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The title of the presentation is "Where are we now?" In my experience so far in attempting to promote the ideas of the movement and the Venus Project, I find about 95% of the critics tend to ignore the current state of affairs. And in a detached manner, they simply criticize the abstracts of what our proposed resolutions are without ever reflecting on the train of thought that was employed to reach those solutions. So in response to this, I decided to simply focus on the information which will, at a minimum, at least further compound the dire need to get away from our current social practices while also showing the logic that the Venus Project employs to arrive at the conclusions and ideas that they do.

We're not just making things up. Jacque Fresco didn't just creatively come up with ideas. He has a pivotal train of thought and it has a near empirical basis. First there's going to be an overview of the movement, the tenets of the Venus Project. In Part 1 we're going to elaborate even more on the nature of our world monetary system and its consequences while in Part 2 we will take a larger step back and consider the human condition its cultivation and the effects of the social system at large. Before I begin, please note that it was recommended in the emails sent out that people read the Orientation Guide or the Activist Video because basically I'm going to move very quickly through a lot of this information on the assumption that a lot of you are already familiar with some of it. If you're not, don't be surprised if some things come as extremely foreign. This lecture is actually part of two lectures.

The second lecture will be given sometime in the future to deal with the other section. As you'll see, I deal with the first part of the idea which is the fact that our social system is corrupt and the second section is what the solutions are. We're not going to talk about solutions specifically right now. We're going to talk about the reasoning behind it. The term "Zeitgeist" is defined as the intellectual moral, cultural climate of an era. The term "Movement" simply implies motion or change. Therefore, the Zeitgeist Movement is an organization that urges change in the dominant, intellectual, moral and cultural climate of the time specifically to values and practices which would better serve the well-being of the whole of humanity, regardless of race religion, creed or any other form of contrived social status.

The Zeitgeist Movement in function exists as a communicative representation of an organization called The Venus Project which is essentially a conceptual and technological set of ideas which constitutes the life-long work of industrial designer and social engineer, Jacque Fresco. Mr Fresco, along with his associate Roxanne Meadows, have been working for decades to establish the technical methods and educational imperatives which can transition society away from its current cycles of war perpetual poverty and pervasive corruption into an improved social design based on environmental alignment practicality, peak efficiency, and most critically a heightened standard of living, personal freedom and well-being for not just one nation or class, but for the entire human family. The ultimate materialization of these ideas is in the form of a new social design updated to present-day knowledge. And the design can be termed a "Resource-Based Economy" (RBE).
In the words of Mr. Fresco "We call for a straight forward redesign of our culture in which the age-old inadequacies of war, poverty, hunger, debt and unnecessary human suffering are viewed as not only avoidable but also as totally unacceptable. Anything less simply results in a continuation of the same catalog of problems inherent in the present system. In summary, a Resource-Based Economy utilizes resources rather than commerce. All goods and services are available without the use of currency credit, barter, or any form of debt or servitude. The aim of this new social design is to free humanity from the repetitive, mundane and arbitrary occupational roles which hold no true relevance to social development while also encouraging a new incentive system that is focused on self-fulfillment, education social awareness and creativity, as opposed to the contrived, shallow, self-interested, corruption generating goals of wealth, property and power which are dominant today.

The enabling foundation of this concept is the realization that through the intelligent management of the earth's resources along with the liberal application of modern technology and science we have the ability to create a near global abundance on this planet and thus escape the detrimental consequences generated by the real and artificial scarcity and waste which is dominant today. This reality can provably create a high quality of life for the entire world population many times over. The Venus Project takes into account something which has been long lost in our modern, financially driven world the fundamental building blocks of society and the basic understandings required to maintain a person's emotional intellectual and physical well-being. All social systems regardless of political philosophy, religious beliefs or social customs ultimately depend upon natural resources as the initial step towards social functionality. Concurrently, society itself is a culture machine.

In other words, it's a natural consequence for a culture to support the values integral to the dominant institutions of that society, regardless of the benefit of those values. In other words, a society reaps what it sows. If your society's foundation inherently supports self-interest elitism, greed and dishonesty then no one should ever be surprised when certain members of society continuously fall into the extremity of murder financial corruption or indifferent, selfish gain. In other words, society is not only a product of the sum of its members values paradoxically, it's also a generator of them for each new generation. It should be no wonder that government perpetuates nationalistic and patriotic values.

If they didn't, people might not support the state agendas or their wars. It should be no wonder that the Catholic church perpetuates the idea that humans are born into sin otherwise, people might not show up to be saved. And it should be no wonder every major city on this planet is cloaked with corporate advertising working to force materialism and inadequacy. Why? Because otherwise, some people might just be happy with what they have and not contribute to the profit and perpetuation of a corporation or an economy. Regardless, when it comes to cultural influence, nothing can hold a candle to the vast psychological implications that have developed due to the system of monetary finance. Money, contrary to the attitudes of most of the world's populations today is not a natural resource, nor does it represent resources. In fact, by our standards of logic, money is only functionally relevant in society, when natural resources and the mechanisms of creation are scarce. And thus, a system has emerged where people are given value for their skills
in exchange for their servitude which can thus be used as a medium of exchange for those supposed scarce resources.

Sadly, the culture is now fully indoctrinated into this frame of reference and, like the rising sun, most could not even consider any other possibility for our social functionality. In fact, some have even redefined the relevance of money itself by being conditioned to think that money represents choice. That money somehow has something to do with democracy. And the greatest illusion, that the monetary structure is a tool of liberty. While money has indeed served a positive role overall on the course of our social evolution adaptation and change and improvement is still unstoppable. The fact is, most of the original problems, which required the development of the economic system we see today, are no longer pressing due to the dramatic advancement of science and technology. We now have the means to move in to a new paradigm one where the negative by-products of our current social establishment such as perpetual war, human exploitation, poverty and environmental destruction are no longer tolerable.

What is advocated here is merely a next step in our social evolution as dictated not by a person or group's opinion but by statistics, trends, basic inference and extrapolation all deduced by the scientific method. Unfortunately, regardless of how logical, clear and obvious new ideas may seem, the public still remains on average...tremendous fear of any form of social change. This is largely due to propaganda indoctrination which has been pushed upon them by the established powers which of course prefer to maintain their power. These institutions range from religious organizations, to government, to business. In fact, it really isn't the technical understandings and implementations of the physical attributes that comprise the Resource-Based Economy which is the problem. We know we can do it, technically.

We know it can happen. The analysis has been extrapolated. It is the outdated cultural values, such a testy subject. The cultural values and the education barriers of our conditioned culture is the most difficult aspect to consider and that's one of the reasons I'm approaching this presentation as I have because I want people to understand that we have to move somewhere. This is where the Zeitgeist movement comes in! We are not here to tell people what to think or believe. We're here to spread statistical information and socially positive value identifications in hope of bringing people into an awareness of the incredibly positive possibilities the future can hold. Once these understandings are fully realized I think most people will never be able to look at the world in the same way again, and the problems we find as commonplace today will become simply unacceptable, motivating change. There are countless well-intentioned people in activist organizations out there, and they keep popping up like weeds. It's incredible to me how many of these there are all admirable and amazing, and they're yelling at the top of their lungs about the rampant problems and injustices in our world. Yet, as you tend to find, very few actually offer any solutions whatsoever. Those that do offer solutions, however, always frame those solutions within the context of the current established system. Very little regard seems to be given to the root structure of our social design.

The Venus Project and hence the Zeitgeist Movement is different. Our fundamental focus is finding the foundational sources of our social problems and working from that lowest common denominator to create solutions. And when it comes to social corruption, poverty, environmental
disregard human exploitation, and most personal and social turmoil in the world today an important realization is that most of these problems are not the result of some particular company, some nefarious elite group or some government legislation. These are symptoms of the foundational problems. And this is the ultimate realization when it comes to how you look at the problems of the world today. There is a massive superstitious basis out there: It's us against them. That is extremely poisonous to the development because people are constantly looking for someone else to blame when it's really themselves because they continue to perpetuate the system that creates these things.

The real issue is human behavior. And human behavior which will be addressed in this presentation specifically is largely created and reinforced by the social patterns required for survival as necessitated by the social system of a period. We are products of our society, and the fact is it is very foundation of our socio-economic system and environmental condition which has created the sick culture you see around you. Our current system is based almost exclusively upon human exploitation resource abuse and abundant waste. It is simply what our system does. As far as the infamous "they" it is simply another social distortion culminated and reinforced by our environment. There is no singular "they". In Zeitgeist I, I described "the men behind the curtain" to the effect of a specific niche of economics the ones that control most government policy, and those are the banks. Banks have been running things forever but that is still a product. These are still human beings. We are dealing with negative tendencies. The "they" syndrome is absolutely obsolete and next time you hear anybody talking about "they" please try to correct them. It's a religious mentality: dualities, good and evil. The bottom line is that we can spend the rest of our existences stomping on the ants that mysteriously wander out from underneath the refrigerator setting traps or laws or we can get rid of the spoiled food behind it which is causing the infestation to begin with.

This leads us to Part I: Monetary Dynamics and Its Consequences. Here's an email I received from a PhD in economics soon after the release of Zeitgeist Addendum. "Dear Filmmakers, my son presented me the first half of your film last weekend and asked me my opinion on the opening section about the Fractional Reserve lending practices. I'm a PhD certified economist of 12 years and teach macro-economics. While I always was cognizant of the creation of money and the sale of government bonds, I had never stepped back far enough to see the larger issue your film presented. I find it tremendously disturbing that the creation of value through debt is indeed by all formal logic, an imposed condition of deficiency and an instigator of public servitude. I'm not sure what shocked me more the fact that this is true, or the fact that after the many years of education I have on the subject of economics this reality never even occurred to me." While it seems counter intuitive to think that a person who should by all social standards be an expert in a given field due to their awards and credentials very often especially in the purely intellectual arena such exposure to set established curriculum can really hinder someone's openness in a very powerful way. You become cognitively blocked from new ideas and realizations which, if you're outside of the existing framework that you understand then you have no chance of even realizing it.

It has restricted your perception. Jacque Fresco, who dropped out of school at the age of 14 has a great example regarding this perceptual point. During the time that the Wright brothers were
building a machine that could fly expert physicists and engineers were busy writing books about how it was impossible for man to ever fly in any meaningful way. Apparently, the Wright brothers, who were bicycle mechanics didn’t read those books. In other words, creativity will always serve you better than just book smarts. With that in mind, let's step back and pose a very simple question about the economic structure we all live in. What are the lowest common denominators required to perpetuate a market economy?

(1) Human labor must be sold as a commodity in the open market. Outside of investment and inheritance nearly all money is obtained through income, and income is derived from wages or profit in some form of employment. Therefore, there must always exist a demand for jobs or the economy cannot operate. (2) Money must be continuously transferred from one party to another in order to sustain so-called economic growth. This is done through constant or cyclical consumption by virtually everyone in society. Jobs are entirely contingent upon demand for production in some form. If there’s no demand for goods and services there will be no demand for labor and hence financial circulation would stop. Needless to say these two aspects of the system which are intimately connected, are absolutely paramount to the functionality of the financial system. If either one of them were substantially hindered the integrity of the economy would be seriously compromised or possibly be made entirely obsolete. So given this reality let’s now hypothetically consider some variables which could put these mechanisms in jeopardy. In the first point, labor [is] sold as a commodity in exchange for money. What if the human labor market became unnecessary for the production of goods and services? More specifically, what if automation technology and artificial intelligence became advanced enough to allow for the replacement of perhaps 40%, 50%, 60% of the human labor force? At what point would such displacement, less employment be considered too much for the system’s integrity and put it into question? As far as the second point, the need for cyclical consumption what if conditions arose where the circulation of money was severely stifled? In other words, what if people simply did not need to continually buy things? What if, hypothetically, it was discovered that through optimized techniques and resource management design and production the most commonly purchased goods could either be made obsolete by larger order renovations or could have such extreme product efficiency longevity, and near maintenance-free durability that most items could last a lifetime without replacement or major repair. Of course, this exact idea couldn’t be applied to perishable items such as food, but following the same train of thought what if the cultivation and production of food was in such ease and abundance through technology, obviously, that the supply and demand equation made the value of such items utterly negligible. To put these points in a different way, let's consider the classic economic concept of "theory of value".

Everything in society, theoretically, is given a value based on two considerations. The scarcity or availability of the materials used and the amount of human labor required to produce a good or service. If material scarcity, both in terms of resource availability and quality was not the issue and human labor was not required to create a good or administer a service then there would technically be no value. As most of you in this room probably already understand one of the greatest realizations of Jacque Fresco and the Venus Project which should be one of the greatest realizations for the whole of humanity at this point in time is that neither of the scenarios
presented are hypothetical. Human beings are indeed being replaced [or] becoming obsolete in the labor force due to advancements in production technology. Likewise, powerful new design advancements in production efficiency and resource management reveal the profound possibility of relative global abundance and peak product efficiency. This can be proven through statistical analysis and the inferential extrapolation of historical trends. Obviously the corporations aren’t out there telling you this.

You have to dig much deeper to find this information. When it comes to production automation capabilities, today specifically the first thing to consider is a statistical evaluation of a phenomenon called technological unemployment. Technological unemployment, which is the unemployment caused by the use of machines as vehicles of labor has continually and systematically forced relevant numbers of people out of every single new emerging sector for the past 300 years. Our current employment market is basically broken into three sectors: Agriculture (including mining and fishing) Manufacturing (tangible goods) and Service (intangible goods). As a near universal social progression all societies tend to follow the same developmental path which takes them from a reliance on agriculture and extraction towards the development of manufacturing, which is automobiles textiles, ship building, steel and finally towards a more service-based system. Naturally, the only reason some countries are farther behind in this process than others has to do with the affordability of the technology required to make it move to the next level. It’s irrespective of social system or political disposition as a scientific progression. Let’s consider this phenomenon using the United States as a proxy. The United States is where a lot of my data comes from but please note that this can be applied to any economy. In 1860, 60% of Americans worked in the agricultural sector. However today, due to advancements in machinery and automation, less than 1% [do]. Fortunately those technological advancements also gave a rise to an emerging Industrial Revolution and by 1950, 33% were employed in the factory-based manufacturing sector. As of now, due to continual advancements in machine automation it is less than 8%. So considering that only roughly 9%... (there’s probably a few percent leeway depending on the analysis you use) There’s only 9% of Americans working in agriculture and manufacturing now. Where did everybody else go? [They went to] the service sector. The only thing that has saved the US labor market after the technological renovation of the agricultural and manufacturing sectors is flight to the service industry. From 1950 to 2002 US employment in the service sector went from 59% to 82%. The service sector is the dominant employer of Americans today along with all industrialized countries. Of course, this begs the question: Is this sector insusceptible to the wrath of technological unemployment? Of course [it is] not. With the advent and increasing of versatile computer technologies we are seeing job displacement once again. This time in all service industries.

The replacement of tellers and cashiers with kiosks the use of automated voice systems for phone service... The Internet has completely redefined retail not to mention full kiosk systems in physical market places advanced food-prep machines, and even research done by automation these days. As economist Steven Roach has warned "The service sector has lost its role as America’s unbridled engine of job creation.” As a unique example, in Germany, the first completely automated restaurant is in operation. It uses kiosks for ordering and payment. The
food is served by a fully mechanized system. There's zero wait staff. There's no reason that this idea could not be done with every single eating establishment in the world. In fact, if one was to think creatively about the application of technology... In isolation, you see pockets of things where you see a news report about a certain technology that can do certain things. If you were to apply those creatively I don't see how 90% of the entire service industry couldn't be wiped out tomorrow. The only reason it hasn’t been done is because the focus of society is backwards when it comes to social progress.

To illustrate this point more so let's stop thinking about technology in terms of unemployment and consider it from the angle of productivity. The most incredible relationship of all of this is that the more technological unemployment increases the more productive things become. In the G-7 advanced industrialized countries employment in manufacturing has been dropping but manufacturing output has been rising. Here's the chart. I think it’s quite profound. I love this: "The truth is that the US manufacturing is doing quite well in every way except the number of people it employs. Furthermore, a few economists would judge the health or sickness of any industry based solely on employment. By that standard, agriculture has been the sickest industry of all for decades because employment has declined. Although farm productivity rose dramatically in the past century. Industrial health is better measured by output productivity, profitability and wages."

The person is completely forgetting one universal thing: If human laborers are displaced, they cannot obtain purchasing power. If they cannot obtain purchasing power they cannot fuel the economy by consumption. On that level it doesn't matter how productive we are. No one can buy anything. The phenomenon has been termed by some theorists as "the contradiction of capitalism" for not only is the obsolescence of the human labor force the obsolescence of the consumer the high level of output generated by technological efficiency makes the corporate motivation to pursue such advanced means very strong. Even though it is economically self-defeating over time. In other words, regardless of the level of productivity if people don't have jobs, they can’t buy anything. This very fact alone that productivity is inverse to employment in all sectors, should be enough to want a deliberate shift from the focus of human labor to a system where technology is given the highest priority.

The system is literally denying peak production. In a world where one billion are starving I think that's extremely despotic and this brings us to one of the most profound points of this talk: the social intent. Should the focus of society be to create and preserve jobs or should the focus of society be to maximize production and create abundance? It is either one direction or the other. You can't have both. Sadly, what you are seeing in the world today is the deliberate withholding of social efficiency for the sake of preserving the status quo. I say that again because I want you guys to use that: The deliberate withholding of social efficiency is what our system does. The main reason outside of employment pressures that you do not see technology being liberally used for all purposes imaginable including the generation of food, energy and material abundance is because our financial system is based entirely on perpetuation of scarcity and inefficiency.

Why? Because it is most self-preserving and profitable. If a company makes a car that can last 60 years without service and also runs without the need of perpetual refueling for battery power the
after-market value of that car is virtually zero and billions of dollars would be lost over time due to the now obsolete consumer, all in auto-service market industry. This could happen right now, again. Why doesn’t it? Because the economic system literally couldn’t work if it shifted its focus towards optimum efficiency. Our entire system in an economic sense is based on constriction. Scarcity and inefficiencies are the movers of money. The more there is of any one resource, the less you can charge for it. The more problems there are, the more opportunities there are to make money. This reality is a social disease for people can actually gain off the misery of others and the destruction of the environment. It’s called a moral hazard in the insurance industry. The whole system is moral hazard. Efficiency, abundance and sustainability are enemies of our economic structure for they are inverse to the mechanics required to perpetuate consumption.

This is profoundly critical to understand for once you put this together you begin to see that the one billion people currently starving on this planet the endless slums of the poor, and all the horrors in the culture due to poverty and depravity are not natural phenomena due to some natural human order or lack of earthly resources. They are products of the creation, perpetuation and preservation of artificial scarcity and inefficiency. To add insult to injury, this scarcity is not only perpetuated in the markets of consumer goods and services but also manifests in a way which influences the behavior of the whole of society through making sure that even money itself is perpetually limited in supply. As denoted in Zeitgeist Addendum, the Central Banks of the world almost all create money out of debt, through loans. These loans are produced with interest yet only the principal is created in the money supply creating a perpetual deficit in supply.

The debts generated by these loans serve as virtual prison cells for the average citizen keeping them willing to work off their debt putting them in a perpetual state of obligation. There’s a word for that. It’s called slavery, debt slavery. The money isn’t real. The interest sure isn’t real. The debt is not real. The whole thing is an illusion. The whole world today is now stuck in the illusion that there isn’t enough money to do this or that. 98% of the countries in the world are actually in debt to other countries and banks. As of 2009, it’s been confirmed that the world is in a state of recession, which basically means massive monetary contraction. In other words, the whole world is somehow short on cash. Am I the only one who finds this absolutely unbelievable? This stupidity is not only unbelievable, it’s deadly.

The market and financial system as we know it is diametrically opposed to development of peak efficiency in order to perpetuate profit in the established order. What is peak efficiency? The highest form of technical efficiency known at a time. Not the highest form of efficiency that is affordable but the highest form of efficiency that is actually possible. The question has never been "Do we have the money?" The question has always been "Do we have the resources and technical understandings to make it happen?" That is all that has ever mattered. Now, given all of this it’s easy to see how the public today finds it difficult to assume that technology can provide abundance and peak efficiency for there’s very little in their day-to-day life that clearly illustrates this point. Everything around them reinforces the idea that scarcity in the world today is a natural problem.

Why? Because the pursuit of profit by industry always inherently limits the quality of design for the sake of monetary preservation. If a company wants to be competitive in the marketplace they
must find a balance between quality and cost invariably denying quality. It is impossible for a company to produce a product with peak efficiency by the very nature of the game. It would be too expensive to afford. This is one reason why there is so much unhealthy food and trash goods in our system. When you consider the majority of people in society today our lower middle class and below, you realize that the corporations must reduce their production costs to meet the terms of the affordability of the predominant demographic of the culture. I live in Brooklyn, New York, in an area that is very very poor. Within a six-block radius of my apartment there are five of these 99-cent stores. These are stores which sell products from the cheapest possible materials and lowest possible efficiency that could ever be manufactured. It’s junk! Stuff that should have never been created to begin with. Why is it there? Because the people can’t afford anything else.

Why can’t they afford anything else? Because the market system also creates and perpetuates social stratification and the poor must exist in order for the rich to exist. Therefore, the level of product efficiency today is artificially and directly proportional to the purchasing power of a target demographic. Therefore, generally speaking, one’s perception of quality is often only as good as their socio-economic status. The quality of goods are stratified, just as the social classes are. The result is outrageous amounts of resource waste. In the world that claims to be growing more and more concerned about environmental issues, resource supplies man-made atmospheric changes and pollution, I find it fascinating that no one is talking about the most consistent destroyer of ecology and the most continuous waster of natural resources there is: the pursuit of profit. Capitalism is based on the free-pursuit of profit by whatever means necessary. I was in a cab coming here and the cab-driver made a great comment.

He was describing something along the lines of business he was conducting. He said "Yeah, there’s no friends in business." And he’s absolutely right. I’m going to be using that one too. Capitalism is based entirely on the free pursuit of profit by whatever means necessary. It is a gaming strategy and nothing more. The irresponsibility it enables by its central philosophy of self-interest is profound. And while there are many angles at this, let’s stay with the point at hand: The deliberate production of inferior products. Think about it. It is as environmentally illogical as it can be. There is no reason to ever create a product that is deliberately low in efficiency. This simply means faster break down, faster obsolescence more duplicate production and many times more waste and pollution than would be required if the goal was to simply optimize products based on the most current technological awareness of the day. And this leads us to the final topic of this section:

Market Mythology. So far we’ve talked about the structural mechanics of the system pointing out the inherent contradictions and problems. As of now, through the overpowering growth in science and technology the monetary system can be considered structurally obsolete serving only as a paralyzing hindrance of social progress not to mention a destroyer of trust, human trust in the environment. That’s a whole different topic in and of itself. Unfortunately, the social indoctrination within the market system has created a mentality which blindly supports the social dogma regardless of what we have touched upon. The identity relationships are simply too strong. In many ways, it’s like a religion. Taking away the belief in the market system is like taking away someone’s belief in God for it challenges who they are.
When you’re a little kid, you pull on your mother’s pants. You want candy and she might say: "No, we can't afford that". It’s this instant indoctrination of the monetary system from the earliest form of life because obviously your parents are always struggling to a certain degree. It becomes absolutely built in to your psychology not to mention that those that have successfully acquired a great deal of wealth... You'll find that those that are in fact very wealthy They will almost always be inclined to tell you that "the system is great!". That's just the nature of behavioral reinforcement. The three most dominant of these psychological indoctrinations that I want to talk about are the notions of property incentive and associations with freedom of choice. Starting with property: The capitalist economy is founded on the very idea of exchanging property in the markets. Even your labor is a form of property in a sense. The world that we know is so bound up in the process of buying and selling that most of us can’t imagine any other way of functioning human affairs. Property is often associated with so-called “rights” as well.

We use a legal system to protect our property and if anyone interferes with what is mine their freedom can possibly be taken away. In fact, there’s even an entire industry which is there to tell you what the best property there is to own. It's called advertising, of course. Yet, with all of this obsession over property, very few ask the question: "Why do we have property to begin with?" The answer is simple: It's scarcity. Property is an outgrowth of scarcity. The farther we go back in time the more difficult and time-consuming it was for people to create tools or extract a resource. They, in turn, protected it because it had an immense value relative to the labor entailed along with the possible scarcity associated. People claim ownership because it is a legal form of protection. Property is not an American or free-enterprise or capitalist idea. It is an ancient mental perspective necessitated from generations of scarcity. If there isn’t scarcity, rationale for property becomes an irrelevant issue.

Let’s move on to the idea of incentive. As the theory goes, the need profit provides a person or organization with a motivation to work on new ideas and products that would sell on the market place. In other words, the assumption is that if technology replaced humans in the workforce and abundance could be created then people would just have no motivation to do anything socially relevant. "No monetary incentive, no progress" is the idea. There are two glaring issues with this assumption: The first is that it's entirely based on projected values and the values are almost entirely based on culture. Nikola Tesla, Louis Pasteur, Charles Darwin, and The Wright Brothers Albert Einstein and Isaac Newton did not make their massive contributions to society because of material self-interest. Did Martin Luther King walk down the street in Birmingham, Alabama while a bunch of racists threw rocks at his head because he was on his way to cash a check? If the incentive motivation theory held true then you would see no volunteerism in the world today. Amazingly, in the 1992 US Gallup Poll, it was found that more than 50% of American adults volunteered time with no pay for social causes on an average of 4.2 hours a week for a total of 20.5 billion hours a year.

This is pretty amazing, especially with a lack of social capital in a place like the United States which is the most powerful free-market country there is. The ideology is the most ingrained. I find that to be pretty incredible. Even with the sickness of self-interest, generated by the monetary system even with this sickness, humans still strive to help each other and give to society without reward. What’s even more amazing is that the poor and the middle class are more likely to
volunteer than the wealthy. Think about that. These are the people that have the least amount of money. It makes you understand the cultural and psychological nuances that are created: The more money you get, the more diseased you might possibly become. It's a fascinating phenomenon. The second thing to consider is that while it is true that useful inventions and methods do come from the motivation for personal gain, the intent behind those creations has nothing to do with human or social concern for the incentive goal is not to improve humanity but to make money.

There is a massive disconnect, and as we have denoted thoroughly the very means by which money is obtained in our system is counter to social progress fundamentally for it is based on the deliberate withholding of efficiency. And, by the way, I haven’t even addressed the traditional corruption that we see occurring on a daily basis based and derived from this incentive for income which spreads like a malignant cancer of an indifferent self-interest from product dishonesty, murder, fraud, theft, slave labor outsourcing, price fixing, monopolistic collusion, redundant waste environmental exploitation, illegal taxation institutional theft, societal indifference, imposed psychological distortions or advertising, and of course, the sickest monetary incentive ever created, war! That is the reality of the monetary incentive.

And the final myth for now: The Freedom of Choice. The free market is very persuasive for most people because it appears that the possibilities are endless and that they, the individuals, have limitless choices. People witness the vast stratification of goods and services portrayed by the media and advertising and think that since the options just exist in abstraction it has some form of relevance to the freedom of the individual. They can walk into a store and choose between 25 kinds of detergent and 75 kinds of sugar-coated cereal yet they turn a blind eye with the fact that their lives are managed by on average, two political parties. They pay no attention to the reality that 40% of the world’s wealth is owned by 1% of the population and thus 99% of the world’s people will never obtain the luxuries afforded by the 1%. More specifically, everyone seems oblivious to the reality that nearly every day of your life, you are forced by the obligation of mere survival and, of course, debt which is imposed into a private dictatorship where most of your decisions are controlled by those on the next artificially created hierarchical degree the next larger hierarchical degree. It’s amazing to me when you talk to economists and they say "Well, people have a choice of where they work."

They only have a choice of where they work within a specific frame that is allowable based on their demographic of education. And of course, there's so many friend orientations in business. Their ultimate fantasy is that anyone can be a President in the United States. This is something that has been perpetuated. These are groups that perpetuate themselves: elitism. Elitism works in the same way in the corporate world. You are absolutely restricted. You have no freedom because you are forced to do the work as it is. It’s amazing to me and I get this argument a lot from high-end economists. They say "You have freedom of choice. You can choose where you work". No, you really can’t. When you get out of college there's this wall of jobs. You can find your slot. And that’s about it. That’s your choice.

It's preset choice. So I ask you: What freedoms are we talking about? You are only as free as your purchasing power will allow you to be. And the statistics have proven that the socio-economic
rank you are born into tends to persist for the rest of your life. If you are born poor, you will likely remain poor. Why? Because all the odds are against you. If you are rich, you will likely remain rich. Why? Because all the odds are in favor. It is the nature of the system. For example, if you have one million dollars and put it into a CD at 5% interest you are going to generate 50,000 dollars a year simply for that deposit. You are making money off money itself: paper being made on top of paper, nothing more. No invention. No contribution to society. No nothing. That being denoted, if you were lower to middle class who is limited in funds and must get interest-based loans to buy your home or use credit cards then you are paying interest into the bank which the bank is then using, in theory, to pay the person's return with the 5% CD.

Not only is this equation outrageously offensive due to the use of usury or interest to "steal from the poor and give to the rich" but also perpetuates class-stratification by its very design: keeping the lower classes poor, under the constant burden of debt and servitude, while keeping the upper classes rich with the means to simply turn excess money into more money. The very idea that you can take money and turn it into more money is absolutely hilarious and corrupt. Likewise, it should be no surprise that the world is run by cartels and government collusion for competition is based on nothing more than a gaming strategy as we have said. In other words, competition breeds corruption.

It's another one of those economist things where they say "Oh, the free-market used to be great, but something happened and now we have all these cartels." No. Monopoly is the final stage of success in a competitive environment. It is incredible how people don't realize this. It doesn't matter how much legislation you have to combat sector or industry dominance. It will keep occurring. Even more powerfully, government coercion by big business is also unstoppable. It is a natural progression of market strategy to get government on your side. In fact, the true propensity of our world economic system continually, year by year, approaches one thing fascism. Or more specifically, inverted fascism. This is the condition where corporations covertly control government policy. This is the natural gravitation. So, as time continues to move forward and you keep looking back it seems like things always get worse. And they do. And this leads me to Part 2: Culture and the Bio-Social Imperative. This is a detour now. I hope that first section... If you have any questions, keep them in mind, as we go to the Q&A. In this section we're going to address some issues regarding our physical and social selves. This is very relevant to me, and I think very relevant to the whole argument and unfortunately most never think of this subject at all.

In order for us to consider routes of social change we must also have a clear understanding of conditioning our biology, and our relationship to the environment. As denoted before, when it comes to the pursuits of social change the most profound hurdle is overcoming the traditional ideology identifications and dogmas, which have been set in stone as final by the established culture. Of these ideas, a consistent one that comes up has to do with the conclusion that the human being is a rigid fixed nature, whereas certain behaviors are simply immutable. Therefore, as the logic goes, social structures are locked into a set pattern which cannot be overcome due to the very nature of the species. In order to address this claim we need to first consider the ramifications of culture itself. The word culture, in a social sense, is defined as a set of shared attributes values, goals and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group.
The most obvious, yet often overlooked example of the mechanics of culture is the fact that we are provably shaped by the sort of society we live in. The language we use, the gaming strategies you execute for survival the perception of beauty you lust for, the familial patterns and traditions that you perpetuate and the deeply held theology: myths and urban legends that define your broadest view are all examples of the qualities you might absorb arbitrarily, in the culture you have been born into. In fact, if you dig deeper, you find that there's really nothing that we cognitively think and believe which isn't first presented to us in some environmental form.

An insulted man who pulls out a gun and shoots somebody had to learn at some point of his life, what a gun was, how to pull the trigger along with what he was to find insulting to begin with. Every word that I'm saying has been learned one way or another. Every concept relayed is a collective accumulation of experience. A Chinese baby taken at the birth and raised in a British family in England will develop the language, dialect, mannerisms traditions and accent of the British culture. Needless to say, it is obvious the profound effect the environment has on behavior. But that's only part of the equation for we are obviously biologically defined as well. Doesn't matter how much time I try to condition a cat to learn to speak English, it simply can't. Simply due to limitations of its evolutionarily derived biological state. Those limitations are basically defined by genes.

Genes are a fairly recent discovery and there's been a great deal of speculation as to the spectrum that genes hold. The spectrum of relevance that genes hold. The most contentious is in the realm of behavioral biology. This is a field dedicated to understanding how genetics influences behavior. The idea that genetics are the possible source of various behaviors became popular in about the 19th century. One of the first pursuits that emerged was the idea that the aberrancies of the human behavior, such as criminality could be explained by the person's genes. The old "criminal gene" idea. Sickly enough, even eugenics operations in the form of sterilization took place many years ago in an attempt to rid society of "criminals, idiots, imbeciles, and rapists". The implications is that certain people are naturally "bad people" due to their genetics. You see this rhetoric everywhere. Someone might say "He has bad blood." or "She's just a evil person." As an aside, I find it fascinating that this simplistic social fall back to explain a person's behavior is in full accord with the primitive superstitious duality postulated by nearly all established religions: Good and Evil.

The gene in this case has replaced the satanic demon that once possessed the person and thus the person has no control over their evil actions. In other words, they are slaves to their genes. As research has progressed, it has been found that genes do nothing at the sort. Genes are stretches of DNA that produce proteins which, of course, are vital to the operation of the brain the nervous system and the whole body. However, they are not autonomous initiators of commands. They do not cause behaviors in any real sense of the idea. In the words of professor of biology and neurology at Stanford University a well-known anthropologist as well, Dr. Robert Sapolsky "Genes are rarely about inevitability especially when it comes to humans the brain and behavior. They're about vulnerability propensities and tendencies."

As it turns out, the determining factor of genetic propensities particularly in the realm of behavior is the environment that the organism resides in. For example, recent research has shown that a
gene could exist for depression. However, just because you have that gene does not mean you’re going to get depressed. It takes some form of dramatic environmental stress to trigger the genetic response such as a sudden death of a loved one or something very severe. In other words, the environment triggers the existing genetic propensity. Even with the genetic predisposition to particular illness there’s no guarantee you’re going to get it. A chair with a broken leg is not dangerous if you never sit on it. As a variation of this, it is interesting to know how the environment even affects broad physiological attributes a realm traditionally left for the genetic side of the nature and nurture debate. A study was done a few years ago at the Miami School of Medicine with premature infants in neonatology wards where they decided to simply touch a section of the infants in the wards a few times a day, while the other section was not touched.

All feeding patterns remained alike, everything else equal. As it turned out, the infants that were touched grew 50% faster and were noticeably more healthy. They were released from the hospital a week early. When compared months later, these same kids showed better health and agility than those that were not touched. It’s incredible. It’s a dramatic finding on many levels, for it shows that the genetically prescribed growth hormone release can be profoundly influenced by a simple and subtle environmental experience. Further more, the environment can not only trigger genetic propensities or influence their extent, it can over-ride them to a certain degree. A couple of years ago, another study was done in Princeton University where scientists were able to genetically engineer mice removing a key gene relevant to their neurotransmitter system selectively targeting learning and memory. As a result, the cultivated mice were poor at various memory and learning exercises. They had trouble recognizing simple objects. Their accuracy of smell was poor and they were unable to learn well in many ways which otherwise would be normal to an average mouse. Once their disability was confirmed and established the scientists then put the cognitively dim mice as adults in an enriched, stimulating environment. And over time it was found that many of the genetically engineered learning disabilities were actually overcome by the simple exposure to an intellectually nurturing environment. In other words, the environment is actually able to re-establish neurological pathways that seemed not to exist.

Again, this is a powerful testament to the power of the environment when it comes to brain and hence behavior. We’re perpetually molded and shaped by what’s around us and it has an extremely direct effect on our genes our genes and what might be inherent to us. It’s very important. The reason this is being brought up is to illustrate the fact that our environment is provably the most important determinant in our functionality. Nurture, in many ways, dictates nature. On many levels, ranging from behavior to psychology, excuse me, to physiology. (psychology wouldn’t have a relevance) but to physiology and health. Consequently, it is incorrect to think that the human being is a slave to his biology. Especially when it comes to his or her actions. This is a powerful myth which needs to be dispelled and debunked for when we realize the importance of our environment we’ll be much more prone to changing it. That’s why I’m talking about this. In isolation, it might seem that these are abstractions but we have to learn that biologically, we are only as relevant as the environment which interacts with our biology.

However, as one final example worth considering which, from my perspective, summarizes the overwhelming power and relevance of our environmental culture we’re exposed to let’s consider the implications of feral children. A feral child is a human child which has lived isolated from
human contact from a very young age. Isolated from society or human society. Historical examples of this range from children that have been locked in rooms by their parents for years to children who have been abandoned in the wild and raised, so to speak by animals. This is Genie. She was discovered in 1970 having been locked in a single room virtually alone for ten years. When they found her at 13 years old, she could barely understand language and she knew only a few words. She was 54 inches tall. Her eyes could not focus beyond 12 feet and she walked in an awkward, hunched manner and she could not chew solid food. Once rescued, psychologists and scientists immediately began working to rehabilitate Genie, creating a nurturing environment and she quickly began to overcome a great amount of the problems that she had had, but due to the severe mental scars that she went through, something very specific stuck out which has a specific relevance to the point I'm trying to make and that was her inability to learn language.

While humans obviously have a genetic predisposition for language it is cases like this that show how the environment does not... If the environment does not engage those propensities at a certain point in time then those language capabilities will not form. It requires the environment to stimulate the effect. That's a very important thing, and I may keep reiterating that. This young girl was rescued in May of this year in Russia. She was locked in a room with dogs and cats for several years causing her to behave like an animal. She could not speak. She lapped up her food, drank with her tongue and she walked on all fours. She was five years old when they found her, but her physical size was only that of a two-year old. This is fascinating, apart from being horrific. It's the fact that feral children can pick up and imitate things in their environment that to us would seem absolutely unhuman. This is a girl named Oxana Malaya. She was also extremely neglected and ended up spending the majority of her childhood between the ages of 3 and 8.5 years living with dogs in the back of the family home.

She actually slept in the kennel with the dogs for 5 years and when rescued, she had adopted incredible canine mannerisms including barking, a higher than average sense of smell and hearing. She ate raw meat. She walked on all fours and knew virtually no language. It is sociological examples like this that should really make one step back and question the lowest common denominator of what is supposed to be "human nature". Please understand that there is no denial that we human beings are "wired" in a particular way. However, the fact is we obviously, especially at a young age have an incredible ability to adapt to our environment. We are exceptionally malleable and as studies have shown, we'll adapt based on what is supported and reinforced by the social condition we inhabit. If the known propensities of human beings such as walking upright learning language and the like are not triggered and supported by the environment, then they might not manifest.

Therefore again, the human being is very much a cultivated organism. The quality of a person's health and behaviors really comes down to the quality of the environment culture and social influences they are exposed to. This is critical that society fully understand this and adjust accordingly. It should be no wonder the world we live in when we examine the system, the environment that creates us. And this is the point: We, as so-called individuals are running composites of our life experiences. We are walking expressions and cultivations of the environments we have passed through up until this very moment. And when it comes to survival, only those behavioral attributes that have served a function in your environment are reinforced
and made dominant. Once you understand this, the corrupt world around you suddenly makes perfect sense. Human beings are not inherently greedy or inherently competitive or inherently corrupt. It is the social system. It's the environment that creates us.

Just as a young girl will choose to walk on all fours and bark because that's what the environment makes similar to her we become corrupt, and we become self-interested because that's what our culture has created and put upon us. The social imperative that emerges on all of this in the long run is that there is a great deal of care which needs to be taken in regard to our social environment. We must alter the system in such a way so it does not create support or reinforce those behaviors which are socially harmful. And that's what social design is about. It's interesting to point out and this takes me to a sub-section of this: It's interesting to point out that competition and hierarchy which seem dominant today have not been the dominant ethos of human society for the majority of our time on this planet. Before the agricultural or neolithic revolution which occurred about 10,000 years ago, hunter-gatherer societies actually had a non-hierarchical, egalitarian social structure.

The social values were based essentially on equality altruism, sharing and literally forbid upstartism, dominance, aggression and egoism. We know this because of the anthropological research that has been done on remaining hunter-gatherer societies over the course of the past century. I find this fascinating, that for the bulk of our existences as the human species, 99% of our societies have been virtually non-hierarchical, non-materialistic. They have had the wisdom to appreciate a minimalist affluence as opposed to the dominance-driven, excessive and unsatisfied culture we see today. Regardless, this historical reality puts into question the notion that social hierarchy is a natural human tendency. What it is, is a social condition that has been created. In the view of Robert Sapolsky: "Hunter-gatherers have thousands of wild sources of food to subsist on. Agriculture changed all of that generating an overwhelming reliance on a few dozen food sources. Agriculture allowed for the stockpiling of surplus resources and thus, inevitably, the unequal stockpiling of them stratification of society and the invention of classes."

Thus it has also allowed for the invention of poverty." The core basis of social hierarchy is real, or perceived, scarcity. Social hierarchy is a formalized system of inequality which serves as a substitute for perpetual conflict over scarce resources. In view of our Western society which, as we have denoted works to literally preserve scarcity it's easy to see how our social classes are perpetuated unnecessarily. But the problem doesn't stop there. Another consequence which is very new, has to do with the chain of causality. One that affects everyone of us in a way that is almost hidden and that is to do with the effect it has on our health. Studies have shown that people of higher socio-economic status live longer, enjoy better health and suffer less from disability while those of lower socio-economic classes die younger and suffer the largest burden of disease and disability. This most often comes in the form of a gradient meaning that from the highest upper classes, straight down the lowest bottom classes each successive step up or down the socio-economic ladder constitutes a respective quality change in a person's health on average.

On the surface this would seem absolutely logical, right? Just makes sense. In the sense, lower classes often have poor diets due to lack of purchasing power. They're more prone to live in polluted areas. They are more likely to get sub-par health care and due to lack of education, they
might not take care of themselves in the best way. Now, while these attributes are obviously relevant to health new studies have shown that there is something else going on that is contributing to the increasingly poor health and disease propensities of people the lower they go in the social hierarchy. One of the most documented studies that has been done on this issue has been called "The Whitehall Studies", done here in London at the University College of London. Using the British Civil Service system as a subject group.

They found that the gradient of health quality in industrialized societies is not simply a manner of poor health for the disadvantaged and good health for everyone else. Something else was happening. Remember this is the UK where health care is socialized and theoretically you have equal health care. They also found there is a social distribution of disease meaning that as you went from the top of the socio-economic status to the bottom, the types of the diseases people would get would change on average, but they'd be linked. For example: The lowest rungs of the hierarchy had a 4-fold increase of heart disease-based mortality, compared to the highest rungs. I think if I remember correctly, the highest ones were things like melanoma. You know, people sitting on their yachts which I thought was quite amusing. Regardless, this is the pattern and to a certain degree. It's irrespective of health care, keep this in mind. Disease is being generated irrespective of socialized health care.

Even in a country with universal health care, the worse a person's financial status, the lower they are in the social hierarchy the worse their health appears to be getting. Why is this? As it turns out psychological stress generated from social inequality. Not the by-products of inequality such as poor nutrition health care resources or education for a person's health, but inequality itself: psychological subordination. Concurrent research, done by Richard Wilkinson at the University of Nottingham found that the more income inequality there is in a society the worse the gradient of health and mortality rates. This is irrespective of absolute income and again it has nothing to do with health care or nutrition.

Evidently, the more income inequality that exists in a society or in other words, the more stratified a society is the more money that's divided between the culture the more health problems that occur in the upper and lower classes together. It isn't about money in and of itself. It's about the psychological ramifications, the psychological stress or "psychosocial stress" generated by the social hierarchy itself. Not to mention as an aside it is also well documented that the more income inequality that exists, the more crime. Assault, robbery, murder are probable. Not the more poverty and deprivation that causes this, the more inequality. Does everyone understand that? It's a very interesting point.

This is easy to exemplify, for the United States which has the largest income gap on the planet also has the largest crime rate in the world the largest prison population in the world and amusingly we're also the most aggressive and armed nation in the world. Go figure! The bottom line is that when it comes to the comparison of hierarchy to egalitarianism, in other words, people being equal or people being stratified, egalitarianism or equality when it comes to psychosocial stress-driven health trumps stratification for the whole of society from crime to disease rates. In conclusion to this section, I hope I've made this relatively clear.
It’s a really important point when you think about it. Not only are social classes modern inventions of human society social classes are scientifically proven to be detrimental to the health of everybody by the very construct of its creation. I think, in conclusion of this formal presentation that that is one of the most incredibly compelling motivations to seek alternatives. The very fabric of the larger order of society is intrinsically and provably, unhealthy. And, coupled with everything else that we’ve talked about I think that adds a tremendous weight to moving forward into something new.

[end, July 25th 2009]