

# From Epicurus to Maslow: Happiness Then and Now and the Place of the *Human Being* in Social Theory

Gerald Gutenschwager, PhD,  
Emeritus Professor, School of Architecture  
Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Research Fellow, Department of Planning and Regional Development  
University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece

Πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον άνθρωπος  
Πρωταγόρας

The human being is the measure  
of all things - Protagoras

## Abstract

Protagoras said, “The human being is the measure of all things”. This implies, among other things, that language, science and religion are human inventions, as is, economics, money, efficiency, race, conflict, etc. As symbol-using animals we have created these concepts to serve our purposes. But as our societies have increased in size and our concepts become more abstract, there is a danger that we will forget *our* authorship and reify these symbols. This inhibits change in the way we name things, so that we are always in danger of misunderstanding the reality we are describing. We seem to be at such a stage now as we employ 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century theories to describe and, more importantly, create 21<sup>st</sup> century reality. One such idea has to do with human needs. Influenced by the abstract (economic) concepts we use, we have lost our sense of what we truly need. Epicurus and Maslow may help to review and reassess those concepts, Epicurus, by suggesting that our material needs are quite simple but that emotional and spiritual need satisfaction requires a small scale loving community, free from fear, and Maslow, by suggesting that our emotional development is age-related, which, besides therapy, may help in suggesting revisions in socioeconomic theory that would insure the social conditions that would allow this development to take place successfully.

## Three Challenges Facing Humanity Today

Humanity is faced with three major and interrelated challenges in the 21st century, all of which are derived in part from outdated assumptions, or metaphysical beliefs, as E.F. Schumacher called them in 1973 in his classic book, *Small is Beautiful*. These are assumptions about nature, and about human beings and their societies that we have inherited from the past. They are found embedded especially in current

mainstream economics, the (self designated) 'queen' of the social sciences, and continue to have effect because of an indifference to the message of Heraclitus that, "We can not enter the same river twice", often rendered as, "τα πάντα ρει" – "all things change (flow)", a metaphor expressing, among other things, the idea that we are always in danger of applying obsolete ideas to new circumstances.

The challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, themselves, are economic, environmental and in particular philosophical (psychological). Mainstream economists derive their assumptions about the economic system, about nature and about humans from the beliefs and conditions that were prevalent in the 18th and 19th centuries. More specifically, these assumptions were designed to liberate humans from the religious dogma that so constrained the freedom of thought and behavior at that time. In the place of an (angry) God, they substituted, on the one hand, a reductionist and mechanistic interpretation of Newtonian physics, which assumed that the universe was like a giant autonomous clockwork, such that if we reduced it to its smallest parts and understood the initial conditions and causal relationships between those parts we could "reconstruct" that universe or parts of it to our own advantage through engineering. This Newtonian framework could then, according to economists and other positivist social scientists, be carried over onto society so that it, too, could be "reconstructed" through *social* engineering, with the difficult question of *who* was to do the engineering usually left vague, if not completely unanswered. In any case, for the scientist, it was not to be God or any of his earthly representatives who would conduct any part of this cosmic 'orchestra'.

On the other hand, this assumption was accompanied by the necessary Cartesian belief in the separation of the mind and body, this having to do especially with the relationship between the "objective", "value-free" scientist, and the social and/or natural reality under study. It was seen as necessary that scientists and engineers be untainted by religious or other dogma and *apart* from the reality under study, though their discoveries might allow them to seek to control it by exploiting its basic laws. Humanists and humanistic social scientists, while seeking objectivity, have never believed themselves to be *apart from* the reality they were studying (Natanson 1963), and now quantum physics believes that this is not even true for those studying the elements of nature, particularly at the sub-atomic level, and probably at larger levels as well (Rosenblum and Kuttner 2011). In other words, in the quantum world scientists and engineers are now seen as a *critical* part of the physical reality they study, with their thoughts and actions potentially altering that reality. How much more would this be true for social scientists, especially economists, who are advising governments and business all over the world?!

At the same time, the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century economic theorists were living in the smaller scale society and the relatively under-exploited nature that existed at that time. Their assumptions were thus based upon different kinds of human relationships and a different kind of environment. And furthermore, as we question the extreme Cartesian belief, as stated above, we may now suppose that the effects of those assumptions (and the resulting theories), themselves, have contributed to a change in that reality, making it something quite different in the 21<sup>st</sup> century! Thus, those assumptions may have been useful then but are clearly less supportable today. So from Protagoras' wise saying that, "Humans are the measure of all things", we arrive in the 18th and 19th century and beyond to the assumption that, "Money (or Newtonian science) is the measure of all things", and *in the process have pretty much lost all idea of the human measure.*

In other words, matching the well-known structural crises of the economy and the environment, there is also a philosophical crisis related to how we think about and conceptualize these crises, for, indeed, 'the body and the mind', as well as all things in the universe, are now seen by quantum physics to be connected. This philosophical crisis ranges from how to address the rather limited epistemological axioms of positive science, especially in the social world, to questions about how we are now to understand ourselves, collectively, and how we are to set and evaluate goals for a future that would be free from these structural crises. Specifically: What are human needs, and how can they be satisfied? How can we best organize society and establish systems of social control to meet these needs? How do we establish moral values for behavior? In what sort of social environment can we begin to answer these questions? Etc.

## **The Economic Crisis**

Looking first at a key assumption of mainstream economic theory, it has been obvious for many years now that, among other things, the so-called 'free' market system composed of isolated decision-makers cannot (automatically) solve the imbalance between production and consumption. Nor could it ever, though 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century economic theorists, working within a deterministic Newtonian framework, couldn't have appreciated this. Looking beyond economics, we might find quite different understandings of such an assumption. For example, in physics it would appear that the idea of a system composed only of *isolated* elements would be something close to entropy (or the end state of our solar system some billions of years from now). In literary history the outstanding example we could find of the detached decision-maker, aside from the occasional hermit, would be that of Homer's one-eyed Cyclops, a primitive creature who lives in a cave isolated from all other creatures and with no sense of the meaning of community, laws or society. As for the biologist, who works with *living systems*, such an anarchic situation would likely signal a spontaneous evolutionary move to create greater order, as a logical response to such a state of crude disarray (Lipton and Bhaerman 2011, Ch. 8).

Indeed, in an economic system a truly free market would be anathema to most businessmen, and they would likely seek to establish order by reducing the number of independent decision units through merger and takeover, which is exactly what has happened historically. Thus, in today's reality the term 'free market' has come to be used throughout the world as a cover for this actual process of consolidation, where larger economic units move in to take over smaller ones, particularly in less developed economies. To what extent economists, themselves, are aware of this deception is hard to tell, given that they are working within a 19th century idealist (mathematical) framework that 'proves' that such a market system is 'efficient' in this respect.

At the same time, larger production units can take advantage of economies of scale, while also exerting greater control over the conditions of the market. One long-term result of this has been a chronic tendency to overproduction in the industrial countries (the system produces more goods than consumers can consume, especially with the income available to them). As a consequence of this trend there has been a tremendous effort by capital, for over a century now, to interfere with the free market by stimulating an increase in consumption through any means possible, i.e., through advertising, marketing, loans, credit cards, and even architecture and art, etc. (Duncan 1965, Ewen 1976), rather than reduce its profitable production. One by-product of this effort was and is to distort the psychology of people, especially young

people, with the idea that only wealth and the consumption of goods could define the successful (and happy) human being. I need to stress that this portrait of success is the product of a **colossal human effort** by powerful commercial, industrial and financial interests, with considerable help from psychologists and artists, and **not** some inevitable 'natural' evolution of the social system, as is assumed in the mechanistic ontology of economic thinking.

The thought that a better distribution of wealth would give even a partial solution to this problem inspired Henry Ford (only briefly) in the 1920s. Economists and political leaders were also inspired, (though not ultimately persuaded - Nasser 2012) by this thought during the application of Keynesian theory in the decades from 1930 to 1970 in America, and in a more substantial form in the welfare states of Europe. However, with the rise of monopoly capitalism and its 'globalization' over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, along with its new (old) ideology, neo-liberalism where privatization and the market are sacred, this option is no longer considered 'fashionable'.

Another (unfortunate) result of the inability of the market to maintain a balance between production and consumption has been the shifting of capital from production (the real economy) into the financial sector (banks, stock markets, and other forms of gambling) for speculative investments, in spite of the increased risk associated with such investments. This form of investment is also accompanied by a certain mentality, that of the gambler, who is totally unaware and unconcerned with the broader human and social effects of his activity. To quote Marx (no date, p.36), who is describing a similar situation in 19<sup>th</sup> century France:

[They] . . . get rich not by production, but by pocketing the already available wealth of others. In particular there broke out, at the top of bourgeois society, an unbridled display of unhealthy and dissolute appetites, which clashed every moment with the bourgeois laws themselves, wherein the wealth having its source in gambling naturally seeks its satisfaction, where pleasure becomes *crapuleux* (debauched), where gold, dirt and blood flow together. The finance aristocracy is nothing but the resurrection of the lumpen proletariat at the top of bourgeois society.

These capitalists are even more morally indifferent than the industrial capitalists, who must at least be somewhat concerned with their labor force, to say nothing of their customers. Given this casino atmosphere, the more profitable these investments are, even if only temporarily, the greater is the imbalance of wealth that is created, which tends to exacerbate the problem of under-consumption - overproduction, etc. As a result of this mentality, we also see a chronic tendency towards an over accumulation of capital among the wealthy. The system becomes even more unstable, as profit is increasingly based on lending (i.e., for consumption and not for productive investment) and on fly-by-night speculation. Every time a speculative bubble bursts, as we see all too frequently, the absurd 'logic' of the basic assumptions of neo-classical economics and of capitalism becomes more obvious, and a more rational organization of the economic system with a more equitable distribution of wealth, more necessary.

## **The Environmental Crisis**

The environmental crisis, in the meantime, is much more serious than the economic crisis, which can in time be reversed, whereas the changes that are occurring in nature are likely to become increasingly irreversible (Colborn, et al 1996). Capital and the neoclassical/neoliberal approach for the most part ignore this crisis, believing, it seems, that, "Après moi le deluge" (after me the deluge), or, in another version, that science and technology will in time solve all such problems. It should be emphasized

that most economic theories of the 18th and 19th century saw nature as an open system, which one could exploit *ad infinitum*, such that it enters economic calculations as *income* and not as *capital*. And this assumption still characterizes capitalism, but also, unfortunately, to a large degree, 'socialist' systems, insofar as they are also directed to infinite growth, with the same deleterious effects on the environment. Today, more and more people are coming to understand the limitations of this assumption, except, unfortunately, for most corporate executives and mainstream economists, whose ideology inhibits them from acknowledging the problem. As for politicians, journalists and many scientists, we hear them repeating the 'mantra' of growth, as if this had nothing to do with the environmental crisis. Part of this mentality is the belief (and desire) that we could solve the problem of inequality only through growth, rather than through a radical change in the socio-economic structure.

Here we are reminded of the Greek myth of Erysichthon. In his insatiable desire for power and control (not unlike that of today's bankers, technocratic planners and politicians), he was willing to sacrifice nature, represented in the myth by his cutting down of the forests, including the sacred tree of Demeter, the goddess of the harvest or more literally, "Mother Earth". As punishment he was cursed with a hunger so ravenous that he ate everything in sight . . . until he finally ended up eating his own flesh! We can only hope that today's corporate and political leaders, and economic theorists will realize their folly before they have consumed everything in sight, themselves included.

But to solve the global environmental problem would require some sort of full and genuine democratic socio-political cooperation, something that has only been rarely seen by humans except among hunters and gatherers. The moral emphasis on 'possessive individualism' (Macpherson, 1962), which we have also inherited from the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century, along with its predatory competitiveness, does not serve us well with respect to this question. Also, the over accumulation of capital and the ever greater emphasis on large scale corporations, technology and financial entities that follow from this, do not allow much freedom for more creative and flexible thoughts and actions in the dialectic between humans and nature. Nature, however, has limits beyond which Homo sapiens could not survive; one can only hope that we will recognize this critical problem before it is too late.

Meanwhile, there are, of course, many, including economists, who are concerned with environmental problems and who offer thoughts on solutions and strategies for the future (Norgaard, 1994; Goodwin, 2008) The most important thing to realize is that it is absolutely necessary to reorient most of the assumptions about political-economic systems, about society and about nature that we have inherited from the recent past when capitalist directed science and technology flourished unabated.

## **The Philosophical Challenge**

The first philosophical assumption that we must question is that nature and society are the same thing, and to understand that social theories based on a mechanistic Newtonian-Cartesian science and that ignore human consciousness and intention, *do great harm in their application to society*. Without humanity and ethics, both missing in natural science, these theories and the mindset that accompanies them tend towards a fully controlled 'brave new' technocratic society. This leads to increasing despair and nihilism in humans where the only 'freedom' is to be found in the phantasmagorical reality of television, on the one hand, and consumerism, on the other. (Stivers, 1994, Himmelfarb, 1995). The future, if we are to survive, must be

built upon love and cooperation, on equality, on respect for nature, and on a substantial reduction in the demand for material goods, especially those that consume large amounts of energy to produce (Lipton and Bhaerman 2011). This implies a qualitative shift towards a balance between the material and spiritual needs of humans, which in turn will require a significant change in the education of the young and old alike, so that we can learn to live as self-determined people and not as slaves to advertising and technocracy.

It is worth reflecting here on a statement by Robert Kuttner, co-editor of the magazine, *American Prospect*, as referred to in an article by Eamon Javers and Jim VandeHei (2009), in support of the massive amounts of *public* money that must be given to the plutocrats in order to “solve” the financial crisis in America and Europe *that they themselves have created*. “This,” says Kuttner, “is not about ethics, it is about economics”. So if you believe Kuttner, economics is without ethics, is amoral, with the result that while economics can distinguish between rational and irrational, *it cannot distinguish between moral and immoral!* (This is quite apart from the thoughts and actions of any specific economists; it is simply that they must find moral inspiration outside of their science, if they are interested.).

Following Democritus, however, this moral indifference requires an explanation, and there appear to be several reasons. First of all, economics would like to see itself as a natural science (physics, preferably) being applied to society, and thereby assume that human consciousness and intention play no role in the events that are observed and measured in the social context. Actually, this is only partially true, because economics does assign consciousness and intention in the form of the “economic man”, a caricature of the human in the form of a ‘robotic’ rational man who thinks and acts in total isolation from his fellow human beings. Thus, moral concerns would play no role in such a construction.

Secondly, in a related way, as a natural science, economics is obliged to be ‘value free’, in part a residue from the (still) unresolved conflict, between the spiritual and the material, in this case between science and religion (Chopra and Mlodinow 2011). That greed, envy and fear, as mentioned below, are implied moral values in this construction is left unexamined for obvious reasons.

Third, when Keynes (and Roosevelt) threatened the orthodoxy of mainstream economics in the 1930s, with a macroeconomic theory not built up from reductionist individualism, there was a small crisis in the science of economics. There was also a political crisis of sorts, as the moneyed classes rallied to cut back on the New Deal after the elections of 1936, thus sending unemployment shooting back up again. World War II interrupted and temporarily resolved this crisis by creating a military Keynesianism, which continues until today in much of the capitalist world.

Meanwhile, the McCarthy witch-hunt of the 1950s in the United States sent academics scurrying for cover. That is, any suggestion of government interference in the economy, as recommended by Keynes and carried out by Roosevelt, might be construed as ‘creeping socialism’. Most economists gladly (or reluctantly, as the case might have been) returned to the micro-economic based orthodoxy, and protected themselves with a wall of (mathematical) abstractions, often with little relation to reality, in order to prove their value-free ‘innocence’, a tendency that had earlier caused Keynes to say that:

Too large a portion of recent ‘mathematical’ economics are mere concoctions, as imprecise as the initial assumptions they rest on, which allow the author to lose sight of the complexities and interdependencies of the real world in a maze of

pretentious and unhelpful symbols. (Keynes 1936, pp. 297-298, quoted in Martins 2012, pp. 27-28)

However, human societies *are* based upon consciousness. The human mind contains logical, emotional and moral dimensions, and human actions that produce the social structure are always guided by these three parameters. Therefore, when Marshall celebrated the separation of economics from moral philosophy in London at the end of the 19th century he heralded the growing irrelevance of economics to human society, *except*, of course, to the extent that its theories (and ideology) are continuously *imposed* upon society through education and behavioral programs and policies. But, insofar as this is true, economics, itself, becomes a part of the *social construction* of reality, and is no longer only theorizing about it.

In the final analysis Marshall also heralded the likely disintegration of the capitalist system, if not human society, itself, as we now observe the degradation of nature that has followed. Unfortunately, it seems that most mainstream economists and businessmen then, as now, have not been able to appreciate that *no society could long survive without emotions and ethics*. This is what Plato meant with his saying that, "All science without justice and the other virtues must be seen as mere cunning and not wisdom". But that was at a time when science was still a branch of philosophy, unlike today when philosophy is considered by many scientists and engineers to be, at best, an interesting pastime.

Thus, a key philosophical challenge is to bring virtue or moral philosophy back into science. Not that science, especially economics, does not contain a moral and emotional framework; simply it is not very obvious, or discussed very much, given its claim to a 'value-free' status. Thus, this third challenge, which is closely related to that framework and, ultimately to the two other crises, is to define the place or role of the human being (including the scientist) in the socio-economic system. For the positive sciences, which have largely replaced religion and philosophy in social thought, the human being is little more than a cog in the Newtonian mechanistic world. In this world there is no place for emotion and ethics, two of the major non-material dimensions of human existence.

For economics this is especially important, since there are, indeed, emotional and moral dimensions implicit in economic theory. Here we refer to *greed* and *envy*, along with the necessary *fear* (of others) that accompanies such a value system as a means of social control. In this value system the mind must be focused on *cunning*, which, in this world view, is the only ability that humans need to be concerned about in life, a life that for mainstream economics, especially, is pretty much like a game of 'poker.' Thus the wiliest will be the most successful in life, and will represent the 'ideal man' in this philosophy, despite the degraded position assigned to him by Plato.

If economics, and science generally, did not play any significant role in society, this characterization of humans would simply be sad. But economics, and the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century liberal 'philosophy' of the merchants, bankers and industrialists that still accompany it, along with modern technology, largely determine our lives today. They restrict our daily lives to an inordinate degree, especially if we are unable to understand how crucial is their influence on our thoughts, both practically and theoretically.

This leads to the question about what should be, ultimately, the role of the human being in a more philosophical social vision. If Protagoras was right in believing that neither science nor religion but *the human being* should be the measure of all things, then how should we define humans and their needs? How should we define human happiness, especially if we believe that this is the ultimate goal of science? We

should be able to improve on the strictly limited (and fabricated) *Social Darwinist* definition of humans that we have inherited from the science, economic theory and political ideology of the recent past and, more specifically, the interpretation of this 'tradition' that characterizes contemporary socio-economic doctrine. And, finally, could a deeper understanding of humans help in the solution to the other two crises that bedevil us so much today?

### **Happiness Then and Now**

Two hundred years ago only a few people possessed the wealth and luxury that are now associated with modern living - whereas today. . . ? Of course, there is a substantial middle class in the developed countries that enjoys the material benefits of modern society, a class, which unfortunately is dwindling under the influence of the 'New World Order'. This is true even in the U.S. where the median family income has not increased at all for more than thirty years, and has not actually declined because there are so many more women working now (Tabb 2012). But beyond this there is a worldwide alienation in this middle class that is not consistent with the material wealth and amenities that they enjoy. (On the other hand, does anyone truly believe that the very wealthy are happy, in spite of the persistent advertising about the 'rich and the famous' we see in the media?)

So, one must ask, with all the economic development and the evolution of science and technology in the last 200 years, what are we now able to offer to modern humans? First, throughout the whole world more than half of humanity has witnessed from very little to almost no improvement in their material lives during that time. Clearly many people benefit from the wonders of medicine, and a minority enjoys progress in the use of energy, communications and transportation, and general comfort in everyday life. But is this minority happier now, even with these improvements and amenities? Perpetual war, crime and other sociopathic indices, e.g., divorce, drug abuse (including caffeine, nicotine and alcohol), prostitution and pornography, as well as bribes, kickbacks, patronage, fraud, theft, etc., which are common phenomena at every level of life today, all together reflect a general collapse of the moral structure in today's society. These findings would cause one to suppose that, no, today's humans are not happier, despite the apparent progress in science and technology. And research that addresses directly the phenomenon of happiness draws the same conclusion (Lane, 2000).

We have no measurements of happiness from 200 years ago, although certainly there was much misery associated with the poverty that characterized the lives of most. Today's worldwide poverty, meanwhile, still deprives many people of the basic needs for adequate food, clothing and shelter, and more than that there is still a general lack of some sort of security in life and the assurance that the few things that people have will not be taken away in one fashion or another, at any time that suits the ideological demands of the system -- as we see in the recurrent financial crises that mark the history of the modern capitalist world. Of course this deprivation could lead to forms of sociopathic behavior then as now. But shouldn't we have solved these problems by now? In any case, shouldn't everyone be happier now? *Wasn't this the promise of science and technology and free market capitalism in the 19th century?*

### **Economic Theory and Happiness**

In a sense, poverty and insecurity should have been eclipsed long ago; because for nearly a century now *we have a production capacity that could satisfy most of the*

*basic material needs of all people.* However, by the time we had arrived at such a capacity both the politico-economic system and economic theory had become trapped in a severely limited perception of society and of human needs, as propagated by certain 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century philosophers and theoreticians. The result has been that 20<sup>th</sup> century corporate leaders have been 'obliged' to create (artificial) needs to fit this concept and this system of theory and practice. That is, the misery caused by poverty is an anachronism that requires an explanation, one, oddly enough, which is not far from the explanation for the unhappiness of the privileged few.

We start this explanation with a quote from Isaiah Berlin (1962):

The history of thought and culture is, as Hegel showed with great brilliance, a changing pattern of great liberating ideas, which inevitably turn into suffocating straitjackets, and so stimulate their own destruction by new emancipating, and at the same time enslaving conceptions.

We recognize here the basic dialectical insight of Heraclitus, as mentioned above, which Hegel and others have used to analyze the philosophical and socioeconomic systems of their time and ours. This dialectic refers here to the relationship between thought and behavior, between consciousness and being, between subjective and objective reality and even between conjectures and refutations, as Popper would have it. Kuhn (1962, 1970) has interpreted straitjackets as 'anomalies' that would lead to scientific revolutions, whereas Marx interpreted them as basic systemic contradictions that would provide clues for the next phase of human history. Thus, Marx, for example, began with an analysis of the subjective reality, i.e., the reality of ideas and thoughts, or the consciousness, that inspired the capitalist system at that time. This was a consciousness that made private ownership of the means of production sacred, that made workers selling themselves or their labor to those owners in order to survive seem natural, a consciousness that believed that everything, i.e., labor, nature, education, indeed, all of society, could be reduced to engineering, etc. Within a short period of time this consciousness resulted in the inescapable alienation of people, alienation from the products of their labor, from their communities, and from each other. Furthermore, the ideas that promoted this alienation, could, according to Alan Macfarlane (1987), have begun as early as the 14th century in England.

Marx, however, did not start with Hegel, but with the Epicurus. His doctoral dissertation was an analysis of the argument between Epicurus and Democritus about whether society is deterministic in the same sense as nature, that is, if there are any mechanisms that allow for the prediction and control of society in the same way that current Newtonian/Cartesian science and technology seek to control nature. His conclusion was that the humanist Epicurus was right, that there are *not* deterministic social mechanisms, and from there came his respect for the dialectic and for the human participation in the construction of social reality. He was quite modest in his expressions about what exactly would be the next (socialist) phase of humanity, despite the 'certainty' that some of his followers showed in later writings, as they sought not to exclude themselves entirely from the deterministic ethos of the age.

With these considerations we can clarify some of the basic problems of western society today. Capitalism has liberated the enormous human resources that were hidden beneath the various forms of despotism that lasted for 2000 years following the end of ancient Greek civilization. This liberation occurred in a quite 'natural' way as a result of the increase in commerce in the Mediterranean, aided in turn by the

Renaissance that uncovered manuscripts preserved by the Arabs that revealed ancient Greek science and philosophy. The growth of commerce prompted the creation of industry and technology, which in turn contributed to an increase in the production of goods and the further development of trade, by now on an international scale (Pirenne 1925).

The industrialization and urbanization that followed created a huge productive capacity, dependent, however, on a political-economic system based on the so-called free market and on an economic theory that rationalized it by focusing exclusively on production and investment for profit. (This emphasis on endless material production was true even in the communist Soviet Union - Lebowitz 2012). Unfortunately, however, it ignores any human needs beyond those related to money, profit seeking and its mathematical theorization. Thus, if a need can be combined with a financial return, the system will offer an appropriate product or service; if not, it will simply not be met, at least not within the dominant politico-economic system. In theory and practice this system allows, though only grudgingly, a public sector to provide the necessary social and physical infrastructure to satisfy significant unmet needs, especially if their satisfaction would improve the productivity of the system in general. But again this is allowed only if it does not compete with the private sector. It is important to emphasize in this respect that with neo-liberalism in recent years the private sector has expanded enormously, while the public sector is increasingly being used as a conduit to channel public funds into the private sector, usually for excessively profitable activities (Frank, 2008).

When the system arrived in the late 19th century with a production capacity that could soon have satisfied the basic material needs of everyone, especially in the industrialized countries, and over time throughout the rest of the world, it did not follow the logical development of doing so because it was not 'profitable'. All of the subsequent evolution of capitalism and of mainstream economic theory since then has been characterized by this outdated 'logic'. Thus, in the less developed countries of the Third World colonial capital has sought cheap raw materials and cheap labor, and subsequently, to the extent possible, new markets (consisting mostly of the privileged few), which on the whole aids more in the underdevelopment and the continued deprivation of basic needs in these countries (Magdoff 1968). We must exclude, of course, certain countries of Asia, particularly China, which have to a large degree freed themselves from this colonial syndrome and where now the local ruling class, itself, has taken on the 'onerous' task of exploiting its own people in the name of 'development'.

During the same period in the industrialized countries themselves corporations have learned to manipulate consumers' emotional and moral needs to increase consumption, so as not to reduce the production that was the source of their profit. In a sense it might have been more logical to increase the income of workers so that they could consume the increased production, but this would have reduced profits. Caught in this contradiction, they have turned, on the one hand, to new forms of organization and technology to reduce production costs, ignoring the psychological and physical toll on employees and workers, as immortalized in Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, and on the other, to advertising, credit, etc., as already mentioned, to increase the consumption of goods, including often those that are largely unnecessary, providing they yielded a profit. Meanwhile, the evolution of a technology that displaces workers further reduces purchasing power in the market. The combination of all these choices has contributed eventually to the current global socio-economic crisis.

The scientific, artistic and emotional manipulation of workers and consumers has reached a very sophisticated level today, forcing them to engage in a frantic but meaningless 'rat race', in which they work harder and longer hours to earn more money to buy goods they think they need, without a thought given to how these needs were created in the first place. Capitalism and mainstream economic theory and even liberal ideas about democracy, are trapped in the 'straitjacket' of thought from the 19th century, and are unable to help the workers, citizens and consumers to free themselves from this impasse (Linder 1970; Perelman 2011).

### **'New' Perceptions of Happiness**

We know that in large social systems there are many unintended consequences of people's actions: we think we're doing one thing but it turns out that the effects are not what we expected. The feedback loops in large systems are very slow moving and often interpreted in terms of out-dated conceptions, so that reality usually runs ahead of thought. Thus, it has taken until now for more and more people to understand that the 'liberating' theories and ideologies of the 19th century do not fit the realities of the 21st. There is now an effort to bring science closer to real people and real needs. There are thousands of students and professors of economics who are looking for new, more humane 'reality based' economic theories, reflecting today's circumstances. (Fullbrook 2004, Magnuson 2007, Quiggin 2010; See also [www.paecon.net](http://www.paecon.net))

At the same time, in the larger industrial society there are millions of people seeking to satisfy non-material needs by fleeing the modern sector and the frenzied competition that characterizes it, living with smaller cars and simpler houses and consumer goods. They are seeking to reduce environmental pollution by using more 'friendly' technologies, and to eat fewer processed foods containing toxins from pesticides, fertilizers, etc., and generally to avoid the pressures for the 'good life' promoted by the media. In other words, they are seeking to create on a smaller scale a more moral and emotionally satisfying socioeconomic system to replace the large scale one that has now become so immoral and so irrational (Ray and Anderson 2000, Dawson 2006, Moore 2005). This is not, of course, to suggest in any way that the poverty-stricken people in the Third World should be denied access to those basic material goods and services that are so lacking there, to a large degree proportional to their over abundance in the First World.

It is not the first time, however, that people have realized that their society could not allow the fulfilment of important non-material human needs. Here we must mention one of the earliest and most important of such people, Epicurus, who left the city, not to avoid consumerism, but to find the essence of human life. Although the school of Epicurus lasted much longer than all the schools of all the other philosophers, his thoughts have been distorted and his concepts perverted more than those of any other philosopher. Why? because Epicurus tried to free humans from every sort of unessential physical and psychological need that might derive from the socio-political system. This has not made him popular in any system of power, anywhere, ever.

This is because people in positions of power are always looking to devise emotional and ethical justifications to legitimize their power. The Greek word for (political) power is 'ἐξουσία', which means literally 'outside the essence'. Insofar as the powerful are usually 'outside the essence' they seek those justifications outside the realm of the human and outside the essence of society, that is, in the realm of the metaphysical and in mechanisms beyond the human. When Nietzsche said, "God is dead", he meant that the metaphysical symbolic system of religion had lost its grip on humans

because it had been replaced by science. Now unfortunately, following the idea of the dialectic, science, or at least the language of science, is increasingly used for similar symbolic purposes (of 'mystification'). Thus, for many people, including almost all businessmen, and the politicians who support them, as well as many economists, *economic theory and science, generally, play, to a significant degree, the social role of a metaphysical symbolic universe that legitimizes the power of the existing status quo* (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

Meanwhile, there are many contemporary people, who, like Epicurus understand that modern society pushes one beyond and outside the essential, and that society, therefore, needs to be redefined. Such an effort requires reflection, time and quiet, something not to be found in the city. Hence, the movements mentioned above, which have different names: 'cultural creatives', 'postmodern', ecovillagers, transition towns, 'harmonization movement', even Epicureans, etc. (Ray and Anderson 2000, Inglehart 1997, Dawson 2006, Moore 2005. See also Brende 2004)

## **The Philosophy of Epicurus**

How could Epicurus assist current Epicureans? What was the philosophy of Epicurus? (Theodorides 1981[1954]) A basic presupposition of Epicurus was that happiness begins at the level of human beings, and that they should be happy here and now (and not after death, for example). To be happy, one should avoid physical pain and mental distress (what today we call stress). But, according to Epicurus, one should seek to avoid physical pain and mental distress, *through reason and logic and not through gluttony and greed*. That is, what all the agitated critics of Epicurus have done for two millennia now is to distort the meaning of 'ἡδονή' (hedonism) and to slander him by giving a totally opposite meaning to the word, all based on a big lie. *For Epicurus any pleasure of a given moment that would bring unhappiness to the next, either to one's self or to others, should be rejected*. Thus, his true maxim was frugality, simplicity in food, in drink, in housing, in clothing and sex, i.e., 'μέτρον ἄριστον' (measure in all things), *not* the current tendency to overeating and dieting, drug abuse and detoxification, overconsumption and over indebtedness, etc.

There is modern scientific evidence to support this philosophy. For drug dependence there is no need for discussion. As far as overeating is concerned, experiments with animals have shown that less food contributes to health and longevity. There was an impressive study of American Navy pilots who were imprisoned in North Vietnam (where they ate only rice and vegetables) compared with their fellow non-imprisoned pilots, which showed that in a whole range of body systems the prisoners were healthier than their colleagues who ate the usual meals of the American people! (*St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 1977)

Epicurus believed that to avoid psychological stress, the most important thing was to avoid fear. He believed that all psychological stress begins with fear, and furthermore, along with Aristotle, that fear is the chief weapon of power. Epicurus believed that fear is rooted in the fear of death, so he tried first of all to relieve people of this primal fear. It was also for this reason that his philosophy was in continuous conflict with western religions over the centuries that followed. He did not believe – as was also true of Thomas Paine (2006) and other deists in the 18<sup>th</sup> century - in gods that would meddle in human affairs (supporting one or the other side in wars, sporting events, etc.), either before or after death. He believed that if such were true, gods would be human and not divine, thus disarming the power of all the religions that threaten humans with punishment through exile, excommunication, hell, or whatever. The same is true for all forms of power that use fear to control their subjects. Indeed,

the more a system depends upon fear to govern, including fear of the enemy, of terrorism, of crime, of torture and execution, and in general fear of the 'bogeyman', the further away it is from democracy, whatever label is used to define that system. Thus, Epicurus entreated his students to avoid the fear of God, the fear of authority and the fear of death, fears often generated by ritualistic and sociodramatic means such as staged terrorist events, the theater of violence in the mass media, overt demonstrations of power, victimage, mystification, etc. (Duncan 1968, but also the many writings of Kenneth Burke).

At the other end of the emotional spectrum Epicurus gave much importance to *friendship*, as he believed it was the most important basis of human happiness. He emphasized companionship, honesty, generosity, goodness and kindness to friends, along with prudence, self-sufficiency, serenity, simplicity and restraint. Because he appeared to give little importance to kinship or to society as a socially constructed reality, and as he believed in and supported the atomic theory of Democritus, he was compelled to find a social explanation for "the temporary association of individuals within larger systems characteristic of nature, where 'everything flows' ". There may at some time be found a quantum explanation to complement the psychological importance we give today to the attraction between people that results in temporary communities or groups. Epicurus, however, offered friendship as the philosophical explanation for the role of such attraction. And in his garden, friendship was extended to all: to women, slaves, young and old. There, associations relied solely on human volition, rather than on coercion, and hence the importance of friendship to maintain the sense of cohesion.

In this context, without fear, and with equality and freedom and with the search for happiness based on wisdom, logic and simplicity, Epicurus saw no place for glory, for success and fame, for wealth and greed, or for power and conquest. "Λάθε Βιώσας" (Live inconspicuously, unobtrusively): avoid behavior and ambitions that bring only banalities and mental distress. Live life here and now, with simplicity and respect for each other, but with joy and happiness.

How ironic! Almost the entire evolution of humanity since Epicurus has gone in the opposite direction, especially with the rise of economic theory, individualism and the technological society, which have brought a culture of egoism, competition, conquest and arrogance, and with ultimate consequences that may well circumscribe significantly, if not conclusively, human life on our planet. So it is not surprising that so many people today are looking to implement the values of Epicurus, with or without his name. There are scholars in all disciplines who are turning their attention towards the human and the spiritual, seeking to find a more reasoned philosophical and scientific approach to the current social reality.

### **Maslow's Developmental Theory of Human Needs**

One such effort (without apparent reference to Epicurus), starting nearly a half a century ago was that of Abraham Maslow (1970), who sought to formulate a theory of emotional needs as they develop throughout a normal (non-pathological) person's lifetime. In his well-known "hierarchy" he sought, through his clinical work, to develop an empirical theory that was dynamic and universal. He claimed that the first needs, first in importance and time, were the *physiological needs* of humans arising during infancy: needs for food, water, warmth, etc. These are the basic material needs, and essentially the only needs incorporated in economic theory where they are expressed solely in terms of money. Mainstream economic theory offers essentially no theoretical guidance as to how these needs would be insured for all people. The free

market system has certainly not succeeded in doing this even in the advanced industrial countries, as the past 200 years have shown all too clearly. Surprisingly, they were not even identified as needs in scientific discussions and indices of development, including in the United Nations, until fairly recently, and only after a long campaign by Mahbub al Haq (1999, Streeten 1981).

The second developmental need is the emotional need for *safety*, which is very important during the childhood years of human beings. It is the need for security, protection, stability, dependency, freedom from fear, anxiety, and chaos, need for structure, order, law, and limits, etc. It is a need that is satisfied primarily within the context of the loving family, *but which presupposes the security of the family in the larger society*. Again mainstream economic theory offers no guidance here. It is also a need whose satisfaction is undermined by the violence that is a daily presence in the media, even in children's cartoons. This violence serves broader political purposes by creating fear, often subconsciously, important for social control as mentioned above, but also necessary to justify the militarization of the global politico-economic system in which military armaments are the number one world trade commodity according to statistics provided by the United Nations.

The third need in human psychological development is the need for *affiliation or friendship* within a group, a very important need during adolescence when the child begins the search for autonomy. It is the need to belong somewhere outside the family, the need for loving relationships with friends, which will subsequently evolve into similar relationships with spouses, children and community. It is a need which could be satisfied through youth groups and clubs sponsored by schools, churches and other associations for young people. Among other things the young could discuss the ways in which the need for affiliation is much exploited in advertising, which is directed increasingly towards adolescents. Teenage children have a critical emotional need to belong to a reference group beyond the family and will do almost anything, which in current society, television, cinema and, in general, advertising, suggest are necessary to belong to such a group.

Later, during the early developmental years of adulthood people have an emotional need for esteem, specifically for self-esteem and social esteem. The first is expressed as a need for power, achievement, efficiency, ownership, capacity, confidence, independence and freedom, and the second for reputation, position, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity and respect. Maslow's theory has been much used in management seminars and workshops in relation to this need, though how it can serve to counsel employees involved in a rapacious, predatory system where only the bottom line is of importance, must remain a mystery.

It was also a need referred to by Adam Smith as approbation, though his examples reveal his failure to appreciate how different life in mass society would be from what he was experiencing during his time. One unfortunate development has been that most of the economists who have followed Smith have reduced the basis of such praise (often clouded by envy) to material or monetary terms, disregarding other forms of emotional and spiritual satisfaction sought by human beings. Unfortunately, Smith justified the search for approbation on the grounds that it would encourage people to continue to "cut the trees and plough the fields", with all the disastrous results we see today in the environment and in human psychology.

In any case, here it appears that Maslow diverges from Epicurus and his canon to live inconspicuously and unobtrusively. Or could it be that Epicurus understood something that Maslow did not take into account, i.e., that it is very difficult if not

impossible to find real (authentic) esteem in a large-scale society? This is certainly true in the mass society of today, as evidenced by inquiries made on this topic. Current surveys show that few people express satisfaction with their work, which is, for the most part, the place where one must expect the need for esteem to be satisfied (Huizinga 1970).

Parenthetically, one might add that the Soviet system also ignored these emotional needs in defining the new socialist world. Material needs were guaranteed, but were ultimately understood as they were defined in the capitalist world. Thus, continuous increases in consumer goods and the necessary increases in industrial production that this entailed were to be the defining purpose of the new socialist society, with the same resulting environmental problems that have marked the history of capitalism. At the same time, development was seen as an engineering problem in the same mechanistic framework as employed by the capitalist system, and was to be realized through central control, in this case the state instead of the corporation. Work, while guaranteed for everyone, turned out to be the same mindless process as portrayed by Charlie Chaplin and formalized by Taylorism under capitalism.

Thus, esteem needs, which can only be realized through worker participation at every stage in the decision-making process, were as frustrated under Soviet socialism as under capitalism. Joshua Horn (1969) described the long painful process that worker participation entailed, based upon his experience in the post revolutionary medical system in China. But, if applied universally, this would have slowed down the accumulation of consumer goods that was to characterize the new utopia. Thus, apparently for this reason, it was rejected as 'inefficient' in the Newtonian framework that was employed in the centralized Soviet planning system. (Lebowitz 2012)

Meanwhile, the (illusion of) glory, much sought after by politicians and those who generally have a passion for money and power, cannot satisfy such needs. Is it perhaps that Epicurus believed that only in small-scale communities could one satisfy the need for esteem? Epicurus did not live in our present mass society, but he must have realized that it was necessary for people to know you well, and to truly respect you, so that you, yourself would realize that this was genuine esteem. And is this perhaps why so many people are now creating smaller communities in order to live a more fulfilling life?

At the final stage in one's emotional development Maslow identified a higher need, the need for *self-actualization*. This is the need to become more and more idiosyncratically everything one is capable of becoming, from ideal parent to athlete, musician, carpenter or whatever. Normally, this need is met only very rarely in our contemporary society, according to Maslow, on the grounds that, apart from very exceptional people, most would have had to satisfy all the other developmental needs first in order to reach this level, and this would occur usually only after the age of fifty (Hall and Nougain 1968, p. 32, Gutenschwager 2004, Ch. 10).

Indeed, Maslow's hierarchy is characterized by the concept of 'prepotency', which means that it is an interdependent system where lower needs must be generally satisfied before higher needs even become relevant. Hence, ordinarily, if a lower need is not satisfied at the appropriate age it could very well remain dominant and prevent the emergence of higher needs later in life. Thus, if during the years of infancy persons have not satisfied their need for food, these people will tend to remain psychologically at this level, and food will persist as an obsessive need throughout their lives, inhibiting the emergence of other higher needs. The same applies to the need for security in childhood, or friendship and affiliation in adolescence. If any one of these needs is not met at the appropriate age, it will tend

to persist as an unmet psychological need throughout a person's life and block the emergence of later needs for esteem and self-actualization (Huizinga 1970).

With this in mind, the seemingly strange and erratic appearance of children's psychological needs, or lack of emotional intelligence according to Goleman (2005), in adult populations is explained. Different people have stayed at different stages in their psychological development, and hence the emotional immaturity characteristic of a significant proportion of the adult population, especially, the male need for power, perhaps because childhood safety needs were not satisfied. And one reason for this is that socioeconomic conditions plus the lack of philosophy throughout the educational system, throughout science and throughout (the technological) society in general, do not give attention to normal psychological development. That is, if we want people to be happy we must at some point put emotional and moral development alongside, if not ahead of economic growth, which, if we did, would cause a tectonic shift in the current scientific understanding of what is important in human life.

Meanwhile, it is not that this shift has not already started to take place. Since the time of Maslow, there has been an enormous amount of research on human happiness and well-being, or eudaemonia, as the Greeks referred to it. Neuroscientists, psychiatrists, psychologists, geneticists, philosophers and even physicists have been conducting research on every facet of human well-being. Much of this research has been summarized recently by C. Robert Cloninger in his book, *Feeling Good, the Science of Well-Being* (2004), which also includes his own research on the multi-dimensional, including spiritual, characteristics of well-being. Unfortunately, the academic and business world are still largely dominated by the mechanistic Newtonian vision of reality and the Cartesian separation of the spiritual and the material, and where even basic physiological needs have only recently been recognized as worth reporting along side GDP, per capita income, etc. It is for this reason that we must struggle to make known the insights of Maslow, Cloninger, and the many other scholars who are working to incorporate the *total* (spiritual and material) human being into our philosophy of science and society.

### **What Can We Do To Save Humans With (and from) Science?**

We must appreciate that Maslow's hierarchy is *not* a deterministic theory in the Newtonian sense, nor is it expected that people reading about his theory would not be affected by it, as Descartes would have imagined. Therefore, the idea of prepotency can be utilized and then overcome through reflection on the hierarchy during adulthood. Just knowing about it may free persons from its hold, in the same sense that physical reality in the quantum world may be altered by scientists who are observing it.

Maslow, in the meantime, adds two more needs outside the prepotency framework: cognitive needs and aesthetic needs. These needs appear in all societies and all epochs, and are probably the key thing to examine if we wish to extract ourselves from the impasse of our present existence. To create a better social system we must first understand the problems in the current system and then be able to envision, think about, and generally create an image of a new social structure.

Thus, Maslow's developmental theory may be used in two ways:

First, it may be used as an approach to individual psychological therapy as part of a quest for personal well-being. Here it can be used to identify inadequacies in psychological development arising from unmet needs during infancy, childhood and adolescence that constitute obstacles to satisfaction of

esteem and self-actualization needs later in life. This is something which most of psychological therapy is directed towards, in any case, either within similar or differing theoretical frameworks, including that of Dr. Cloninger (2004), who has explored the need for cooperativeness and self-transcendence as necessary prerequisites not only to individual well-being but also to social well-being and, in the long run our species survival.

Secondly, and equally important here, we must talk about the socioeconomic implications of Maslow's theory, and about the need to institutionalize, in the sociological meaning of the term, the satisfaction of these needs at the appropriate time in the emotional development of all members of society. Thus, our fixation on efficiency, productivity and growth in the material realm must give way to concern for growth in the emotional and spiritual realm. Instead of adding endless numbers of gadgets and widgets, especially of the military sort, we must seek to add more healthy and emotionally mature human beings. Epicurus' insights into happiness should also help to liberate us from this overbearing material realm, with additional untold benefits in our effort to stop degrading the environment (and each other).

Thus, economic theory must be directed to providing a minimum of food, clothing and shelter for all members of society, with the assurance that women (and men) will not be degraded socially for their absence from the "productive" sector during periods of early childhood development. The same requirement must apply to each stage in the emotional development of all persons such that the satisfaction of their needs for security, love and affiliation are embodied in social institutions directed to that purpose. Here we must emphasize the importance of protecting the family where such needs are first and best satisfied, which would mean allowing flexible work schedules and avoiding punishment for either women or men who are engaged in this critical social function. At later stages, when esteem needs are relevant, work must be designed as an end in itself, and not just as a means to increase production and/or profit making. Obviously, questions of productivity and efficiency cannot be ignored in the work place, but they must be kept in perspective, not as ends in themselves, but as means to the greater well being of the overall population. Again, Epicurus, as well as the serious problem of environmental degradation, should help us to maintain a proper perspective on how much and what sorts of production of material goods and services are important to society. Finally, economists, themselves, will have to learn to arrange the numbers so that these radically different social goals can be achieved. It should be both a challenge and a great satisfaction as they relearn their science in the service of humankind, serving Apollo, the god of light and healing instead of Ares, the god of war.

Among other things, this will require a renewed understanding that all knowledge is relative. What we believe as true today may have been either unknown or fantasy yesterday, and may be either a falsehood or, more likely, only a partial truth tomorrow. This understanding of relativity has been increasingly more acceptable to science since the time of Einstein, Heisenberg and Bohr (Capra, 1982), and in general has always been more or less known in the humanities and the arts. Indeed, the social role of art is to experiment with reality, opening prospects for other possible realities, either through criticism of the status quo, or through images of another, better reality (Burke 1961, 1968; Duncan 1968, 1969). If ordinary people and, even more, scientists begin to accept the relativity of knowledge with all its implications, as Berlin indicated above, and to *know when liberating ideas have become suffocating*

*straitjackets*, then we can begin to build a better society. This not, of course, to adopt the extreme relativist (often postmodern) position that implies that there is no such thing as true knowledge, and that, therefore, nothing matters. Newtonian physics has not been thrown out because of quantum physics; it still occupies an important, though now more limited position, which is the way of all growth: the more we know, the more we realize what we don't know.

As mentioned above, we live with a number of scientific and socio-political ideas from the 18th and 19th centuries. The liberating ideological and theoretical ideas of this era were the product of the efforts of merchants and industrialists to be freed from the control of landlords and kings, who claimed that they ruled with the blessing of divine right. Even the U.S. Constitution extended the idea of democracy solely to people with property! Only after prolonged struggles did workers acquire voting rights, and women only in the 1920s, and for blacks in America only in the 1960s, that is, just a few short years ago! In spite of this, an American journalist has described the current U.S. system as still little more than a 'representative oligarchy', which is not far from reality in Europe, as well. If you look at the cost of elections around the world, for example, you will understand that only the rich or 'friends' of the rich, that is, of the oligarchy, may seek to become elected to higher political office. Many social scientists still insist on calling these systems 'democracies', disguising reality with such "Orwellian" euphemisms in their 'scientific' analyses.

Mainstream economic theory is even more disingenuous. It speaks of a 'free market' system that might have existed at some point in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19th century before the inevitable effects of competition started producing winners and losers and 'the big fish began to eat the small'. The accumulated effect of these economic forces has produced ever fewer and larger firms, particularly in the developed countries and by extension in the rest of the world, as competitive capitalism has evolved into its present monopoly form (Baran and Sweezy 1966). The term 'free market' is a euphemism that obscures, among other things, the economic disparity between developed and less developed countries, a disparity that allows monopoly capital to enter freely into the less developed economies and pillage their resources, as well as their means of production and distribution, creating a permanent dependent status for these countries. It also obscures the ability of these few companies to control the prices and general market conditions for the products or services they provide.

Finally, and more recently, it obscures the evolution of the shift in economic power from the industrial to the financial sector where 'the financial tail is now wagging the industrial dog', and the subsequent and inevitable extension of the severe economic crisis beyond the financial sector into a worldwide depression at least as great as that of the 1930s. There are many other examples of anachronisms in economic theory, as it struggles with the 'straitjackets' of 19th century thought, without even mentioning the whole range of non-material human needs that do not appear anywhere in the economic and technocratic approach to the socioeconomic system.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, to begin to change the system, humanism and philosophy would have to be reintroduced into society and science, that is into the educational system and the 'theater' of the media, where adult education takes place. With art, especially dramatic art, playing an important role, we can begin to envision a different reality where human beings and their emotional and moral needs would be given precedence, rather than our current preoccupation with profit making, consumerism, greed, jealousy, and fear. Not that we should ignore the positive values of science

and economics, values such as logic, efficiency, rationality, etc. Simply, *these values should serve human needs rather than define them.*

Furthermore, we must seek to remove all the labels that we use, without thinking, to describe people and situations, labels that separate 'us' from 'them', even in the same society, the same city and the same neighborhood, cultivating hostility and intolerance, and creating a serious obstacle to a more humane society. This is likely a phenomenon that has derived, as Maslow might say, from the insecurity that, ironically, appears to have characterized the history of all the world since the acquisition of property accompanying the creation of surpluses provided by the domestication of plants and animals over the past 10,000 years, an insecurity that appears to have led to a craze for power and control that has characterized so many people (especially males) since that time (Engels 1972).

Indeed, as humankind seeks to attain the next level of spontaneous evolution to manage its global complexity, it should be inspired by better knowledge of the stages that have come before. Unlike the social Darwinist inspired belief that random mutation, competition, and adaptation create survivors, it is now seen to be a more "intentional" process that is inherent in quantum nature itself. This process leads to the **increased cooperation** that has allowed adaptation and survival, which in turn explains the evolution from prokaryotic uni-cellular organisms to multi-cellular organisms to proto-hominids and then to our own self-conscious organisms (Lipton 2008). The increased control fostered by increased complexity is not accomplished by dominance but by increased communication among specialized components of the system. The current urge for control, which characterizes the early Newtonian conception of the universe and which has been carried over into society, is not what has allowed us to evolve into the self-conscious organisms that we are today. If we are to survive as such, and given that we have increasing knowledge about how the quantum universe is organized, we should like all the other elements of that universe use that knowledge to find new cooperative means of surviving at the global level.

Maslow describes the process whereby children can become integrated, self-actualized adults. We now need to participate in creating a society that would allow the satisfaction of **emotional** needs, as they appear at each stage in human life. Epicurus, at the same time, has described a more modest material environment in which this process could evolve in a natural way, where humans could find the biological and psychological security and respect that would allow them to form a non-hostile identity, an identity that would not be threatened when confronted with other people and other identities in the same or other geographic and social space. Such an identity would not be restricted to 'us and them', so that the inevitable conflicts that occur in human society could be solved without resorting to violence.

Unlike the Pythagorean communities, as well as most subsequent utopian religious communities, where obligations are institutionalized, all facets of membership in the 'garden' of Epicurus were voluntary, such that the bonds were based in emotion, not law. The contributions and sharing to create a more egalitarian and just community were done in a spirit of friendship and not obligation. This process was facilitated by the principles of frugality and lack of vanity, which allowed social status and respect to be achieved without resort to material wealth and fortune. It is this combination of the maximization of pleasure in the context of austerity that would allow the need for self-awareness and self-actualization to be satisfied without undue reference to material goods, wealth and money. Such a philosophy is particularly necessary today, because it would not only facilitate true psychological development, but would do so at a much lower environmental cost.

The philosophy of personal greed, which inspired the rise of capitalism, has brought us to an impasse with nature and with ourselves. Thus, we return to Epicurus not only to see how he sought to satisfy human needs, but also especially how he sought to create a community (society) that resembled the more democratic societies of 'hunters and gatherers'. There is no need to over romanticize them, but at the same time these people had, for the most part, found ways to live modestly by sharing their limited wealth, without the need to create an identity so closely attached to property (Sahlins 1972). A 'possessive' identity arose with the domestication of plants and animals and with the idea of 'private property' (land and livestock), as mentioned above. Over time this definition of identity extended to larger geopolitical entities and led it towards a hostile dynamic with an extension from simple jealousy all the way to civil strife and eventually to international wars of conquest, thus turning it into a force for division rather than inclusion: 'You're either for us or against us', where there is no 'third way' and no space for compromise (Ury, 1999).

Today, the courageous effort to create a common identity among all mankind is forced to struggle with the residue of human evolution over the past 10,000 years, to say nothing of the effects of a social Darwinist inspired predatory capitalist system and its economic theory institutionalized over the past several hundred years. This is a system where every thing and every person is an exploitable resource, and cooperative relations, even with nature, are very difficult, if not impossible to realize. It was precisely this hostility that Epicurus sought to combat with his emphasis on simplicity, equality and friendship in the garden, where property is something that we share as an outgrowth of people learning to develop faith in their fellow human beings.

Instead of helping us to use and develop our emotional and moral selves, mechanistic (social) science has tried to convince us that they are not necessary, that scientific logic would make them redundant, and that shrewdness would suffice. Instead of confronting the maxim of Plato, this science has sought to establish cunning as the highest human value. Can social scientists, especially economists, who have so much influence in today's world, produce a theory for a system that would maximize *security, friendship, and love*? If they can, perhaps the effort to satisfy needs for esteem and self-realization could evolve naturally within the same framework.

So, let us try to look more closely at the meaning of happiness, something that the welfare states have tried to do, although, as seen above, the effort has been blunted by an economic view of the human being, even in the socialist countries (Lebowitz 2012). But we must measure true need satisfaction, not some fabricated indices developed from existing data. We must ask the people, themselves, remembering that individual perspectives are always social in origin. Social scientists, psychologists and philosophers must all work together to create questionnaires and interview methods that can uncover true human feelings, and then develop indices that would measure such feelings. A significant change in scientific thought, and ultimately in society, would be required, if we were to succeed in such an effort. We need a new vision that would subordinate conventional economic signals to new human concepts. The beliefs of economists about efficiency would have to change to: 'improving not only the material, but also the *emotional and moral circumstances of one person without worsening the emotional and moral circumstances of anyone else*'. All this must refer to new and more humane societies, simply because existing thoughts and behaviors are leading us to a dead end. Indeed, mainstream economic theory is not able to guarantee any of the above-mentioned needs; it appears at this

time, at least, to guarantee only that all the wealth, property and power will float to the top 1% of the population!

Often it is the more adventurous, the 'marginal', often younger scientists, who dare to risk their 'reputation' with such unorthodox thoughts and deeds. This, at least, is what the analysis by Thomas Kuhn (1962, 1970) would predict when he speaks of 'scientific revolutions'. It is the young scientists who can experience the quantum or Gestalt shift from an old paradigm to a new one without the excessive emotional cost that older scientists are likely to experience. And it characterizes the adventurous people who are leaving the modernist rat race for life in more cooperative settings, whether in large cities or small towns, as they seek to rediscover the emotional and social skills necessary for harmonious living in a return to the 'Garden of Epicurus'. There they are seeking to find new ways of coexistence among themselves and with nature, ways necessary to found a new post-individualist society, where humans will be the measure, and money, science, mathematics, etc., will be the lesser, though not unimportant means.

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**Brief abstract** of "From Epicurus to Maslow: Happiness Then and Now and the Place of the *Human Being* in Social Theory"

If Protagoras' idea that, "human beings are the measure of all things", is sound, then mechanistic Newtonian ideas applied to society are quite inadequate. This also helps to explain our current economic and environmental crises, and encourages us to seek inspiration from Epicurus and Maslow, as to what human beings truly need.



Gerald A. Gutenschwager, PhD

Emeritus Professor, School of Architecture, Washington University,  
St. Louis, MO, USA

Scientific Fellow, Department of Regional Planning and Development, University  
of Thessaly, Volos, Greece

B.S. in Education, Eastern Michigan University, 1954

M.A. in Geography and Planning, University of Chicago, 1957

PhD in City and Regional Planning, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, 1969

Formal education and experience have focused on research, education and administration in relation to planning, international development, urbanization, and health. These concerns have prompted investigations and experiments in social theory, planning theory, educational gaming and simulation, social change, time budgets, the political economy of health and the philosophy of social science. Additional research has focused on modernism and postmodernism as expressed in social theory, urbanism and architecture. Practical work experience has ranged from a city planning department in the U.S. (Chicago) to an extensive tenure with public and private agencies and offices overseas in Athens, Greece. Teaching experience has ranged from junior high to graduate school and with students from all of the continents over a sixty year period since the 1950s. Publications include numerous articles, reviews and presentations, as well as two books: *The Political Economy of Health in Modern Greece* (1989), Athens, Greece: The National Center of Social Research (in Greek), and *Planning and Social Science; a Humanistic Approach* (2004). Lanham, MD: University Press of America, also published in Greek by The University of Thessaly Publications, Volos, Greece