. Love happens in emptiness (in-between), more than in ourselves. Love is at full completion when our selves disappear.

# Money – Work - Generosity

## 21-22 July 2018

*SUNDAY MORNING*

*07.30 – MEDITATION*

*08.00 – BREAKFAST*

### A) What is subsistence?

01) 09.30 – Introduction (15')

02) 09.45 - A few basic laws (30')

03) 10.15 - Subsistence and needs vs desires (30')

04) 10.45 - The hunter-gatherers model (15')

*11.00 - MORNING TEA*

05) 11.30 - Chayanov's law and its corollary (30')

06) 12.00 - Subsistence as a duration (15')

07) 12.15 - Traditional model - Ownership and access – The Commons (30')

*13.00 - LUNCH*

### B) Money

08) 14.30 – Barter (30')

09) 15.00 - Money not only as transfer of value (90')

10) 16.30 - Income and profit – Market impact - Price calculation

*17.00 – AFTERNOON TEA*

11) 17.30 – 4 transformations that money brings into our lives (60')

*19.00 – DINNER*

\* \* \* \*

### C) Work

12) 09.30 - What is work - Many forms of work (30')

13) 10.00 - Work as a good for sale - The link work – money (30')

*10.30 - MORNING TEA*

14) 11.00 - The vernacular model – Reciprocity (60')

*13.00 - LUNCH*

### D) Generosity

16) 14.30 – The flow of life and creativity (30')

17) 15.00 – Radical generosity: principles of gratuity and reciprocity (30')

18) 15.30 - Emptiness – pure relation (30')