

The Achilles' Heel of Corporate Capitalism

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The capitalist era dates from the 16th century (approximately 500 years ago). Since then capitalism has become increasingly dominant, globally, particularly over the past 300 years. Currently, global corporate capitalism is flourishing and dominating more powerfully than ever.

Corporate capitalism is a terribly flawed social and economic model. It has spawned many "Mean Arrangements of Man."¹ These mean arrangements represent downstream effects of capitalism. They represent symptoms of a society that has been infected with a social and economic model that sidelines the conscience, upregulates expression of the non-altruistic aspects of our Human Nature,²⁻⁴ and atrophies the soul.

While it is important to treat the symptoms of a society that has become infected with the corporate capitalist model, it is of equal or greater importance to address the root cause of the model's ability to infect, thrive, and sustain its dominance.

Why has this social and economic system dominated for so long? It is the contention of this website that this flawed social and economic model has been able to thrive and increasingly dominate because the social understandings upon which it is foundationally based have not been adequately challenged. Symptoms created by capitalism have been addressed (partially), but the root cause of the model's ability to infect, cause illness, thrive, and continue to dominate has not been adequately exposed and addressed.

More specifically, it is the contention of this website that corporate capitalism has been able to survive and dominate for several centuries because it has been able to convince us (or otherwise force us to accept) that the social understandings upon which it is based (which, in fact, are misunderstandings) are true. Namely, the corporate capitalist model is based on and promotes the following social (mis)understandings:

- A negative, incomplete, simplistic, pessimistic, inaccurate, and abusive (mis)understanding of Human Nature²⁻⁶---one that emphasizes our human capacity for self-interest seeking and claims that selfishness is the dominant behavioral capacity of human beings. Making matters worse, corporate capitalism ignores how a chosen economic model can upregulate expression of our non-altruistic behavioral capacities and downregulate expression of our altruistic capacities (as is the case with corporate capitalism) or can upregulate expression of our altruistic capacities and downregulate expression of our non-altruistic capacities (as is the case with the Children's Hospital Public Economy Model⁷⁻⁹).

- An insistence that “monetary incentive” is the “sine qua non” of any successful economic model---because, “due to human nature,” people need monetary incentive for adequate motivation and adequate performance.
- A negative, inaccurate, and perverse understanding of the nature and role of competition.
- An insistence that monetary incentive and capitalism’s distorted version of competition are essential for innovation and creative advancements.
- A belief that private free enterprise and free market activity are essential components of any successful social and economic model.
- A belief that capitalism, despite its many flaws, is the best economic model that has ever been created---because it takes into account the above understandings (the purported “realities” of human nature, etc.) and because alternative models “do not sufficiently take the above ‘realities’ into account and inevitably lead to authoritarian and totalitarian behaviors.”

It is the contention of this website that the above social understandings represent unfortunate and powerfully misleading misunderstandings. For comparison, the Children’s Hospital Public Economy Model (CHPEM) is based upon the following social understandings¹⁰:

- A positive, comprehensive understanding of Human Nature²⁻⁴ that emphasizes the spectrum of human behavioral capacities that we all have (including capacities for altruistic behaviors and capacities for non-altruistic behaviors), and emphasizes that the social and economic model that a society chooses can either upregulate expression of our non-altruistic capacities and downregulate expression of our capacities for altruistic behaviors (as is the case with corporate capitalism) or do the opposite, up-regulate expression of our altruistic capacities and downregulate expression of our capacities for selfish behaviors (as is the case with the CHPEM).
- An understanding that “moral incentive” is a sufficient motivating factor and that “monetary incentive” is neither essential nor desirable.¹¹
- A positive, accurate understanding of the true nature and role of “competition,” particularly the understanding that the word “competition” comes from the Latin “com petere,” which means “to seek (new heights) together.”¹²
- A realization that “monetary incentive” and capitalism’s version of competition are not necessary for innovation and creativity.¹³
- A realization that individualism, private free enterprise, and free market activity are not essential for a successful social and economic model. Instead, a different kind of freedom might be the most precious of all---the freedom to enjoy widespread upregulation of the expression of human altruistic behavioral capacities---upregulation in oneself and in society as a whole (which are inter-dependent).¹⁴ This “precious freedom” is provided by a public economy, but not by a capitalist economy.
- A realization that it is best to fill positions of leadership in society and the economy with “altruistic natural leaders” who have demonstrated exemplary altruism, honesty,

kindness, and incorruptibility---as opposed to filling positions of leadership with those who will make corporate entities most profitable.¹⁵⁻¹⁸

- A realization that it is unrealistic to think the “Mean Arrangements of Man” that are currently harming Humanity can be corrected by continuing the economic model that has spawned and exacerbated these problems in the first place.¹⁹ The most realistic way to correct the Mean Arrangements of Man is to develop kind arrangements that spawn Social Beauty²⁰ rather than social misery. The CHPEM creates and supports kind arrangements and spawns greater Social Beauty.

Most people have accepted the negative and incomplete understanding of Human Nature that has been insistently taught by the corporate capitalist economic model (CCEM). Most people have not been introduced to the positive, more complete and more accurate understanding of Human Nature upon which the CHPEM is based. Most people have also accepted the notion that “monetary incentive” is essential for motivation, excellent performance, and innovation, and have not considered that “moral incentive” can be an adequate motivating factor. Most people have been taught a negative and rather perverted understanding of the nature and role of “competition.” Most have never heard of “altruistic natural leaders.” Most have never heard of “Social Beauty” or the concept of “Social Clinic.” Most have rarely, if ever, thought of a “Public Economy,” and when/if they do, it is a thought that reflexively strikes fear of totalitarianism and loss of liberty. Most have been taught that capitalism, despite its flaws, is the most “realistic” and most successful economic model ever implemented, and that alternative models are inferior, “always lead to disastrous results,” should be feared, and should not be considered. Most people have not worked in an altruistic children’s hospital, or a similarly altruistic setting---which means they might have little personal experience with collaborative, altruistic, non-profiteering efforts that practice the foundational pillars of the CHPEM.

In short, pro-capitalist teachings (which amount to propaganda) have been extraordinarily powerful and effective. That propaganda has convinced people that no alternative economic models need to be considered. Worse, the message has been that alternative economic models are dangerous to even think about. This pro-capitalist propaganda has vaccinated people against consideration of any alternative models. That has made it difficult for people to understand “Social Beauty,” the CHPEM, and application of the CHPEM to the general economy. Pro-capitalist propaganda has been so powerful that most people are hesitant to even read about these alternative ideas.

But what has been least recognized is that the foundational (mis)understandings of corporate capitalism (those listed above) are its **Achilles’ heel**, and the most effective way to hold corporate capitalism to account and reverse its harmful effects on society is to expose the

inaccuracies and flaws of its foundational (mis)understandings and explain how the foundational pillars of the CHPM represent a more accurate and helpful understanding of Human Nature and how to organize as a society.

It cannot be emphasized enough how extremely powerful, effective, and abusive the pro-capitalist, anti-public, anti-Humanity, propaganda has been.^{5,6} It is not enough to just treat the symptoms of corporate capitalism.

Corporate capitalism is not threatened by symptomatic treatment of the problems it creates. Symptomatic treatment (e.g., softening or partial correction of the “Mean Arrangements of Man”) may result in a somewhat kinder and gentler form of capitalism and give the illusion of progress, but does not affect the root cause of capitalism’s power or its ability to adjust in order to continue infecting and dominating. In fact, symptomatic treatment of capitalism without accompanying exposure and correction of its foundational social misunderstandings enables capitalism to continue its dominance because such treatment gives the false impression that capitalism is okay as long as it is made kinder and gentler via better regulation and periodic injections of compassion. That is why capitalism is not threatened by symptomatic treatment. In fact that symptomatic treatment makes capitalism more palatable and thereby enhances its ability to survive and continue dominating.

Therefore, in addition to treating the symptoms of corporate capitalism, we must focus on **corporate capitalism’s Achilles’ heel**---its inaccurate, powerfully misleading foundational social (mis)understandings. That is where the corporate capitalist model is most vulnerable and would feel most threatened. Throughout the past several centuries, the corporate capitalist social and economic model has been able to infect, thrive and dominate because its foundational social (mis)understandings have not been sufficiently exposed and challenged. Accordingly, the most realistic way to free Humanity from the corporate capitalist model is to focus on its Achilles’ heel.

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The Footnotes refer to the following related essays, which are posted (or will soon be posted) on the **Notes From the Social Clinic** website: www.notesfromthesocialclinic.org These essays are listed, by title, in the Table of Contents (TOC) of the website.

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