Visions for Global Justice through the Lens of Sarkar's Social Cycle

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Abstract

While a large body of work catalogues the problems of economic globalisation, proposals for addressing global economic, environmental and social injustice are notoriously limited. Two visions for the future of globalisation that have emerged are George Monbiot's proposal for implementation of global democracy detailed in The Age of Consent and John Bunzl's Simultaneous Policy proposal, presently being implemented by the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation. These ideas are critically examined from integral perspectives: briefly, using Ken Wilber's Integral Theory; and in greater depth from the perspective of P. R. Sarkar's Progressive Utilization Theory, with a particular focus on his social cycle.

Introduction

"We know what you are against, but what are you *for*?" This is the now familiar retort by supporters of free market economic globalisation used to counter the Global Justice Movement's dissent.[1] While some participants in the movement dismiss this, seeing "rebuttal of the fundamental weaknesses of a system which defends the privilege of a small minority" as their central responsibility, others perceive a pressing need to rise to the challenge presented by this question. (Seabrook 2001) Michael Albert (2002), co-founder of *Z Magazine* based in Boston, sees the lack of attention to "what we actually want" as a "huge error". He contends that "we need vision to know where we want to go so that our efforts will advance our aspirations rather than leading only in circles, or even worse, leading toward ends we abhor." (Albert 2002)

Two particularly audacious visions for addressing the injustices wrought by economic globalisation have recently been articulated. Both propositions involve reigning in marauding corporations and capital through the extension of democratic influence beyond national boundaries to the global sphere. The first approach is detailed by George Monbiot (2003), the British journalist, environmental activist, philosopher and author, in his book *The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order.* The second is based on ideas developed by John Bunzl, Founder and Director of the London-based International Simultaneous Policy Organisation. Bunzl's proposal is introduced in his book *The Simultaneous Policy: An Insider's Guide to Saving Humanity and the Planet* and further developed in a series of essays available on the organisation's website (2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2003a, 2003b, no date; International Simultaneous Policy Organisation, 2003).[2]

Given the intended scope of Monbiot's and Bunzl's programs, deep understanding of their positions demands the application of an analytic tool with requisite complexity. Ken Wilber's Integral Theory, introduced in concise form in *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science and Spirituality* offers a potential starting point (2001). Integral Theory provides a meta-map (depicted in figure 1) that attempts to accommodate and contextualise any perspective. While the entire system is more complex, a simplified version based on two of the principle elements, "quadrants" and "levels", is useful in situating Monbiot's and Bunzl's work. Integral Theory posits that all knowledge can be classified according to whether it pertains to the individual or the collective and to the "interior" or the "exterior". The interior/exterior dimension recognises a fundamental category difference between consciousness and culture (the interior) on the one hand and physical manifestation of matter, energy and their systems (the exterior) on the other hand. Integral Theory tells us that neither domain can, nor should, be reduced to the other. The division of knowledge by individual/

collective and interior/exterior defines four fundamental quadrants. The individual-interior, or Upper-Left quadrant, is the intentional domain, where knowledge claims are assessed according to subjective truthfulness. The individual-exterior, or Upper-Right quadrant, is the behavioural domain; knowledge claims are assessed by objective truth. The collective-interior, or Lower-Left quadrant, is the cultural domain; knowledge claims are assessed by inter-subjective justness. The collective-exterior, or Lower-Right quadrant, is the social systems domain; knowledge claims are assessed by inter-objective functional fit. Integral Theory also posits that all perspectives are held from a particular developmental viewpoint, pertaining to the model's "level" element. The perspectives held in each quadrant unfold in developmental sequences, or "growth hierarchies", extending from matter to body to mind to soul to spirit. In Integral Theory, consciousness develops or emerges asymmetrically, generally following this sequence, and any perspective is identified with the level of consciousness from which it is held.

Upper-Left Quadrant
Interior-Individual
Intentional domain
Subjective truthfulness

Upper-Right Quadrant
Exterior-Individual
Behavioural domain
Objective truth

Spirit
Soul
Mind
Body

Lower-Left Quadrant
Interior-Collective
Cultural domain
Inter-subjective justness

Lower-Right Quadrant
Exterior-Collective
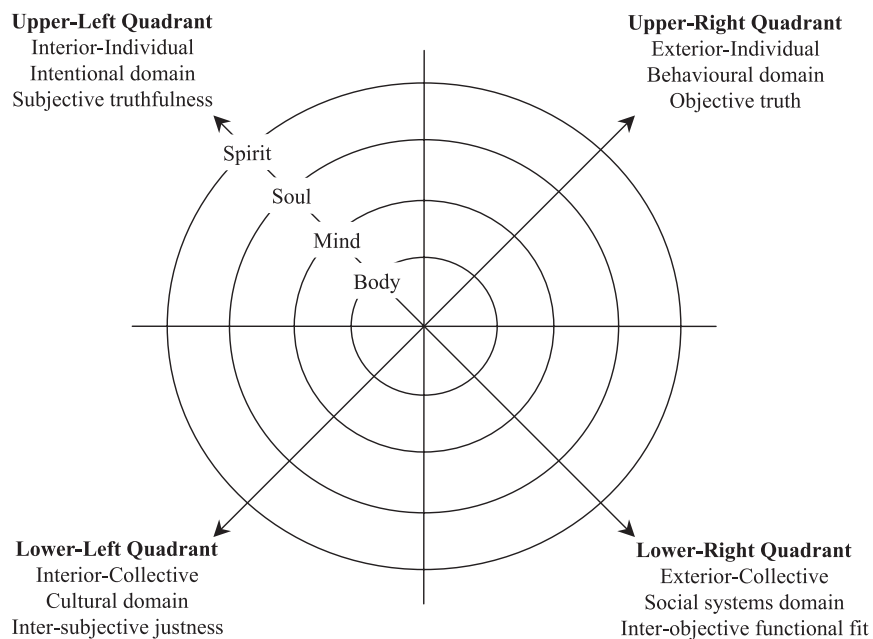Social systems domain
Inter-objective functional fit

Figure 1: Integral Theory's meta-map (adapted from Wilber 2001)

Both Monbiot and Bunzl characterise the problems associated with unconstrained global business interests in terms of Integral Theory's Lower-Right quadrant and it is also from this perspective that their interventions are formulated. They advocate action that leverages economic and political systems on a global scale. Bunzl's position, however, is differentiated by its attention to the Left-Hand quadrants, both in understanding the problem and in formulating his response. In fact, he attributes his proposal to the transformatory insight resulting from "one of those rare moments of stillness" in his own interior world. (Bunzl 2001a: 8) The roots of the globalisation problem are seen to lie equally with "markets, corporations, laws, patterns of ownership, institutions, technologies" and with an attendant "widespread lack of spiritual values in society". (Bunzl 2001a: 6) As we will see later, both writers also consider the relationship between exterior social, political and economic change and interior changes in consciousness and culture, although their respective positions highlight a divide in their thinking. In terms of the level from which their perspectives emerge, some subtle clues are available. Bunzl's embrace of spiritual perspectives, and his openness to insight as epistemology is suggestive of a post-rational stance. In a similar vein, he devotes an essay to the role of Wilber's vision-logic (cognitive development beyond formal operational thinking) in taking us beyond the present globalisation model. (Bunzl 2003a)[3] For Monbiot, on the other hand, the rational is of prime legitimacy. His favouring of the rational is illustrated well in his rebuke of those in the West who would deny proportionate power to citizens of other cultures. In dismissing this chauvinism, Monbiot (2003: 107) reflects that "the people of China and India are just as capable of assessing their political options and making rational decisions as anyone else". Rationality is, for Monbiot, the basis of right thinking.

Integral Theory facilitates deep comparison of the perspectives underlying Monbiot's and Bunzl's proposals. In considering global-scale change, we require also a basis for analysis that addresses and accounts for, in similar depth, the power dynamics underlying the global political-economy. A critical lens that incorporates the integral knowledge concept (integration of breadth and depth of available perspectives) with a generalised model of social change will be invaluable in extending the analysis. The basis for such a tool is contained within the thinking of Indian philosopher, social activist and spiritual leader Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar. Sarkar's Progressive Utilization Theory (PROUT), and his social cycle theory in particular, offers a rich contextual base from which to examine the shifting global interrelationships between citizens, governments, corporations and the philosophers responsible for these groups' guiding ideas. The social cycle combines the focal elements of Monbiot's and Bunzl's works in a grand macrohistorical structure. This provides us with a deep, long-term perspective within which to situate Monbiot's and Bunzl's visions. In turn, the social cycle theory of change should reveal valuable critical insights into the prospects for their proposals. We will commence this process by examining Sarkar's social cycle and other elements of PROUT in more detail, predominantly considering the perspective of Sohail Inayatullah, one of the foremost commentators on Sarkar's thinking. In particular, this article draws on the books *Transcending Boundaries, Situating Sarkar and Understanding Sarkar.* (Inayatullah 1999; Inayatullah & Fitzgerald 1999; Inayatullah 2002)

Sarkar's Perspective as Critical Framework

From Inayatullah (1999: 2) we learn that "Sarkar's intent was and is...to create a global spiritual socialist revolution, a renaissance in thought, language, music, art and culture." Sarkar's thinking, originating in what Inayatullah (1999: 5-6; 2002) has called "the classic Indian episteme", benefits from the many-layered reality that is inherent in this system, and then transcends its specific cultural roots by seeking a genuinely global, spiritual universalism. The Sarkarian system provides a vantagepoint situated outside the Western discourse within

which Monbiot's and Bunzl's ideas are located. Rather than simply offering its own alternative, here we find a system with potential to encompass their thinking by providing "a new way to constitute the real". (Inayatullah 1999: viii)

While discussion here centres on the social cycle theory, this is just one component of the overall PROUT system. Inayatullah (1999: 3) describes the entire system as comprising "Sarkar's theory of history and change, his theory of leadership and the vanguard of the new world he envisions, as well as his alternative political economy." In making best use of Sarkar's ideas for our present analysis, we will touch on all of these elements.

Sarkar saw the history of societies as the result of rising and falling influence of four classes, or *varnas*: workers (shudra), warriors (ksattriya), intellectuals (vipra) and capitalists (vaeshya). (Inayatullah 1999) Associated with each is a particular type of power – mass power, coercive power, normative power and remunerative power. (Inayatullah 1999) But beyond this, each class represents a particular paradigm, with its own way of knowing and dealing with the physical and social world. (Inayatullah 1999) Inayatullah (2002: 265) explains that "varna is about an analysis that is much deeper than government and ruling classes, it is an entire worldview." Sarkar's system, however, differs from purely structural perspectives on class. Varna is not fixed: as Inayatullah (1999: 3) notes, "one can change the influence of history and social environment", for example, via education.

Each varna is characterised by its relationship with the social and physical environment. The shudra are dominated by the environment, the ksattriya struggle with and dominate the environment, the vipra struggle with and dominate the world of ideas and the vaeshya struggle with and dominate the environment and world of ideas. (Inayatullah 1999) History, for Sarkar, involves a cycle of epochs in which each of the classes in turn rises to power in a benevolent form but then becomes exploitative and creates the conditions for the shift to a new epoch. (Inayatullah 1999) The cycle proceeds from shudra to ksattriya to vipra then to vaeshya, before returning to shudra, either through revolution by the shudra, or by evolution. (Inayatullah 1999)

The social cycle is based on the Indian perspective in which social history is continuous. In Sarkar's worldview, history always involves a dialectic relationship between thesis and antithesis, benevolence and perversion, leading to synthesis and renewal. This constant interplay underpins the fabric of the cosmos, creating an internal challenge "that propels humans, collectively and individually, towards new levels of physical wealth, intellectual understanding and spiritual realization." (Inayatullah 1999: 5) According to Inayatullah (1999: 25), the driver of Sarkar's dialectic, rather than means of production, new technology or "the actions of the Great Leader...is *physical struggle* (the battle with the environment), *mental struggle* (the battle between new and old ideologies) and *the spiritual attraction of the Great* (that force which leads women and men towards the infinite)."

Periods of power associated with each varna are characterised by particular systems of government. This is a vital point in applying Sarkar's model to analysis of current approaches to reform of the global political-economy. Inayatullah explains the Sarkarian view on the relationship between types of government and class power:

> when there is worker rule (prehistory and revolutionary times) the political system is anarchy; during warrior rule (empires and kingdoms as well as modern military states) there are monarchies or dictatorships; during intellectual rule (the great religions and the bureaucracy) there are republics; and during capitalist rule, there is mass democracy. (Inayatullah 1999: 70)

Elsewhere, Inayatullah (2002: 158) reflects that "for Sarkar no political system is intrinsically better than any other one." Inayatullah (1999: 2) highlights the manner in which this contrasts with "the Western model where social history can end with the perfect marketplace or the conflict-free communist state." While Sarkar recognised the importance of checks and balances, and separation of powers, the actual forms of government "are but secondary factors in the larger system." (Inayatullah 2002: 265) In

Sarkar's thinking, "what is important is responsiveness to human needs and the accountability of power, that is, a model of needs representation not representation by ballot." (Inayatullah 2002: 265)

In order to address the problem of exploitation that is, eventually, the nature of all systems of government and sources of power, Sarkar also proposed a fifth social group. This is the sadvipra, or servant leaders, who have the potential to create a state of permanent revolution such that the exploitative stage of each epoch is avoided (Inayatullah 1999). The sadvipra sit at the centre of society. Like the vipra, they operate in the realm of ideas. They differ from the vipra, however, in that these ideas are combined with interventional action, transforming the pattern of history from circle to spiral. The sadvipra disrupt the social cycle, preventing it from becoming stuck in a repetitive loop. They create circumstances in which "the call of the infinite" can create a dynamic, evolutionary, social progression (Inayatullah 1999: 4). This provides the ground from which the self may expand from identification exclusively with ego, to family attachment, to geo-sentiments, to socio-sentiments, to humanism and finally on to identity with the cosmos as a whole, Sarkar's neo-humanism (Inayatullah 1999). Inayatullah (1999: 2) describes neo-humanism as "the construction of self in an ecology of reverence for life", characterised by "love and devotion for all, inanimate and animate, beings of the universe."

The sadvipra are universal agents, transcending and working across the spectrum of institutional forms. In Sarkar's view, the priority must be to "create this type of leadership instead of building large bureaucratic organizations." (Inayatullah 1999: 3) Developing the consciousness of the leader must precede any specific change to the structures of social organisation. As Inayatullah (1999: 65) explains, for the sadvipra "power is populist, based on the person not an institution. Thus representation moves away from *acting for* particular individuals as defined by national sovereignty and moves to acting for the interests of a general and universal 'humanity'." The sadvipra represents "a new type of leadership conscious of the

pattern of history and the structures of power that gives us our selves." (Inayatullah 1999: 73) This approach, relying on the integrity and spiritual development of the leader, stands in contrast to the post-enlightenment democratic concept of leadership characterised by institutional protection from the essentially corrupting nature of power. Sarkar embraces instead "the notion of leader as having access to special knowledge or access to deeper layers of consciousness." (Inayatullah 1999: 22) For Sarkar, "it is leadership that represents not a particular class but the interests of the collective that is critical for a future political design." (Inayatullah 1999: 66) But how to cultivate these qualities? How does the potential leader move towards vidya (benevolence, introversion) and away from avidya (the perverse, extroversion)? This is possible only through individual growth, as Inayatullah describes:

> Revolutionaries who desire to transform the numerous pathologies of the present must prepare their minds and bodies, they must be ready to suffer hardships. They must also undergo spiritual transformation: they must suffuse their minds with love, with selflessness. (Inayatullah 1999: 22)

Still, the sadvipra are human: how would corruption of members of this group and subsequent abuse of power be avoided? Sarkar's system, according to Inayatullah (1999: 66), specifies that this polity "is never one person rule but a council, a board of *sadvipras*, thus allowing *sadvipras* to monitor each other's behaviour." Also, the focus on "community and personal power" leading to the "spiritualization of society, the democratization of the economy, interwoven citizen bonds" would act to counter the "abuse of power by those intending to do good." (Inayatullah 1999: 66)

Where might Sarkar's vision lead us? We have seen that the ultimate call is towards neo-humanism, but as Inayatullah (1999: 68) explains, "perfection is possible only at the level of individual enlightenment. A perfect polity is impossible." Nonetheless, spiritual practice aimed towards neo-humanism "must be based on rigor, discipline, and selfless service to the Other, not solely on good feelings and the search for spiritual pleasure." (Inayatullah 1999:

33) The aim should be to create, through a path commencing with transformation of one's self, the social conditions within which others can pursue their own growth. But this does not mean the establishment on Earth of a perfect paradise, Sarkar's understanding of our reality is far more complex than to suggest this. Inayatullah (1999: 33) explains that "Sarkar's vision is not utopia, it does not predict the end of exploitation and struggle; rather it is a eutopia, a good place, where not only will there be good forces, but evil forces as well." Whereas utopia implies the eradication of that which is seen as bad, Sarkar seeks "*prama* or balance between the individual and the collective, growth and distribution, and between ideational and sensate." (Inayatullah 1999: 14) This is a project of global scope: it is seen as a suitable goal for all of humanity, transcending state, race and religion.

Inayatullah (1999: 17) emphasises that, for Sarkar, "one of the criteria of a good society is well being and economic vitality, not solely a society where the transcendental is worshipped." Sarkar saw an appropriate political-economy as integral to PROUT's ability to provide the material and social base for such a good society. The PROUT political-economy stands as a genuine alternative to those of capitalism, localism and communism. Inayatullah (1999) characterises the PROUT system as high growth and high distribution, in contrast to capitalism (high growth, low distribution), localism (low growth, high distribution) and communism (medium growth, medium distribution). A central tenet of PROUT is that it "accepts individual difference and the desire of individuals to own limited property and goods as well as the key role of incentives in spurring technological innovation and economic growth." (Inayatullah 1999: 23) In contrast to both communism and capitalism, PROUT reflects an understanding that "individual good and collective good are symbiotic: neither one is more important; both find their apex through interrelationship." (Inayatullah 1999: 23) Inayatullah (1999: 31) explains that within PROUT, "economic development is defined as increases in purchasing capacity, not gross national product." Moreover,

it is a political-economy based on "physical, intellectual and spiritual resources" (Inayatullah 1999:5). In this system, employment, rather than an end in itself and the principal source of our wellbeing, is seen "as only an intermediate state, the final good is full unemployment, the creation of a society where material needs are fulfilled so out intellectual and spiritual selves can be cultivated." (Inayatullah 1999: 31)

A final key to Sarkar's system, and an essential element in the analysis of alternative globalisation proposals, is his epistemological diversity. He recognises four "conventional" epistemologies, two typically identified as Western, two as Eastern, described by Inayatullah (1999: 16) as "Sense-Inference (Science), Reason-Logic (Philosophy), Authority (Religion), Intuition (Mysticism)." To these he "adds a fifth that of devotion/love which is not merely an emotion but a way of *constituting* the real", creating "an alternative reality inaccessible by other conventional ways of knowing." (Inayatullah 1999: 16) Reason and sense-inference, the West's "officially" sanctioned epistemologies, are placed "in a larger context of intuition and layers of reality." (Inayatullah 1999: 16) Depth of both being *and* knowing is essential to understanding Sarkar's perspective of the real, and hence to assessing the strength of responses to globalisation from within his framework.

The Nature of the Problem

From the point of view of the Global Justice Movement, our present era of economic globalisation clearly correlates with the exploitative phase of the vaeyshan historical epoch. This is the context in which we will now examine George Monbiot's and John Bunzl's characterisation of the problems that they perceive. Following this, we will consider their respective visions for change. Finally, the social cycle and the broader landscape of PROUT will be used to situate each author's work.

Monbiot's and Bunzl's proposed interventions in the economic globalisation process share common themes. Where they differ markedly is in their respective characterisations of the problem that these interventions are

designed to address. As we saw earlier, they are also differentiated by the layers of reality that they recognise and the relative depth of their perspectives. Their positions can each be summarised by a central question. In Monbiot's case this question is "Who holds the power?" For Bunzl, it is "What is the guiding imperative?"

For Monbiot (2003: 8), the injustices of economic globalisation stem from a system "designed and executed by a minority seeking to enhance its wealth and power." Underpinning this perspective is a view of human nature in which greed and fear, violence and destruction are the predominant drivers of behaviour. Humans are seen as having a natural tendency towards oppression of an "other" in pursuit of the resource needs of the group with which they presently identify. The world is divided along class lines, where a small but powerful and rich elite exploits the poor and weak masses. Monbiot (2003: 15) regards the problems associated with corporate and financial globalisation as "simply formulated: there is, at the global level, no effective restraint" of this exploitation.

Monbiot sees problems relating to globalisation originating in the tensions between class-based groups with conflicting interests. In other words, the problem is one of the relative *competitiveness* between these groups, their respective ability to capture and exert power.

While, as we will see shortly, Monbiot rejects communism as a system of political-economy, his thinking with regard to social change is strongly reminiscent of Marxist conflict theory. In Monbiot's view, structural change, albeit instigated by human agency, is the necessary precursor to changes in consciousness. He describes these as "metaphysical mutations", borrowing from Michel Houellebecq's novel *Atomised.* (Houellebecq 2001 cited in Monbiot 2003: 7) This perspective sees human consciousness, and the values enacted by this consciousness, as a collective structural phenomenon, a "framework of perception", itself beyond human agency. (Monbiot 2003: 260) It is only through institutional reform instigated through the action of the weak, poor and oppressed that the onset of the "metaphysi-

cal mutation" might be brought about, permitting us "to cooperate in resolving our common problems." (Monbiot, 2003:260-1)

While Monbiot's understanding of social change is strongly influenced by Marxist conflict theory, he departs sharply from Marx with regard to the historical trajectory. He is perfectly clear on this: "history does not come to an end; dialectical materialism has no ultimate synthesis. New struggles do, and must, emerge as needs change, interests diverge and new forms of oppression manifest themselves." (Monbiot 2003: 29) Here, then, we see his current formulation of the globalisation problem, and the context for any proposed program of action, in a wider framework. We should expect no magic solution, no ticket to utopia. The problem that we face is inherent in human nature. For Monbiot, there is a strong sense that global injustice results from a fundamental flaw in our being. Recognising the central role for human agency in addressing injustice, he sees a clear path beyond our current circumstances, but in the absence of a deeper, layered view of reality, and a perspective on individual transformation, it appears that his options for taking us forward may be limited in scope.

John Bunzl sees two specific global justice issues as being of greatest concern. He describes these as "the threat posed by unsustainable consumption and pollution that characterise continual economic growth in a finite environment" and "the threat posed by worsening poverty and dependency of the vast majority of the world's rapidly growing population." (Bunzl 2001a: 1-2) While not denying the significance of power discrepancies, Bunzl (2001b) perceives the root of these problems to lie deeper: he suggests that it originates in our collective myth of competition itself. For Bunzl (2001a: 3), this myth is inherently associated with "certain aspects of the capitalist system and its attendant lack of spiritual values."

Competition, in Bunzl's (2001b) view, induces fear. Governments, incapacitated by the fear of capital flight, job loss, inflation and currency devaluation, refuse to implement policies aimed at economic, environmental and social sustainability. Businesses refuse to act more

responsibly due to perceived negative impacts on profits and market share relative to competitors who refuse to act for the same reasons. Bunzl (2001b) portrays global economic injustice not as "the result of an 'evil conspiracy' on the part of transnational corporations, market traders or fund managers but merely the natural consequence of competition becoming unshackled from cooperation." His position with respect to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), an institution much maligned by the Global Justice Movement, illustrates this well. He sees the WTO, as "a *symptom* of the absence of political control over the global economy rather than its cause", its establishment necessitated by a mind-set in which competition is an inevitable force, the impact of which we can only hope to make fairer by removal of constraints. (Bunzl 2001b)

The Nature of the Response

Monbiot's vision for change in response to his formulation of the problem involves the extension of democratic institutions beyond the national domain to the global sphere. He advocates overthrow and replacement by the world's citizens of the present global institutions of economic power. The broad aim is the introduction of democratically appointed rule of law at the global level. Specifically, his manifesto proposes the establishment of four principal global institutions:

> *a democratically elected world parliament; a democratised United Nations General assembly, which captures the powers now vested in the Security Council; an International Clearing Union, which automatically discharges trade deficits and prevents accumulation of debt; a Fair Trade Organization, which restrains the rich while emancipating the poor.* (Monbiot 2003: 4)

In framing his vision for a more just political-economy, Monbiot relies largely on variations of existing systems. He writes that "I have not sought to be original. Where effective solutions have already been devised, I have adopted them", his "principal innovation [being] to discover some of their synergistic effects." (Monbiot 2003: 2-3) He considers in some detail

the prospects for communism, anarchism and democracy as principals of political organisation. He examines localism as an alternative to capitalism; voluntary simplicity and mindful consumption as means of de-clawing it; and new rules for the IMF and World Bank as approaches to reforming it. Monbiot (2003: 41) finds in favour of democracy, although it is for him "the least-worst system we can envisage", containing its own inherent problems and requiring scrutiny from a politically active civil society to avoid perversion. His economic proposals assume a continuation of prevailing capitalism and global trade, but with strong institutional measures to ensure distributive justice and control of inter-regional wealth disparity.

The intention here is not so much to critique the specific details of this project. Monbiot (2003: 3) makes clear that he does not "presume to suggest anything resembling a final or definitive world order." The specific ideas are intended as much for seeding a movement and for provocation of debate as they are for direct implementation in their own right. Of greater interest is the worldview within which the proposals arise, and the way that relationships between actors are considered to play out in implementing such proposals.

Monbiot works within a strategic space governed by zero sum logic, in which the advantage of one group implies the disadvantage (real or perceived) of an "other". The world is populated by clearly defined "in" groups and "out" groups. While he eschews actual physical violence in considering how aims of the type that he lays out might be achieved, Monbiot adopts the language of violent revolution. He speaks of globalisation placing "within our hands the weapons we require to overthrow the people who have engineered it." (Monbiot 2003: 9) Power must be seized, existing powers "forced to comply", "cruel and unusual methods of destroying their resistance" must be employed. (Monbiot 2003: 4) Although his resort to "cruel and unusual methods" is clearly intended figuratively, Monbiot does not anticipate such restraint from the entrenched powers. He expects that the success of his approach will be established "only when it is violently

opposed." (Monbiot 2003: 3) We see here that Monbiot's response to the injustices of economic globalisation is framed within the modified Marxist conflict theory with which he constitutes the problem itself. He is disdainful of the role that inner transformation of the individual might play in social renewal. For instance, he suggests that "Voluntary simplicity looks more like the monastery than the barricade. Delightful as it may be for those who practise it, quiet contemplation does not rattle the cages of power." (Monbiot 2003: 62) Monbiot marginalises the role of contemplation and "voluntary simplicity" in the *preparation* of individuals for action in the social domain. His perspective on social change is biased strongly towards structural primacy. The prospects for his response are likely to be tied to the adequacy of that theory of social change.

For Bunzl, global injustice is to be addressed by transcending the myth of competition with the spirit of cooperation. If fear of competitive disadvantage drives the global economic game, then we must step outside the framework that gives validity to such fear, addressing the rules of the game rather than reacting to the fear itself. (Bunzl 2000a) Bunzl has developed ideas that might facilitate such transcendence, and has enacted these ideas via establishment of the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (ISPO). The organisation's program has "as its ultimate aim the transformation of the international economy such that it operates in harmony with the global natural environment and with the needs of human nature", aims that are summed up as "balance", "peace" and "permanence". (Bunzl 2001a: 82)

The Simultaneous Policy (SP) concept and implementation process is described in detail in ISPO's *Founding Declaration.* (International Simultaneous Policy Organisation 2003) The process involves adoption of SP by individuals. The contents of SP would be determined cooperatively by all adopters. Adopters agree to vote in future national elections for any candidate or party within reason that agrees to implement the SP agenda. When sufficient individuals have adopted SP, all candidates or parties would have to pledge to implement SP in order to be elected. Once elected, a government that has pledged to implement SP would be required to do so when the governments of a sufficient number of other countries have also agreed to do so. It is of particular significance that the proposal would "take place within our existing framework of world politics and international relations." (International Simultaneous Policy Organisation 2003: "Background") Bunzl (no date) sees the central strength of SP as its creation of "what could be described as a 'future context' of *co-operation* amongst nations... policies that are unworkable and consequently undesirable in the current competitive context can, in a future context in which all cooperate, become entirely workable and desirable."

Bunzl and ISPO have made initial proposals for policy measures that might be implemented, but the emphasis is on the adoption process itself, on the means of reaching agreement *to* implement simultaneously, rather than on *what* to implement. Interestingly, George Monbiot's specific measures have themselves been suggested as part of the initial SP package (International Simultaneous Policy Organisation, no date). The intention is that the final policy package would be developed from the grass roots level by SP adopters, and it is in this manner that SP is differentiated from other transnational "coordinated" policy initiatives. SP is specifically intended to allow members of a global civil society to have direct input into development of the policies by which their world is governed.

Bunzl's favoured political-economy is based strongly on institutional reform of the prevailing capitalism, supported by liberal democracy at the national level. His "aim is not to destroy capitalism but rather to give it the legitimacy that it currently lacks." (Bunzl 2001a: 82) He holds that the "fall of communism [has] revealed capitalism in all its myriad forms to be the world's dominant mode of production. Having achieved supremacy, the need now is for capitalism to examine itself and to put its own house in order." (Bunzl 2001a: 180) Bunzl sees democratic nation states as the appropriate units of political organisation. The SP program is specifically formulated to take advan-

tage of a perceived trend towards universalisation of this system. He rejects the notion of "a benevolent global state" and, like Monbiot (and Sarkar for that matter), "small-scale opting out". (Bunzl 2001a: 182) In contrast to Monbiot (and again, Sarkar), Bunzl's design criteria are motivated by an aversion to political instability. For him, "the ballot box still remains the only safety valve through which essential reforms can come about, without the danger of revolutionary or violent change." (Bunzl 2001a: 106) It may be useful to consider this in light of Bunzl's personal background. He was born into relative affluence and has spent his working life with his family's business and recognises that his "current lifestyle leaves him in something of an embarrassing situation and wide open to charges of hypocrisy." (Bunzl 2001a: 7, 189) Finally, he reminds us that in suggesting a form of political-economy, "many assumptions are made for I am neither an economist nor a political scientist." (Bunzl 2001a: 81)

Central to Bunzl's proposal is a shift from blaming of one group by another for global problems. SP requires that we all acknowledge some degree of responsibility for our present predicament. (Bunzl 2003b) The reward for such acceptance of responsibility is a path forward based on *positive* sum logic, with the potential to disrupt the cycle of "us and them' blame and counter-blame". (Bunzl 2003b: 1) His intention is to bring us to "a crucial and fundamentally important intellectual and spiritual turning point... at which we can move to a new and liberating level in our thinking and being." (Bunzl 2003b: 3) The aim is to create "the conditions of *forgiveness and non-judgemental acceptance* of ourselves and each other; the *inclusiveness* necessary to beginning our collaborative search for global solutions." (Bunzl 2003b: 4)

Bunzl's worldview is infused with the spiritual, and his vision for social change is underpinned by the centrality of inner transformation. His transformative perspective, reminiscent of the views on social change seen, for instance, in Richard Slaughter's (1999) T-cycle or Jack Mezirow's transformative theory of adult learning (Mezirow & Associates 2000), is coupled to

an appreciation of structural realities. In support of this, he writes: "Whilst the impetus for such spiritual and material reform must come from within, the adoption campaign would at least provide conducive conditions in which it is encouraged to flourish." (Bunzl 2001a: 163) Nonetheless, for Bunzl, the primary energy for change comes from within. In moving "from A to B", it is "clear that a process of fundamental transformation [of human nature] is involved and that any such proposal for fundamental transformation must inevitably be characterised by a high degree of idealism." (Bunzl 2001a: 8) Finally, through "an organisation focused upon achieving a political and spiritual shift of emphasis", he believes that "we have the opportunity to take the stage of World Community – and thus humanity – to a new spiritual height." (Bunzl 2001a: 181; 171)

Through Sarkar's Lens

Although conceding the possibility of Houellebecq's "metaphysical mutation", George Monbiot's proposal is very much "of the system" that it seeks to change. It is also noteworthy that, while he has a strong background in activism, the ideas proposed in *The Age of Consent* are intended as motivation for action by the Global Justice Movement at large rather than as a personal or organisational implementation plan. *The Age of Consent* is a call to arms: the framework for action is to be constructed elsewhere. Through the lens of Sarkar's social cycle, Monbiot's role can be interpreted as that of the disaffected vipran, sensing within the present perversity of the vaeshyan epoch the seeds for the rise of the shudra class. His ideas have the potential to channel shudran chaos into directed and purposeful energy. The revolution for which these ideas call, not withstanding the marginal chance of a "metaphysical mutation", seems destined to assist the rotation of history's wheel by pushing it along its existing track. Monbiot occupies a position of essential significance within Sarkar's macro-perspective, but is perhaps unlikely to bring about the elevation of discourse for which this perspective calls.

Within Monbiot's theory of social change, we find elements in strong accordance with PROUT. Inayatullah (2002: 244), in characterising Sarkar's cyclical view, writes "There is no final synthesis – the battle between basic forces in the universe is endless." As we have seen, Monbiot is unequivocal with regard to his perception of a cyclic trajectory without ultimate synthesis, where the next stage of history has its own problems and potential for oppression. Sarkar and Monbiot share an appreciation of the importance of class and power in social history, and of the inequity of the present global class and power arrangement. They share also a common understanding of the dialectical nature of change, of a continual process of thesis, antithesis and new synthesis. They diverge sharply, however, with regard to the basic nature of this dialectic. Monbiot's perspective is, here at least, strongly Marxist: the dialectic is always physical, material. For Sarkar, it is much more complex. The dialectic varies in degrees between the physical, the mental and the spiritual, and is always related to the psychologies, the epistemologies, the types of power of the varnas in conflict. (Batra 1999) Here we see also a fundamental departure with regard to the layered nature of reality; with the importance of depth of being and of knowing.

From Monbiot, we hear nothing of the spiritual: the category is not considered. For Sarkar it is the central key. Monbiot (2003: 252) writes "to be truly free... we must be prepared to contemplate revolution". Sarkar would agree, but ultimately, for real freedom, this revolution must take place in individual consciousness, proceeding from a sound physical and mental base. (Avadhuta 1999) Nevertheless, on the matter of revolution, we see a convergence of thought. The Sarkarian social revolution may be "bloody or peaceful" in contrast to the Marxian revolution, which is always "bloody and violent". (Batra 1999: 39) Monbiot holds that his proposed program contains the possibility and hope, at least, of peaceful social change.

Finally, Monbiot's economic program, while restricted to the physical category where Sarkar's extends to the intellectual and spiritual domains, is reminiscent of PROUT. Monbiot

sees a strong role for inter-regional trade, but frames this within a system designed to provide distributive justice. This would be achieved not through a shallow "leveling of the field" but by structuring trade rules to ensure genuine, not simply legalistic, equity.

John Bunzl's ideas, while constructed "in the system", are not "*of* the system". For Sarkar, the first step in the emergence of a new universalism "which can challenge the national, religious, class sentiments of history... is liberating the intellect from its own boundaries and placing it in an alternative discourse." (Inayatullah 1999: 2-3) Such a liberation of intellect is evident in the foundations and structure of the Simultaneous Policy project. A clear sadvipran current runs through Bunzl's work: here we see ideas and action combined to lift the wheel of history from its track and place it on a new course. Potential exists to establish a spiral trajectory capable of transcending patterns of the past.

Krtashivananda Avadhuta (1999), in his chapter in *Transcending Boundaries* titled "Politics Beyond Liberalism: the Political Theory of Prout", summarises Sarkar's guidelines and goals of economic development in a series of ten key points. While all of these points are in close accord with Bunzl's economic principles, two in particular stand out. Included in Avadhuta's list we find:

- Harmonious relations of cooperation with nature should be established.
- The psychology of greed and envy must be replaced by a psychology of collective welfare and cooperation. (Avadhuta 1999: 96)

There is strong resonance between these principles and those underpinning Bunzl's program. In fact, the language itself bears an uncanny resemblance to Bunzl's. The source of this is revealed by Avadhuta's reference to E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*, also Bunzl's principal reference for his economic proposals. This suggests a significant philosophical link between the SP program and PROUT: Avadhuta is a disciple of Sarkar, and has held prominent roles in Proutist Universal. (Inayatullah & Fitzgerald 1999)

With his emphasis on the individual's spiritual transformation in creation of healthy social change, Bunzl is in clear accord with Sarkar. Inayatullah (1999: ix) sums up Sarkar's position: "it is through individual effort in the context of social movements that a brighter future is possible." "His goal is to infuse individuals with a spiritual presence, the necessary first step in changing the way that we know and order the world." (Inayatullah 1999: 2) This perspective is mirrored by Bunzl throughout his writing. For instance he discusses, in a section of *The Simultaneous Policy* titled "Campaigning and spiritual values", the relationship between transformative interior development and the SP adoption campaign. (Bunzl 2001a) For Bunzl, the period of SP adoption prior to eventual policy implementation is an opportunity for cultural revitalisation – similar to Sarkar's cultural revolution, described by Inayatullah (1999: 24) as necessarily preceding economic change, due to capitalism's creation of "cultural and economic dependency between centres and peripheries".

Considered from Sarkar's viewpoint, Bunzl's thinking and SP have genuine strengths. Potential problems, however, are also revealed. While strong on transformation of the individual, SP is much weaker with regard to its macro-perspective of social change. The peace and permanence toward which Bunzl hopes his proposals will direct us appear antithetical to the social cycle. This doesn't necessarily discount the value of the SP program under our current circumstances, but it does raise questions as to its relevance within an environment of worsening rather than increasing global stability. We might also ask whether SP could have any influence over inequities within individual nations, without seizure of power by the poor and oppressed.

Finally, Bunzl's reliance on and faith in democracy would be questioned by Sarkar, for whom:

> democratic socialism is far too slow, what are needed are efforts that quicken the pace of change, which allow elites to circulate and social forces to balance... Democracy is useful, but too often, endemically, the larger capitalist structure and local political leaders imbalance it at the expense of the suffering poor. (Inayatullah 2002: 265)

Balance, too, is one of Bunzl's aims. In Sarkar's view this balance would not be achieved without the release of tension that revolution provides. Of course, this perspective on democracy applies also to Monbiot's proposal, however he provides the appropriate outlet for stored energy through his harnessing of conflict.

Conclusion

Viewed through the lens of Sarkarian thinking, the programs of both Monbiot and Bunzl appear particular to their time and place. They are specific responses to problems of a specific historical epoch. Both perspectives reflect strongly their Western economic, political, social and cultural roots. While Bunzl, with his greater epistemological depth, and, to a much lesser extent Monbiot, with his perspective on structural change, class and power, have within their systems of thought the potential to transcend their present frameworks, cast against the backdrop of Sarkar's PROUT their limitations are clearly revealed. Nevertheless, we see in Bunzl's work strong signs of *Western* sadvipran thought and action emerging. Here we see practical evidence that Sarkar's vision of a universal system transcending its Indian socio-cultural origins is indeed being realised.

Sarkar's wider and deeper perspective also gives us reason to see real value in Monbiot's and Bunzl's work. In their programs we see the turning of the social cycle, and we see (in Bunzl, at least) the potential for the spiral trajectory towards neo-humanism. While their thinking is particularly relevant to one stage of the cycle, it is this turn from vaeshyan to shudran power that presently challenges us and upon which our energy will naturally focus. The possibility exists that we might reconcile the tensions between their respective conflict-based and transformative outlooks in a genuinely integral program of social change. A path forward drawing on the best of both Bunzl's and Monbiot's thinking would in many respects echo the vision of Sarkar's PROUT.

The challenge remains to avoid *any* approach to global justice becoming a quest for

the "perfect market" and the "end of history". We must avoid the temptation to pursue development of our exterior, global economic system at the expense of transforming the interiors by which we perceive our economic needs in the first place. If we can move towards the visions of justice held by George Monbiot and John Bunzl, then where will Sarkar's cycle take us next?

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Notes

1. The title "Global Justice Movement" represents what has been widely dubbed in the international media as the "Anti-Globalisation Movement" or the "Anti-Capitalist Movement". The Global Justice Movement could be considered as a loose affiliation of individuals and organisations around the world representing those whose interests have been overlooked, neglected or outright threatened by the process of economic globalisation.
2. The International Simultaneous Policy Organisation website is located at <http://www.simpol.org>.
3. Vision-logic is discussed extensively in Wilber (2000).

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