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### Those Who Live in Class Houses Shouldn't Grow Rocks

In semi-response to...

“Yellow, if it has successfully transited Green should not support the class system in any way whatsoever.”

– Ray Harris, making generalizations and being unclear about the vMememes of Spiral Dynamics. From the essay located at <http://www.integralworld.net/harris14.html>

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This is an interesting statement. I would like to inquire as to what, exactly, this class system is and what causes it to arise. Bear in mind that, in asking this question, I am not questioning that a class system *exists*. I am merely wondering what constitutes the system we all love to criticize, but simultaneously seem to support through an internalization of its structure. Most of us have adopted this structure as a life goal and strive to progress through the strata of class-based achievement.

Many people unnecessarily equate this stratification with capitalism. But capitalism is only the most acute and active propagator of class in the modern world. Certainly nobody would argue that, in countries where capitalism isn't the dominant social structure, a class gradient is not present. Marxist theory would have us believe that the class structure results from the exploitation of the labor class by the non-labor class. But this is a byproduct of a much simpler issue. Socialism and communism run into the same problems manifested in different ways.

As far as I am concerned, the key issue that causes class stratification is an unhealthy emphasis on externalization of focus. Like the difference between the practices of a Neurosurgeon and a Psychologist, both researching the brain but from different internal/external perspectives, the East has generally been turned inwards (Psychologist) while the West has been turned outwards (Neurosurgeon). The West has been struggling to find meaning in the externals of objects for centuries. We have tried to find meaning in space. We have tried to find meaning in atoms. We have tried to find meaning in science. We have tried to find meaning in our social structure.

Ultimately, if one seeks to find meaning outside of one's self, one will end up affecting others. When we set out to live with the assumption that things external to ourselves will bring us satisfaction, then we place a carrot in front of our faces and we start running. Certainly, if this assumption is active, then the active mode of thought is: if we are unhappy at any given moment it must be as a result of not having something more that will make us happy. If we acquire something more and find that it does not bring us happiness, then the orientation is reevaluated and something else takes the place of the newly acquired object. The cycle is repeated. This sort of perspective is a set up to

acquire and expect the collection of objects: power, money, possessions, control, etc. There are, by nature, a limited amount of resources in this world. When a culture has such a strong external emphasis you end up with individuals using, abusing, and crawling over others to achieve a greater concentration of resources. The desire is insatiable and it can, at its worst, violate common human values.

None of this is to say that the existence of *any* external perspective is the root of class structure. What it does say is that an obsessive external focus greatly outweighing a reciprocal internal focus is the root of class structure. These things are evident even outside of the realm of human beings. Some fish will eat themselves to death. Chickens will peck each other's eyes out competing for food. It is not the inclination of nature to turn inwards in the quest for satisfaction.

However, in the cases where an internal focus has been successfully implemented, a structure of class is no longer the governing force in social structure. Take monasteries, collectives of true artists, or even altruistic organizations (which take internally motivated energies and express them externally in *healthy* ways). These organizations do not have the problems that riddle the externally fixated organizations simply because when things are turned inward you cannot use others, or their resources, to achieve your satisfaction.

We all know that survival is the top priority of all creatures and that engaging this mode will override any other more intellectual standards of behavior. In exchange for a person or organization's normal operational standards, the survival mode will provide all personal resources at 100% capacity. Under these conditions it is unreasonable to expect anything but a complete external focus because survival is requisite to everything else we have thus discussed. Yet, this is the state in which many of the people in many degrees of class structure are entrenched. Even a monastery requires some external focus in order to survive. And so support must be supplied in order to give these people a chance to progress.

The key to the equation is not for all people to live inwardly focused at all times. A balance between external and internal elements should be utilized in order to create a society that provides the opportunities individuals need, while those individuals simultaneously provide the responsibility that society requires from them. This can work with capitalism. It can work with any reasonable social motif.

Now to bring this all back home to the original question...

Anyone who views the world from a Green perspective would not support the class system in any way whatsoever and would find the fact that any strata exists **at all** to be inexcusable. Transiting Green to Yellow, as Ray put it, would not support a system explicitly designed to create and maintain a well defined class structure. But, unlike Ray's statement, second tier consciousness would understand that class structure exists as a product of more than this structure. To further the previous analogy: the bigger chickens get more food because they are bigger. The aggressive fish get more food because they are aggressive. Yet, the weaker animals can grow to be every bit as competitive if they exhibit effort and growth combined with the proper support from the

outside world. Ultimately, competition is healthy. Growth is healthy. The progression through class systems is natural. Nobody enters life rich. Nobody enters life poor. We enter life in survival mode and have no internal vehicle for success. We must be provided for entirely by external sources. But this changes... we become autonomous. The vehicle for success is inside of ourselves, while the resources for success are outside of ourselves. No resources, no success. No vehicle, no success. The solution lies in leveling the playing field between these elements.

When placed in a system of limited resources, a big chicken cannot stand up to a dozen fed, healthy, growing chickens. It makes sense to me. Fund the innovators! Find opportunities! Make it worthwhile for people to be autonomous instead of glomming onto large corporations. Make it worthwhile to be an artist, an inventor, a farmer, a market owner, an experimenter. Pour some resources into the creation of inspiration. The only reason the upper class can stay the upper class is sheer resource momentum. They have the mass to keep moving, to keep collecting more. Give the little guys a push and find the paths that will keep them moving.

I'm really curious to hear what people with nothing, living on the streets have to say about how they got to where they are. I'd like to hear about what progression of events might have led to them being penniless and homeless. Schizophrenia? Alcoholism? Drugs? Bad luck? Never even had a chance? I'd also like to hear what they think would provide them with a chance to be successful. I do not know these things, so I refuse to speculate until I do. Maybe the next step in my research is to find out.

Society must reevaluate where we chose to place our equity. If we blindly siphon money from the top and give to the bottom, then we must recognize that the poor still must invest their money *somewhere* to survive. What do we do when we take money from Walmart, give it to the poor, and the poor spend it at Walmart? How can we better support the poor by giving them options which develop *social equity*, instead of simply shuffling funds around? How can the independent market be made competitive so that this doesn't happen? There are thousands of things these 'lower class' investors and investments have to offer that the 'upper class' cannot possibly comprehend. Who has better Chinese food? LeAnne Chin or the hole in the wall in Chinatown, NYC? Duh. We must find these things and magnify them. We must bring them to the fullest of their potential. We must somehow change the dynamic of the market.

There has to be a comprehensive theory that describes how human beings have stratified and polarized the way we have that is more descriptive than simple answers like 'greed' or 'the man'. How can society tap into the energy that individuals have to offer? How can we optimize the talents and abilities of the workforce without stripping the market of its essence, vitality, and authenticity (in the way communism and socialism stripped it of its authenticity)? How can we heal the people who have been broken by the system? How can we bring life to those who have stopped trying to succeed because survival demands their absolute attention? And when they no longer are struggling to survive, how can we give them the momentum they need to be autonomous? How can the little guys' unique quality be cultivated to outshine the big-chicken quantity? How can the two (three, four,

five?) business models survive in the same market, providing appropriately tuned services to the individuals who appreciate them?

These are good questions. I am sick of hearing one dimensional answers and idle complaints. I am going to think about them and discuss them.