

Thinking The Twenty-First Century

Ideas For The New Political Economy

Malcolm McIntosh: Greenleaf Publishers, Sheffield, UK (2015)

Book Summary

The starting point for this book, which is subtitled 'The *New Political Economy*', is a statement from the 2012 The United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability which called for both an intellectual transdisciplinary and a cross-sectoral approach to sustainable development and a "new political economy".

There are five reasons why we need a new political economy. The first relates to sustainable development and its concomitant, globality and Earth awareness, where, for the first time we see and feel the world as one entity in our minds and hearts. The second is concerned with the highest level of evolution - the evolution of knowledge - and in this case the evolution of the balance between what we think we know and what we feel, intuit and discuss. We have come to a critical juncture in which awe and wonder have been marginalised by science, modernity, technology, consumerism and neoliberal economics. Third, the rise of empathy and social, perhaps global, cohesion are a natural progression from the first and second systems changes outlined here - Earth awareness and rebalancing science and awe. I call this nurturing spirit the rise of the feminisation of decision-making and governance as it is a fundamental recognition that the rise and success of the human race is due as much to empathy, sociability, sharing, and group work as it is to competition and masculinity. We are in the process of rebalancing the yin and the yang. The way we organise ourselves as humans on planet Earth is undergoing massive disruption just now. Our organisations and institutions are inexorably changing - and this is the fourth systems change. Fifth, evolutionary success and human survival depends on our ability to learn and our ability to adapt through learning. The way we learn, and our approach to education, will determine our chances of survival.

This book argues that these five changes are necessary and are happening anyway, even if the forces of inertia and conservatism seek to put a brake on them. Just as there is an increase in the frequency of apparently random weather extremes in the form of hurricanes, cyclones, droughts and floods so too the post-1945 social consensus is over. The social welfare reforms coupled to massive innovations in productivity over the last sixty years led to the greatest redistribution of wealth and improvement in most people's lives is coming to an end as elites no longer need so many people - the 99% - to labour in their factories, sweatshops and battlefields to deliver their wealth. What is referred to as the Long Peace is over and just as 'Pax Britannica' led to 'Pax Americana' we are now entering a period of 'Pax Interdependence' - just so long as we can keep a lone political mad man with a nuclear device from blowing us all away.

This book contains dangerous and radical ideas for developing a new political economy.

Reviews:

"This book, partly diary and partly a collection of essays, is a love letter to life and encouragement not to go quietly but to scream loudly."

David J Vidal
Senior Fellow and former Head of Sustainability
The Conference Board, New York, USA

"Brilliant is a term that the British often use to describe something they like. I want to use that term in the more American sense to signify that this book is truly brilliant. Malcolm McIntosh, a polymath of the first order, combines science, politics, economics, feminization, and spirituality among other areas of insight in *Thinking the Twenty-First Century* to create a call for a new order that is much needed in our world. In words that pull few punches, McIntosh calls for five crucial changes: sustainability and awareness of globality; rebalancing science with awe--and spirituality; feminisation of the world to incorporate values of connection, caring, and harmony; re-thinking capitalism; and adopting a 'quieter' form of leadership. Read this book! You will be glad you did."

Sandra Waddock
Galligan Chair of Strategy
Boston College Carroll School of Management, USA

"Malcolm McIntosh's consciousness shifting book helps us see the problems that threaten our very human existence. I recommend it to anyone who is ready for a paradigm shift in leadership for the 21st century."

Dr Amina Aitsi-Selmi
Honorary Senior Research Associate, University College, London, UK
MA(cantab) MRCP MPH MFPD PhD

"A burning man amidst the sociopathic ecopolitical landscape, this beautifully written book advocates for a balanced political economy with community at its centre, as an alternative to a world built to feed the system of Neoliberal Economics. The book is educating, witty and rich in history; much like a conversation with its author, it is bound to leave you feeling nourished and wanting for more. Most of all, Malcolm McIntosh's book is a reminder that we CAN do things differently".

Renata Frolova
Head of Responsible Procurement
Maersk Line
Copenhagen, Denmark

"The world is becoming more and more dominated by specialists who know a lot

about a particular topic. We desperately need people who have a wider focus such that they see the larger pattern of things and Malcolm McIntosh is one of these special people. He combines this wider vision with experience at the top of global companies and media. For the reader the combination of experience at the top and commitment to the future results in a book that is compulsive reading.”

Dr Alan Feest, Chartered Ecologist, University of Bristol, UK

Dr Malcolm McIntosh FRSA is Professor of Sustainable Enterprise in the Asia Pacific Centre for Sustainable Enterprise at Griffith University in Queensland, Australia, which he joined as the Founding Director in 2009.

He started teaching and writing on corporate responsibility and sustainability in 1990 after previous careers in television production and journalism with the BBC; peace research at Bradford University; and business start-ups and language teaching in Sweden, Japan and Australia.

He has worked at the universities of Warwick and Coventry and been a visiting professor at the universities of Bath, Nottingham, Waikato, Sydney, ENPC and Tokyo. He is currently a visiting professor at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa; Doshisha Business School in Japan; and the University of Bristol in England. He is the producer, author or co-author of more than twenty books and numerous articles for journals, magazines and newspapers and he has been a frequent commentator on television and radio around the world on social issues, corporate responsibility and sustainable enterprise.

He has been a Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General's Global Compact and was the founding editor of the peer-reviewed *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, which he still edits. He is a member of the academic board of the Academy for Business In Society (ABIS) and sits on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Sustainability, Accountability, Management and Policy* and the *Journal of Business and Peace*.

In the last two decades he has advised governments, corporations and international NGOs as well working at a community level to establish local sustainability initiatives. In the words of one reviewer, 'in a world of siloed thinking he has concentrated on getting people to talk to people they wouldn't normally talk to' and built partnerships for innovative research and publishing projects, pioneered the teaching of business, human rights, and sustainability, and been at the heart of many global corporate responsibility initiatives.

His last book was *The Necessary Transition* (2012) and his forthcoming book is *Thinking The Twenty-First Century: Ideas For The New Political Economy* (2015).

Malcolm McIntosh lives in Brisbane, Australia and Bath, England

malcolm.mcintosh@btinternet.com